

100 Gems from SrImad Rahasyatraya sAram



Original Article in English By

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SrI Malolan - SrImad Ahobila Matam





||SrI:||

||SrImate nigamAnta mahAdeSikAya namaH||



**FOREWORD
BY
'SRI NRSIMHA SEVA RASIKAN'
OPPILIAPPAN KOIL V.SADAGOPAN**



It is aDiyEn's pleasure to release Srimathy Padmalatha Sridhar's monograph on "The Hundred Gems from Srimath Rahasya Traya Saaram" of Swamy Desikan in our Sri Hayagrivan e-book series. The content has been archived in the articles section of the web site of Sri Vedantha Desikar DevasthAnam, Mylapore, Chennai (<http://www.svdd.com>). Dr. Natteri Hari Swamy, the sampAdhakar of this web site (<http://www.svdd.com>) has kindly given us permission to use this monograph released for the first time in August 15, 2008 for wider access. This monograph is a scholarly analysis of the use of analogies and UpaakhyAnams by Swamy Desikan to instruct us about the sookshmaRthams of the passages in His magnum-opus SrI Sookti, Srimath Rahasya Traya Saaram. Smt. Padmalatha Sridhar's research skills highlight the genius of Swamy Desikan in teaching us about the complex doctrines of Sri VisihtaAdhvaitam with the help of lucid analogies. This is a noble effort! Smt. Padmalatha Sridhar's thorough grounding in the study of our AchArya SrI Sooktis in the traditional kaalakshEpam format under the doyens of our sampradhAyam has paved the way for the successful realization of this monograph that should interest many devotees of Swamy Desikan.

Smt. Padmalatha Sridhar can be best introduced through her own humble words: "aDiyEn was born into SrI Sannidhi tradition and married into SrI

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Sannidhi tradition due to the blessings of SrI MalOlan and SrImath Azhagiya Singars. My husband and I, have the good fortune of doing kAlakshEpam of Grantha ChAthushtyam from SrI U.Ve. MannArgudi RajagOpAlAcchAriAr, AsthAna Vidwan of SrI AhObila Mutt. aDiyEn has completed three levels of VedAnthA studies in MalOla VaagheeSa VaaNi, T.Nagar and stood first in my class. A series of articles under the title "EettIl Srimad RamayaNam" authored by me is being published in SrI Nrisimha PriyA (Tamil) {for the past one year} and a few articles have appeared in SrI Nrismha PriyA (English) too in the past. aDiyEn was involved in proof-reading SrimAn Neduntheru KaNNan's extraordinary work, - 'Mystery of the Man and the Universe: Divine Grace and Our Surrender'. aDiyEn sincerely believes that all the exposure and recognition aDiyEn got through SrI Nrisimha PriyA and now this, is due to the benign grace showered upon me by SrI NrisimhA in human form, SrI NarayaNa Yatindra Mahaa DeSikan".



Smt Padmalatha Sridhar being felicitated





aDiyEn's sincere thanks once again to Smt. Padmalatha Sridhar for her present article. And the permission to publish/release it as a title in the eBooks series.

Srimad rahasya traya sAram is one of the four granthams to be studied under the sacred feet of sadAcAryAs. This grantham has been bequeathed to us by Swamy Desikan out of His compassion for us to gain a clear comprehension of the most important doctrines of SrI VisishTAdvaitam. It is His magnum opus and is presented in the form of 32 chapters.

We will cover two of the five taniyans for Srimad rahasya traya sAram and summarize the essence of each of the 32 chapters of this SrI sUkti of Swami Desikan. The details of Srimad rahasya traya sAram has been released by our likhitha kaimkarya ghoshThI as e-books 91, 92 and 93 of the Ahobilavalli series at www.ahobilavalli.org and as e-book # 8 and eBook # 97 of SrihayagrIvan series at www.srihayagrivan.org as well as e-book #93 in the Sundarasimham series (www.sundrasimham.org).

THE TWO TANIYANS FOR SRIMAD RAHASYA TRAYA SARAM:

विगाहे निगमान्तार्य विष्णुपाद समुद्भवाम् ।

रहस्यत्रयसाराख्यं त्रिस्तोतसमकल्मषाम् ॥

vigAhe nigamAntArya vishNupAda samudbhavAm |

rahasyatrayasArAkhyam trisrotasamakalmashAm ||

Meaning:

aDiyEn immerses deeply in the confluence of the three streams of GangA named rahasya traya sAram, which originated as a blemishless SrI sUkti from the sacred feet of EmperumAn, who incarnated as VedAnta Desikan.





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Swami Desikan with SrI Perarulalan and SrI Perundevi thayar - Kanchi





अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ।

रहस्यत्रयसारख्यं परं ब्रह्मास्तु मे हृदि ॥

avij~nAtam vijAnatAm vij~nAtamavijAnatAm |

rahasyatrayasArAkhyam param brahmAstu me hrDi ||

Meaning:

May the glorious essence of the lofty upadesams about the Para brahmam and the mantrams linked to Him in the Rahasya traya sAram reside firmly in my heart! This Rahasya traya sAram is a sacred grantham and is not understood by those who think they have understood it. The very same grantham is understood by those, who think that they cannot understand the depth of meanings of the lofty doctrines covered in this SrI sUki.

THE SUMMARY OF THE 32 CHAPTERS (NIGAMANADHIKARAM)

It will be useful to have an overall summary of these 32 chapters for a fuller appreciation of the purport of each chapter and the linkage between them.

A. arthAnusAsana bhAgam (Chapters 1-22)

1. upodghAtAdhikAram:

This chapter is an introduction to all that will be covered in SrImad rahasya traya sAram. The jIvan is qualified like the nityasUris to enjoy ParipUrNa brahmAnandam at SrI VaikuNTham and yet has lost that opportunity, nay the rights, because of its immersion in samsAram from time immemorial. It gets disgusted at one time with its lot and gains the sambandham of a sadAcAryan and begins to learn about tattvam, hitam and PurushArtham. The six reasons for being blessed with links to a genuine AcAryan (sadAcArya sambandham) are described here.

2. sAranishkarshAdhikAram:

The jIvan desirous of gaining moksham (mumukshu) now realizes that the three





rahasyams are the most important as pramANams (valid Knowledge) for understanding tattvam, hitam and purushArtham. This chapter establishes in an unambiguous manner the three pramANams that should be clearly known by a mumukshu.

3. pradhAnapratitantrAdhikAram:

The jIvan becomes aware that the pradhAna pratitantram to be understood with the help of the three rahasyams are the SarIrAtma bhAvam - the relationship between ISvaran, the jIvans and the insentient. PradhAna pratitantram means the key doctrine unique to our darsanam, which is not accepted by the other darsanams (Systems of philosophy).

4. arthapancAdhikAram:

The five important things to be understood along with the doctrine of SarIrAtma bhAvam are: the nature of ParamAtma, the nature of jIvAtma, upAyam (means) to gain moksham, the phalan of moksham and the virodhis obstructing the realization of the moksha phalan.

5. tattvatrayacintanAdhikAram:

The knowledge about the links of the three rahasyams in the five topics of the artha pancakam are covered here.

6. paradevatA pAramArthyAdhikAram:

The recognition of the fact that sAtvIka SAstrams assert that SrIman nArAyaNan is the Parabrahmam identified by the three rahasyams.

7. mumukshutvAdhikAram:

The jIvan which has attained clarity about the meanings of the three tattvams develops now the desire for moksham and begins to engage in the pursuit of the upAyam for moksham.

8. adhikArivibhAgAdhikAram:

The adhikAri performing the upAyam for moksham is identified as belonging to two kinds: Bhakti yoga nishThar (expert in practicing bhakti yogam) and prapannan (adept in pursuing prapatti) as their upAyams.





9. upAyavibhAgAdhikAram:

The division of the upAyams for the above two types of adhikAris .

10. prapattiyogyAdhikAram:

The viSesha adhikArams of the one who chooses prapatti among the two upAyams.

11. parikaravibhAdhikAram:

The listing of the five angams of prapatti, which is to be performed only once for moksham and their divisions.

12. sAngaprapadanAdhikAram:

The explanation of angi (BharanyAsa rUpam) and its importance for the one who is desirous of moksham (mumukshu).

13. krtakrtyAdhikAram:

The absence of need to take any other actions by the one who has placed the burden of his protection at the sacred feet of the Lord.

14. svanishThAbhij~nAnAdhikAram:

The recognition of the appearance of signs in one as a result of completion of the bharanyAsam.

15. uttarakrtyAdhikAram:

The acts (svayamprayojana kaimkaryams) to be carried out by the prapannan until leaving the mortal body.

16. prushArthakAshThAdhikAram:

The development of the understanding that bhAgavata Seshatvam is the upper limit of bhagavat kaimkaryam.

17. SAstrIyaniyamanAdhikAram:

The emphasis on performing the prescribed kaimkaryams after prapatti according to the ways shown by the SAstrams.

18. aparAdhaparihArAdhikAram:

The steps taken to avoid aparAdhams during the performance of such kaimkaryams and the removal of those which have entered.





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EmperumAn is siddhopAyam - Kanchi SrI Perarulalan





19. sthAnaviSeshAdhikAram:

The conclusion that the fittest place of residence for the prapannan to perform his kaimkaryams is the place, where the BhAgavatAs reside, and make that place a veritable divya desam.

20. NiryaNAdhikAram:

The way in which the jIvan of a prapannan exits the body with bhagavat sankalpam without any restrictions of desam or kAlam.

21. gativiSeshAdhikAram:

The glorious way in which the prapanna jIvan travels by the arcirAdi mArgam to Paramapadam.

22. paripUrNabrahmAnubhavAdhikAram:

The enjoyment of moksha sAmrAjjyam after arriving at Paramapadam and the performance of nitya, niravadya (blemishless) kaimkaryams there.

B. strIkaraNa bhAgam (Chapters 23-26)

23. siddhopAyaSodhanAdhikAram:

The confusions about EmperumAn, the siddhopAya, who is the most prominent among the tattvams to be understood and the removal of those confusions.

24. sAdhyopAyaSodhanAdhikAram:

The confusions about the sAdhyopAyams of bhakti and prapatti and removal of those confusions and misunderstandings.

25. prabhAvavyavasthAdhikAram:

A chapter to clearly define the glories of prapatti without exaggeration or diminution.

26. prabhAvarakshAdhikAram:

This chapter to protect the glories of prapatti without downplaying it.

C. padavAkyayojana bhAgam (Chapters 27-29)

27. mUlamantirAdhikAram:

The meanings of the padams, vAkyams of the tirumantiram (ashTAksharam) and





the ways to link them to gain their overall purport.

28. dvayaAdhikAram:

The meanings of the padams, vAkyams of the dvaya mantram and the ways to link them to gain the overall insights.

29. caramaSlokAdhikAram:

The meanings of the padams, vAkyams and the ways to link them to gain the various meanings.

D. sampradhAyaprakriyA bhAgam (Chapters 30-32)

30. AcAryakrtyAdhikAram:

The explanations about the fit and unfit ones to receive the upadesams of a sadAcAryan.

31. sishyakrtyAdhikAram:

The duties of a sishyan who cannot ever repay the AcAryan for the great upAkAram rendered by the AcAryan.

32. nigamanAdhikAram:

This adhikAram wraps up the messages from all the topics covered in the previous 31 chapters and concludes the upadesams on the three rahasyams.

It is not easy to comprehend the subtleties (sUkshamams) of dharmam. No harm will come to us if we follow the timeless path of the sages and AcAryAs, who follow the strict path shown by Srutis and smrtis and do not swerve from those paths. Travel along those paths will lead one to the arcirAdi mArgam to enter SrI VaikuNTham and enjoy kaimkarya sAmrAjyam and ParipUrNa brahmAnamdam there without any possibility of returning to the samsAra maNDalam. A clear comprehension of the upadesams of Swamy Desikan and the sadAcAryAs that follow Him would help us realize the indispensability of holding on to the sacred feet of Sriya:pati, SrIman nArAyaNan, during the upAya and phala dasais (stages of seeking the means and fruits there of).

Swamy Desikan has explained the esoteric doctrines relating to the three





rahasyams and their links to artha pancakam, the two upAyams for moksham and the glories of prapatti precisely with the help of PramANams, analogies and upAkhyANams (anecdotes). May we all learn the doctrines covered by Swamy Desikan in Srimad rahasya traya sAram under the sacred feet of sadAcAryan and be redeemed!

SrImate nigamAnta mahA deSikAya nama:

SrImat Azhagiya Singar tiruvadigaLE SaraNam

dAsan,

Oppiliappan Koil VaradAchAri Sadagopan

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SrIman Narayanan is the First Preceptor - Kanchi SrI Perarulalan





॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ श्रीमते निगमान्त महादेशिकाय नमः ॥



100 GEMS FROM SRIMAD RAHASYA TRAYA SAARAM



PREAMBLE

Sriman Narayana is the first preceptor in our Visishtadvaita philosophy. The unique lineage of our Sampradaya has continued unbroken till date (and will continue in the future!). There have been many preceptors, viz. Sriman Nathamunigal, Sri Alavandar, Sri Ramanuja, who have enriched our glorious Sampradaya by their works and also numerous other kanyakaryams.

Swami Desika, who adorns the lineage down the line, is non-pareil in that, he strode like a colossus in the field of our Sampradaya works be it philosophical, dramatics, commentaries, poems, esoterics, sthouthras or Tamil paasurams. He has authored 28 Stotras, 4 kaavyas, an allegorical drama, around 15 Vedanta granthas, 8 commentaries, 32 Rahasya Granthas and 24 Tamil Prabandhams.

Swami Desika was the one who established Sri Ramanuja Darsanam on a firm footing and cleared the misconceptions and controversies through his works. He has presented to us the whole framework of Saranaagathi in a structured way i.e specific answers to what, why, who, where and how. This is the ultimate gift to mankind which cannot be upstaged even by the Lord. It would not be





irreverent to say that there has been no preceptor like Swami Desika nor will there ever be, who has defined, explained, illustrated and justified Saranaagathi in such a plausible way.

His magnum-opus, Srimath Rahasyathraya Saaram, is a veritable 'How-to' book on Saranaagathi. Hence, it is a 'must' for every Sri Vaishnava to learn Srimath Rahasyathraya Saaram under the tutelage of an Acharya at least after Saranaagathi if not before.

There are 32 chapters in Srimath Rahasyathraya saaram of which the first 12 talk about the three Tattvas in our philosophy and the method of surrender to the Lord, the pre-requisites, the actual process and so on; the next ten about Life after Saranaagathi; the next four are clarifications on the concept of Saranaagathi; the next three about the Three Manthras; two chapters about the Qualities of Preceptor and Disciple and the final chapter gives a bird's eye view of the whole Grantha.

In each chapter Swami Desika resorts to examples, analogies and upakhyaanams (short stories) to get across the basic concept of the chapter. His mastery in giving apt examples and analogies is something to be marvelled at. The masterpiece is studded with analogical gems aplenty. Let us study in this series 100 of these which would give a taste of what is in store for us when we learn the Grantha in the traditional way from an Acharya!

THE ONE HUNDRED GEMS

1. How the clouds absorb water from the sea and spill out rainwater to be useful to everyone (Guruparampara Saaram):

மேகங்கள் ஸமுத்ர நீரை வாங்கி ஸர்வோபஜீவ்யமான தண்ணீராக
உமிழுமாப்போலே

This is an analogy for the Azhwars. The Vedas and other Sasthras are likened





to the sea which is apt in two ways: 1) It is a huge body of water and too deep to explore - The Sasthras are innumerable and difficult to master; 2) Only those who are qualified can jump into the sea and get coral, fish etc. - the Sasthras are restricted to the first three Varnas and only they can obtain the Purusharthas (what is desired by them, viz. wealth, fame, Moksha etc.).

The clouds absorb the salty sea water; change it into sweet rainwater and the downpour is enjoyed by all irrespective of who they are. Similarly, the Azhwars absorbed the inner meaning of the Sasthras, couched them in easy verses of Tamil and sang their heart out so that the Ultimate Truth could be understood by everyone irrespective of the caste or creed.

The change from salt water to rainwater is denoted by the change of language. In those days, the use of Sanskrit was restricted to the upper echelons of the society. Just as rainwater can be stored and used for all purposes, the Divya Prabandhams of Azhwars can be learnt and recited repeatedly to get all our desires fulfilled.

2. How a parrot brought up in the hunter's abode talks (Upodhghaatha Adhikaaram):

வேடுவச்சேரியில் கிளி போலே

Swami Desika narrates the story of the Lost Prince who had got separated from his father (the King) during a hunting trip and equates him with the Jeevathma who subsisted in this world without knowing his entitlement to the perpetual vision of Sriman Narayana in Sri Vaikuntam. Here, Swami likens the prince to a parrot brought up in the hunter's abode. A pet parrot just repeats the words it has learnt in its current habitat, be they welcoming ones or violent ones.

Thus, a parrot brought up in the hermitage of sages, welcomes everyone, while the parrot in a hunter's dwelling utters threatening words, even if they are siblings. Just like a parrot which merely repeats the words without grasping





their meaning, the prince assumed the food habits, apparel and behavior of the hunters who brought him up in the jungles, as he did not know that he was of higher birth.

3. How the cow, out of affection, floods its new-born calf (Upodhghaatha Adhikaaram):

அன்று ஈன்ற கன்றுக்கு இரங்கிச் சுரக்கும் தேநுவைப் போலே

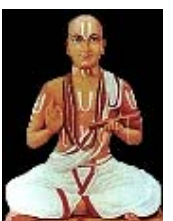
This is again an analogy for preceptors. The preceptors do not expect anything in return for themselves from their disciples. They are gratified if the Mumukshu (one who desires Moksha) realises his unique relationship with the Lord and adopts the means to obtain Him, viz Bhakthi Yoga or Saranaagathi. Just as the milk gushes out from the cow for a new-born calf, verses pour from the Acharyas' hearts through to the lips which enunciate the true nature of the three Thathtvas or realities.

Here, the interesting point to note is the affection the cow has towards its just-born calf. The cow displays enormous love and affection towards the calf by licking its body all over, nursing it and supporting it. This cannot be equated to any other love at any other time or place. Similarly, the preceptors' love for their disciples is so unsullied and pure, without expectation of anything in return, that they readily spill forth their knowledge in the form of verses for the benefit of mankind.

4. How the misplaced liking shown by the crown prince towards the chambermaids while languishing in prison, affects his prospects (Arthapanchaka Adhikaaram):

அபிஷேகத்திற்கு நாளிட்ட ராஜகுமாரனுக்குச் சிறையிலே எடுத்து
கைநீட்டின சேட்டிமார் பக்கலிலே கண்ணோட்டம் உன்டாமாப் போலே

Swami Desika gives a big list of material and not-so-material things which can





make us stray from the path of realisation and prevent us from attaining Moksha. For instance, if a prince who is the king-in-waiting has to spend some days in prison due to some misdemeanour, he should still keep up his position and behave accordingly. Instead if he eyes the chamber-maids therein, who are conscious of their place, it would reflect badly upon him. Further, his behaviour would mar his prospects of succeeding the King.

Similarly, we are also waiting to be crowned in the kingdom of Moksha and our place is reserved once we have adopted the necessary means. While we languish in this world, due to our past misdeeds (Karma) we should be mindful of the exalted position awaiting us and should not let ourselves be ensnared by the five senses and their pleasures. It would be a pity to lose sight of our goal by indulging ourselves in material pleasures which are fleeting by nature.

5. How there is no difference between persons who slipped in the first step and the 30th step (Arthapanchaka Adhikaaram):

முப்பத்திரண்டு அடியான துரவு தத்துவார் முன்னடியிலே விழுந்ததோடு
முப்பதாம் அடியிலே விழுந்ததோடு வாசியில்லாதாப் போலே

This is a very interesting concept put forth by Sri Swami. Supposing a person wants to jump across a well of 32 feet, it doesn't make any difference whether he slips up at the 1st step itself or the 30th. Either way, he would not get across the well and would fall into it. Now, this Samsara is a big well which has to be crossed to reach the Nithya Vibhuthi or the permanent abode of Sriman Narayana.

As the saying goes, there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. We could have won over our desires for wealth or fame but still there could be a pitfall waiting and all our previous efforts could come to nought. Then, we would be in the same boat as all those who have no knowledge of the three Thathvas or those who have not adopted an Upaya (means to attain Moksha) or those who have opted for wrong means etc.





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SrI and Narayana form a single Supreme Reality
Namperumal and SrI Kamalavalli thayar serthi - SrIrangam





There exists the real danger of losing our way till the final ascent and even then, of reaching a different destination. So, it is imperative upon us to be careful every step of the way, not to succumb to any temptations and let ourselves off-guard. We have to be constantly striving to act in such a way not to invoke the displeasure of the Lord.

6. How the sailor needs to know only the route he has to take and not the entire length and breadth of the sea (Thathva-thraya Chinthana Adhikaaram):

அபரிச்சேத்யமான கடலிலே படகோட்டுவார் வழிமுதலாக வேண்டுவன
தெளியுமாப் போலே

In this chapter Swami Desika has enunciated the three Realities — Chethana, Achethana and Iswara (the sentient, non-sentient and the super-sentient) and described the essence of all the three. While explaining the Iswara thathvam, Sri Swami expounds that it is only Sriman Narayana who is the Supreme Reality and sets out to describe his nature, various attributes, form, wealth, exploits, etc.

Swami then establishes that Goddess Sri and Narayana together make up the single Reality of Iswara and the Divine Couple have divided between themselves the divine actions such as recommendation for salvation (Purushakaaram) and punishment. Swami Desika avers that Sri and Narayana do not form two Realities but a single Supreme Reality. This is corroborated by all the Saasthras and the works of our preceptors. So it is needless to question the veracity of the same. Citing illustrations, he opines that in such extremely profound matters, it is better to know only what we need to for the purpose of deliverance rather than confounding ourselves with matters which are beyond our scope.

So, just as the sailor who ventures into the sea need not and cannot know fully the immeasurable water body, just learns about a safe route to reach the shore across, we need to accept unquestioningly the philosophy as professed by our





preceptors.

7. How a person who is fortunate enough to obtain food products without personally cultivating them need not worry about cultivation (tattva-traya Chinthana adhikaaram):

க்ருஷி பண்ணாதே உண்ண விரகுடையவன் க்ருஷி சிந்தையை விடுமாப் போலே

Sri Swami herein states a fact which is heartily felt by all of us. it is extremely difficult to master the various philosophical works which are immensely complex and tend to confuse the intellect. So, one must approach an ideal preceptor and learn and clearly understand only those concepts relating to the means to reach the Lord Supreme's abode and refrain from striving to acquire knowledge in various other Saasthras.

One who can buy the stuff from the cultivator/merchant, would not worry about the weather, availability of seeds for cultivation, etc. Similarly, our preceptors have already cultivated the rich land of our philosophy and the produce is available to us in a ready-to-use form and so we need not waste our time in knowing about unimportant things but concentrate on learning the essence of the Saasthras, namely, the proper means to attain the Lord.

8. How a person gets relieved of his sins after a dip in the river Ganga even if his intention was to assuage his thirst (Paradhevatha Paaramaarthya Adhikaaram):

விடாய்தீர்க் கங்காஸ்நாநம் பண்ணப் பாபம் போமாப் போலே

This is a particularly relevant analogy to most of us who cannot help but desire for material things. Even if we desire material things we should pray to Sriman Narayana for them and not other deities. Why?

People worship various deities for getting various things like wealth, fame, good





health, etc. and it may seem that these wishes are getting fulfilled immediately but it is Sriman Narayana who is the actual source as he is the Immortal Soul (Antharyaami) residing in the bodies of these deities. Further, these smaller Gods or Pretenders cannot give Moksha. But if one approaches Sriman Narayana without resorting to others like Siva or Brahma, he would be granted material wealth also and gradually made to embark upon the path of spiritual pursuit as the wealth granted by the Lord Himself is good-natured (Saathvik). This is because of the absolute mercy of the Lord who is pleased that the person came to Him even if it was only to get a petty wish fulfilled.

Just as the person who becomes pure after a dip in the Ganga irrespective of the fact that he fell into it unintentionally or he simply wanted to assuage his thirst, we get cured of our trivial desires and progressively opt for higher goals even while enjoying the material benefits bestowed on us by the Lord.

9. How the child princes of a smaller kingdom just have to repeat their nanny's words to get succour from the sovereign (Adhikaari Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):

தாதிமார் சொன்ன பாசுரத்தைச் சொல்லி ஸார்வபௌமனை சரண்புகும்
முக்தரான ஸாமந்தகுமாரர்களைப் போலே

Saranaagathi is mainly performed by two methods, namely, Ukthi Nishtai (repeating the manthras after the preceptor in front of the Archaavathara (Divine form of the Lord) and Acharya Nishtai (being included in the preceptor's Saranaagathi).

There are five pre-requisite qualities (Pancha Angas) for performing Saranaagathi which are:

Anukoolya Sankalpam — Pledging to do only those acts prescribed in the Saasthras as pleasing to the Lord;

Praathikoolya Varjanam — Averting to refrain from doing things which are forbidden in the Saasthras;





Maha Visvaasam — Unswerving belief that Sriman Narayana is the sole protector;

Gopthruthva Varanam — Explicit request to the Lord to accede Moksha; and

Kaarpanyam — Realisation of our haplessness, that is, that we are incapable of carrying out the difficult means (Bhakti Yoga) to attain Moksha.

Even a person who is not fully cognisant of these five components, can still perform Saranaagathi if he has the aptitude for it and clear understanding that only Sriman Narayana can protect him from being earth-bound again.

Just as the child princes of the conquered kingdom would repeat their nanny's words without fully understanding them to get succor from the conqueror, the disciple has to just repeat the utterances of the preceptor and surrender himself to the Lord, but with complete faith in salvation.

10. How a youngster gets alms from a wealthy well-wisher on uttering the words 'Bhavathi Bhikshaam Dehi' even if he is unaware of the etymology of the words (Adhikaari Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):

பத-வாக்யாதி-வ்ருத்தாந்தம் அறியாத பாலன் ஒருகால் "பவதி பிசுஷாம் தேஹி" என்றால் ஆட்யரான ஸத்துக்கள் அகத்திலே அபேக்ஷித-ஸித்தி உண்டாமாப்போலே

This is another analogy pertaining to Ukthi Nishtai which establishes its fruition firmly. One might wonder as to how words repeated blindly could convey the speaker's intention and beget a response but it is clearly proven even in everyday occurrences that a person need not be an expert in the construction of sentences to make himself understood.

A young man of poor means, if he finds himself in a wealthy well-wishers' house and utters the words "Bhavathi Bikshaam Dehi" without knowing about their order, structure, construction, etc. would still get alms immediately because





the person(s) to whom the words are spoken know(s) their meaning perfectly well. Srīman Narayana is waiting for us to surrender unto him. So, He is gratified by our Ukthi (utterance) even if we do not know its grammatical import and grants us the eternal kingdom of Sri Vaikuntam.

Since the nature of Lord's mercy is all-encompassing, there is no doubt about the redemption of even ignorant people like us through Ukthi Nishtai.

11. How the insects inhabiting the body of a lion are carried from one hill to another effortlessly when the lion jumps (Adhikaari Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):

ஒரு மலையில் நின்றும் ஒரு மலையிலே தாவும் ஸிம்ஹ சரீரத்தில்
ஜந்துக்களைப் போலே

This is an analogy with reference to Acharya Nishtai. Swami Desika declares fervently that there is no doubt about the fruition of Saranagathi done through Acharya Nishtai as it is stated in Sandilya Smruti thus:- "There could be doubts about the devotees of God attaining their goal but there is absolutely no doubt that the devotees of these devotees (Bhaaghavatha Bhaktas) would definitely get their hearts' desire".

The insects which live in the body of a lion need not make any effort to cross from one hill to another as they would be carried automatically when the lion jumps. Swami Desika states that this is an example given by Sri Mudhaliandaan, a nephew of Sri Ramanuja who was of the view that when Sri Ramanuja crossed the sea of Samsara, his direct disciples also traversed the same without much effort.

This holds good for all the Acharyas in our Sampradaya who perform Acharya Nishtai for their disciples.

12. How the silk cloth in which the gem is kept, has to be seen first before the gem can be seen (Upaya Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):





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The Lord resides as antaryami - Sri Malayappa Swami - Thirumala





உள்ளிருக்கிற ரத்நம் காண்கைக்குக் கிழிச்சீரை கண்டாற் போலே

Swami Desika gives a detailed description of the two Upayas, namely, Bhakthi Yoga and Prapathi in this chapter. Bhakthi Yoga has two components — Karma yoga and Gnana Yoga which lead to the realisation of one's own soul (Atma Saakshaatkaaram) before progressing further.

Karma Yoga is the process of performing one's duties as prescribed in the scriptures as would his birth and status (Varna and Asrama) warrant and specific rituals like thapas, japam, homam, yagnam, etc. without any desire for fruits. These duties and rituals differ from Varna to Varna and Asrama to Asrama and various combinations thereof. For instance, a bachelor Brahmin, a married Brahmin, an ascetic Brahmin, a bachelor Kshathriya, an ascetic Kshathriya... each has a separate set of duties to perform.

Gnana Yoga means continuous meditation of one's own soul with its unique aspects like atomness, oneness, blissfulness, etc. This would lead to the realisation of one's self which makes him eligible for continuing with the Bhakti Yoga. Self-realisation is a pre-requisite for Bhakti Yoga. It is in this context that Swami Desika gives the example that one has to see the silk cloth in which the gem is kept before the actual gem can be seen.

The Lord resides as Antharyaami in our soul and so the soul has to be experienced first before the Lord can be seen through our mind.

13. How the form of Bhakthi Yoga is similar to the flow of oil (Upaya Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):

தைல தாரை போலே

This is a beautiful analogy for Bhakthi Yoga. Bhakthi Yoga means uninterrupted and loving meditation upon the Lord who is Omniscient, Omnipotent and the Ultimate Independent Reality. This uninterrupted meditation upon the Lord's nature, form, attributes etc. is compared to pouring of oil and this has to be





practised by the Bhaktha till his last breath.

It is interesting to note that this uninterrupted flow of thought is compared to the flow of oil and not to the flow of water. There is a scientific principle involved here. When you pour water, even though it may seem to be a continuous flow, actually there is the presence of air bubbles which tend to disturb the flow. But oil, when poured, has an undisturbed down flow and hence it is held that the meditation upon Sriman Narayana should be free from disruption by other thoughts.

14. How a thirsty person rejoices upon seeing a pond (Upaya Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):

பெருவிடாய் பட்டவன் தடாகத்தைக் கண்டாற் போலே

This analogy is simple and self-explanatory. There are three stages in Bhakti Yoga — Para-bhakthi, Para-gnanam and Parama-bhakthi.

The affectionate meditation as given in the previous analogy is Para-bhakthi and the temporary realisation of the Lord's beautiful form in the mind is Para-gnanam.

Once this realisation has been achieved, the Bhaktha rejoices like a thirsty person would upon sighting a pond, his love for the Lord is increased manifold and he longs for the union with the Lord. He is unable to bear subsisting on the earth any longer. This is Parama-bhakthi and this would lead to Moksha without much ado.

15. How milk tastes sour for a person with defective bile (Parikara Vibhaaga Adhikaaram):

பித்த உபஹதனுக்குப் பால் கைக்குமாப் போலே

Swami Desika takes up two instances from Srimath Ramayana to demonstrate





the five components (Angas) needed for Prapathi (Ref. Analogy No. 9). The first one is Thrijata's Saranaagathi to Seetha Piraatti and the second is Vibheeshana's Saranaagathi to Sri Rama.

Vibheeshana advised his brother Ravana to entrust the abducted Seetha Piraatti back to Sri Rama which signified his good intentions. This constitutes Aanukoolya Sankalpam. But the advice irritated Ravana who was obsessed with desire. Just like a person with defective bile cannot appreciate the sweetness of milk, Ravana was blinded by his own evil desire and hence refused to pay heed to the good advice given by his brother. Furthermore, he was enraged and ordered for Vibeeshana to be expelled from his kingdom.

(Swami Desika's apt use of medical parlance is amazing! Is it any wonder that he was blessed with the title "Sarva Thanthra Swathanthra"?).

16. How those serving in the queen's quarters are treated indulgently by the king (Parikara Vibhaga Adhikaaram):

அந்தப்புர பரிஜந விஷயத்திற் போலே

Swami Desika, while establishing the fact that Prapathi is the means to obtain any end as desired by the Prapanna, lists five objections that might possibly arise and proceeds to rip into shreds every single one. The first one is — How could the Lord bear to tolerate our approach — we the sinners, who commit innumerable sins per second? This indeed seems to be remarkable but there is a simple explanation.

Since we surrender to the Piraatti first, we become the object of Her recommendation (Purushakaaram) to the Lord to forgive our sins. Hence we are treated leniently by the Lord just like the king who has a soft corner for those working in the queen's quarters and is tolerant towards their misdeeds. Taking it further, even though the Lord is Omniscient, He is said to be ignorant of our sins! Such is the glory of Piraatti's recommendation. How could He refuse to pay heed to Piratti's words? So we can boldly approach Him for surrender even





though we are blatantly undeserving of his mercy.

17. How a great emperor is easily satisfied by a small offering (Parikara Vibhaga Adhikaaram):

அல்ப வ்யாஜ்த்தாலே வசீகார்யனான் ஸுஜன ஸார்வபௌமனைப்
போலே

This analogy pertains to the third objection, that is, how the Lord, who is complete in Himself, without wanting for anything, could be wooed by the simple act of Prapathi? It is true that there is nothing unattainable for Him and hence He does not need any favours from anyone.

But, just like an amiable emperor who is pleased with any small offering from his subjects, the Lord is gratified that we performed the simple act of Prapathi which is the only excuse needed for Him to shower his blessings upon us. Here the emphasis is on the amiability of the emperor since if he were a cruel one, there is no question of him being pleased by humble offerings. Sriman Narayana's quality of Mercy is the only shelter for us which transforms the simple act of Prapathi into a great deed befitting the fruit thereof, namely Moksha.

18. How the king while feeding his son feeds the pet parrot alongside (Parikara Vibhaga Adhikaaram):

குமாரனோடு ஒக்க திரியக்கான கிளிக்குப் பாலுட்டும் கணக்கிலே

The fifth objection is how the Supreme Lord (who is discerning), could grant the wishes of all Prapannas irrespective of their qualifications in terms of birth, knowledge etc.? The answer is poignant. The Lord feels that He is obliging Himself by helping His beloved Prapannas obtain their desire. When the beneficiary is self, where is the question of looking into the antecedents of the seekers? Swami Desika cites the anecdote from Srimeeth Ramayana, wherein it





is stated that when Sri Rama left Ayodhya for Sri Vaikuntam he took all the living things of Ayodhya with him be they animals, plants or trees!

The analogy here is how the king while feeding his son with sweet, nourishing milk, extends the same privilege to a mere bird, the pet parrot. Similarly, while granting Moksha, Sriman Narayana does not differentiate between a highly qualified, scholarly Brahmin and an ignorant animal as long as they are Prapannas!

19. How a citizen offers his belongings to the king even though everything automatically belongs to the king (Saanga Prapadhana Adhikaaram):

தன்னுடைய தீரவ்யத்தை ராஜாவுக்கு உபஹாரமாகக் கொடுப்பாரைப்
போலே

This analogy has to be studied carefully since it could be misleading otherwise. While the citizen need not necessarily feel or realise that what he offers to the king is the king's property itself, the person who is performing prapathi has to mandatorily realise that the soul is the property of the Lord.

Some people were of the view that Sri Alavandhaar regretted his Prapathi and thus he spoke in his Sthotra Rathnam (53) that "when I know I and mine are Yours how and with what can I surrender unto You?"

Swami Desika refutes this surmise strongly and says that the inner meaning of Sri Alavandhaar's sloka is that, if a person proceeds to offer his soul to the Lord without fully understanding its nature and thinking of it as his own, then he is not absolved from the crime of soul-theft. To explain it more clearly, we are all guilty of theft if we think that our soul belongs to us instead of the Lord. If we perform Prapathi with this misconception, it will not be effective. It is like a person offering his land, house etc., to the king, who is actually the real owner of all the property in his kingdom.

So, the point is, a Prapanna should reflect and realise before Prapathi that he is





returning the property (the soul) that he had misappropriated, to the rightful owner (the Lord).



The Lord is the rightful owner of the soul !
(Thirukkudanthai SrI Saarangapaani Perumal with ubhaya nacchimars)

20. How piercing an object with an arrow is accomplished in one second by an expert archer (Saanga Prapadhana Adhikaaram):

அனேக வ்யாபார ஸாத்யமான தாநுஷ்கனுடைய லக்ஷ்ய வேதார்தமான
பாண மோக்ஷம் க்ஷண க்ருத்யமாகிறாப் போலே



One may wonder as to how all the components of Prapathi and the actual performance could be deemed to be done in one second as portrayed in the Sasthras.

To clear this doubt, Swami Desika proffers a fitting analogy. Piercing an object with an arrow involves various steps like fixing up the object, determining the point of piercing, testing the bowstring, choosing the arrow, taking aim, etc. But an experienced archer can do it all in a trice, courtesy perfection attained through years of practice. Similarly, the actual Prapathi is completed in a second, while the pre-requisites and the five components (Angas) have been included in the single thought process as encompassed in the three Manthras for performing Prapathi.

21. How even an inept person finds a treasure effortlessly (Kruthakruthya Adhikaaram):

அகிஞ்சநன் அயத்நமாக மஹாநிதியைப் பெறுமாப் போலே

Once a person has performed Prapathi, he has fulfilled all his obligations and hence there is nothing left for him to do in the sphere of attainment of Moksha. He is called "Kruthakruthyan"- (meaning "one who has done what he had to do"). He can spend the remaining years in the earth without any fear or fervour, imposing his faith on Lord Krishna's words in the Charama Sloka - "Maa Sucha:" (do not worry). Sriman Narayana is the Ultimate Constant and Omnipotent and once He has taken a Prapanna into His fold, (which he does during Prapathi itself) the Prapanna can rest assured of his incredible fortune for the simple act of his done once.

It so happens that sometimes an inept person, without any effort, finds a treasure which is unattainable to others. Similarly, a Prapanna, who has renounced other fruits except Moksha and discarded other means of attaining of God, like Bhakti Yoga and reposed his faith in the Lord through Prapathi, gains the supreme fortune of reaching Sri Vaikuntam once he leaves the earth.





22. How when the king's servants anoint garlands and jewels over his shirt, they know it is for the king's pleasure and has nothing to do with the shirt (Kruthakruthya Adhikaaram):

ராஜஸேவகர் ராஜாவுக்குச் சட்டைமேலே மாலையும் ஆபரணத்தையும்
இட்டாலும், சட்டையில் துவக்கற்று ராஜாவின் ப்ரீதியே
ப்ரயோஜனமாகத் தெளிந்திருக்குமாப் போலே

This is a wonderful analogy used in a lighter vein by Swami Desika, which answers a pertinent question that could arise in the minds of all Prapannas.

There is an oft-repeated query in the question-answer section of religious journals in our Sampradaya - "I have performed Prapathi as I have realised that Sriman Narayana is the Supreme Reality. So, is it correct that I pray to other Gods during my daily and routine ablutions, like Sandhyavandhanam and Amavasya Tharpanam, etc., as the Manthras seem to be in praise of other Gods?"

Swami Desika explains thus: When a servant adorns his master with garlands and jewels he has to necessarily anoint them over his shirt but he knows fully well that the adornment is not for the shirt but for the pleasure of the king! The lesser Gods or pretenders to Godliness are but bodies to Sriman Narayana.

Lord Krishna Himself declared thus in the Bhagavath Gita - "அஹம் ஹி ஸர்வ
யஜ்நாநாம் போக்த ச ப்ரபு :ப்ரபு: ஏவ ச" ("I am the one who is worshipped in
all Yajnaas"). So, all rituals are routed ultimately to Sriman Narayana only.

23. How the Lord's dictum is understood by the Mukthas (Kruthakruthya Adhikaaram):

ப்ரத்யக்ஷ-விதித-பரமபுருஷ அபிப்ராயரான் முக்தரைப் போலே





This is in continuation of the previous analogy. The whole edifice of our Sampradaya is built upon Sarira-Sariri bhava (i.e. our souls are bodies to Sriman Narayana's Soul). So, any paeans to other Gods would ultimately end up with Sriman Narayana since they are also Jivas (sentients) just like us.

Sage Jaimini is of the view that all words if split up phonetically and studied, would be found to be referring to Sriman Narayana only. So, a person has to perform all the rituals and actions as laid down in the Saasthras with the prescribed Manthras. He need not concern himself with the presumed import as it is Sriman Narayana who is ultimately denoted by all the Manthras.

But a word of caution here: This principle holds good only for those rituals and actions as laid down in the Saasthras, since only they enlighten us about the Lord's dictum. We cannot extend it so as to apply to all our other actions or those which are outside the scope of the Saasthras. We who live on the earth have to follow the Holy Scriptures which represent the Lord's dictum as we cannot receive it directly like the Mukthas (those who reside in Sri Vaikuntam). But we are no less fortunate in that we have received it through the Saasthras as He Himself has stated "ச்ருதி ஸ்ம்ருதிர் மம ஏவ ஆஜ்நா" (the Vedas and Smruthis are only My orders).

24. How a person who has sold a major part of his native land and retained a small portion for sentimental reasons, feels towards his property (Utharakruthya Adhikaaram):

பழந்திருவிளையாட்டத்திலே சிறிதிடத்தை அடைத்துக் கொண்டிருப்
பாரைப் போலே

Here Swami Desika delineates how a Prapanna should view his stay on this earth - Once a person has realised his true nature and performed Prapatti, his remaining sojourn on the Earth is as per the wish of the Lord and he has to be detached from all the happenings.





A person may have sold off a major portion of his inherited land but might have retained/rented out a small portion for himself for sustenance. He would display a sort of detached attachment towards his property - it serves him currently as means of livelihood but he is no longer the owner of it all. Similarly, a Prapanna cannot renounce everything and live like an ascetic as he has to make his livelihood till his end, and has to worship the Lord everyday with some offerings.

However, he should have no material desires and so shouldn't consider anything as entirely his. He should spend his time in the study of scriptures, contemplation of the Lord's nature, form, qualities, etc. and submit all his actions (karmas) for the pleasure of the Lord.

25. How a dam should be built in time to control sudden floods (Utharakruthya Adhikaaram):

வருகிற நீருக்கு அணை கோலும் கணக்கிலே

This analogy and the next one are in answer to the question of how a Prapanna should spend the rest of his life and what his thoughts should be. In effect, it is an instruction on the "Art of Living".

We see that some people, who have performed Prapathi at an advanced age, lament that they wasted so many years of their life and they have little time left to experience the Lord's mercy. Be that as it may, they should spend their life meditating upon the Lord's mercy in gratitude of His acceptance now, and in anticipation of the wonderful fortune awaiting them. They should not lose sight of their obligations arising as per their Varna and Asrama and strive to fulfil them.

A dam should be built before the floods arrive and there is no point in building it once the floods have subsided after causing the havoc. Similarly, a Prapanna should not consider himself ineligible to approach the Lord in view of his past deeds, distance himself and drift away. He should not lose his perspective and





has to perform his duties (kainkaryams) as per the Lord's dictum explicitly laid down in the Saasthras.

26. How one has to follow the rules of the game even when it is played for fun (Utharakruthya Adhikaaram):

அக்கரையிலே அபிமத தேசத்துக்குப் போக ஓடம் பார்த்திருப்பார், நினைத்த போது விடவொண்ணாத பண்பந்த த்யூதத்தில் இழியாதே, வேண்டின மட்டிலே தலைக்கட்டுகைக்கு ஈடான விஹார த்யூதத்திலே இழிந்தாலும், த்யூத சாஸ்த்ரத்தின் படியே அடிதப்பாதே கருவி வைக்குமாப் போலே

This is a fantastic analogy and Swami Desika paints a beautiful word-picture of the way Prapannas have to conduct themselves after Prapathi. It is a given that Prapannas have to do Kainkaryams without aspiring for anything as the Kainkaryams themselves are the end rather than the means but it is extremely important to bear in mind that the Kainkaryams should be done according to the Saasthras only. Further they should be undertaken relishingly and not as cumbersome duty.

For example, some people are sitting on the banks of the river awaiting the ferry to arrive from the other side and to while away the time, indulge in a game of cards or chess. If they were playing for money, they would not be able to quit as and when the boat arrives. So, they would ideally be playing for fun without stakes. Still, can they play mindlessly and in a haphazard manner? No. They would still have to comply with the rules of the game.

Similarly, Prapannas have a reserved place in Vaikuntam, across the Viraja River and they are awaiting the day of the Lord's Will for them to cross the ocean of Samsara. However, as long as their earthly sojourn is not ended, they have to play by the rules of the game, i.e., follow the path shown by the Saasthras.





That way, there will not be any delay once the day of reckoning approaches unlike the case wherein people do Kainkaryams to the Lord to get material things (In which case, the Karmas have to be continued till their fruition, like the game with stakes).

27. How a healthy person with a balanced diet enjoys the sweetness of milk much more than a person with ill-health who has been advised to drink it for medicinal purposes (Utharakruthya Adhikaaram):

பித்த பரிஹாரார்த்தமாக க்ஷீரஸேவை பண்ணுவாரைப் போலன்றிக்கே
அயத்த லப்தமான ஒளஷதத்தாலே அவிலம்பிதமாக ஆரோக்யம்
பெற்றவர்கள் பால் வார்த்து உண்ணுமாப் போலே

This analogy is for the second part of the previous concept, namely, the need to do the Kainkaryams with no other objective but to seek the pleasure of the Lord. The Saasthras have laid down the Kainkaryams that are to be submitted to the Lord as per the time and place and the Prapannas are bound by them.

These are not to be looked upon as entailments but as opportunities to serve the Lord in the way He desires. When one performs the Kainkaryams without seeking anything from the Lord, he is much more likely to enjoy them than the one who does them expecting specific rewards.

28. How the abode of king-in-waiting is illuminated the night before the crowning (Utharakruthya Adhikaaram):

அபிஷேகம் பண்ணப் போகிற ராஜகுமாரனுக்கு ராத்ரியில் விளக்கேற்றி
வைக்குமாப் போலே

If a prince were to be crowned as the king the next day, then, his palace would be lit up with extravagant lamps and it will be all glow and radiance the previous night. Similarly, for Prapannas, the world is the dark place of Samsara and their





Acharyas are the ones who with their luminous knowledge dispelled the darkness.

The crowning for the kingdom of Moksha is to take place in the future and till that time, one has to repeatedly acknowledge with gratitude the mercy of one's Acharya who is the sole reason for his good fortune. The Acharyan can never be repaid by any means. The least we can and must do is to serve our Acharyan with our mind, body, heart and soul.

29. How the king feels if his son is feted (Purusharthakaashta Adhikaaram):

ராஜாவுக்கு ராஜகுமார உபலாலநம் போலே

This chapter of Purushartha kaashtaadhikaaram is devoted by Swami Desika to emphasise that Bhagavathas are more important than Bhagwan Himself and hence for our Kainkaryams to be complete, they should be submitted to Bhagavathas also. In short, the cornerstone of Kainkaryam to the Lord is Bhagavatha Kainkaryam.

Since Bhagavathas are close to his Heart, there is no contradiction of terms in that we are not paying obeisance to any other entity but to that of the Lord Himself. Just as the king is overjoyed to see his son being feted by his servants, and watches with pride and indulgence, Sriman Narayana is extremely pleased if we do service to the Bhagavathas.

30. How the king who receives many garlands and gifts distributes them to his servants and pets (Purusharthakaashta Adhikaaram):

ஸ்வதந்த்ரனாய் ஸ்வச்சந்த லீலனான ராஜா, தான் பூண்ட
ஆபரணத்தையும் இட்ட மாலையையும், அடியார்களுடையவும் ஆனை
குதிரைகளுடையவும் கழுத்திலே இடுமாப் போலே

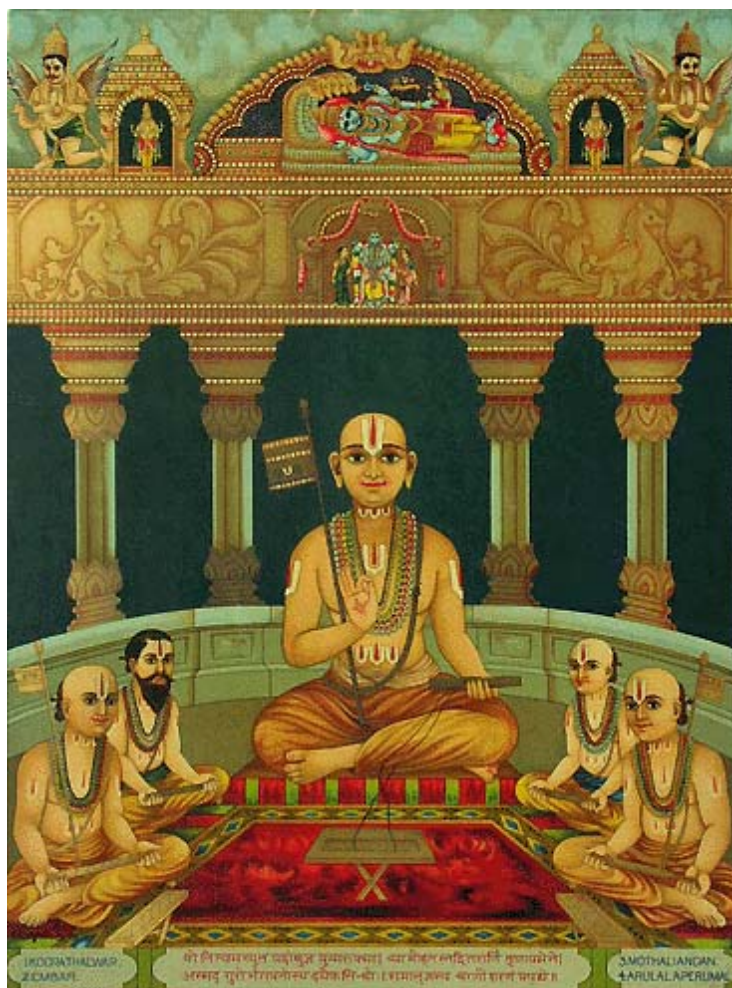
One might wonder as to how a Prapanna can accept another person albeit a





Bhagavatha as his Master when he has already sworn his allegiance to the Lord alone. It is not only the Will of the Lord that we should treat other Bhagavathas as our Masters but they are in fact our Masters in that they are the soul of the Lord Himself. ("Jnani tu atmaiva me matham" - I deem Jnani (the knowledgeable) to be Myself - Bhagavath Gita 7.18).

Since Sriman Narayana is our Master, He can use us in any manner He desires and he can subject us to other Masters too. Just as the King, who has received many garlands, gifts, etc., magnanimously distributes them to his servants and pets, the Lord ordains that a Bhagavatha be the Master of another and His Will prevails as He is the Absolute Master. To draw a contemporary parallel, we see that politicians distribute the Ponnadais (shawls) given to them to his underlings



Bhagavad Ramanujacharya





31. How a person rejoices upon seeing well-wishers, how he is apprehensive of his enemies and is indifferent towards others (Saasthreeya Niyamana Adhikaaram):

அனுகூலரைக் கண்டால் சந்தந குஸுமாதிகளைப் போலவும், நிலவு தென்றல் போலவும், அபிமத விஷயங்கள் போலவும் உகந்து வர்த்திப்பான். ப்ரதிகூலரைக் கண்டால் ஸர்ப்பாக்ரிகளைக் கண்டாற்போலே வெருவி வர்த்திப்பான். அநுபயரை கண்டால் காஷ்ட-லோஷ்டாதிகளைக் கண்டாற்போலே த்ருணவத்கரித்து வர்த்திப்பான்.

In this chapter, Swami Desika teaches us the 'Art of Living' as per Sri Ramanuja's philosophy. He reproduces verbatim Sri Bhashyakaara's final words before leaving for Sri Vaikunta. "A Prapanna has to spend his life learning and teaching Sri Bashyam, Divya Prabhandam, doing temple Kainkaryams, meditating upon Dhvaya Manthra, etc. as far as his capabilities would permit."

He will come across three types of people during his everyday life; namely, Bhagavathas/well-wishers (Sri Vaishnavas), those who hate God and those who don't fall into either of these categories. How does one behave towards them?

Upon seeing Bhagavathas he should rejoice like he is experiencing a soothing sandal paste, fragrant flowers, soft moonlight, cool breeze, etc. The second category of people warrant fear like serpents or wild animals. He should be indifferent towards ignorant people who form the third category, as one would be upon noticing pebbles or small sticks in the pathway. If these people show signs of interest, he might teach them the Concepts of Reality. If not, he should always be patient towards them and pity them reflecting upon what they are missing out on. (This can be taken as a cue as to how a Prapanna should conduct himself towards relatives and friends).

32. How an emperor would be furious if his son is insulted in his presence





(Saasthreeya Niyamana Adhikaaram):

ஸார்வபௌமனாய் இருப்பானொரு ராஜாவினுடைய புத்திரனை
ராஜஸந்நிதியிலே பரிபவித்தால் ராஜா வெறுக்குமாப் போலே

Now, Swami Desika explains the consequences vide three interesting analogies (starting with this one) if the three categories of people are not treated appropriately as prescribed above.

If Bhagavathas are ill-treated, the Lord becomes furious as they are His favourite children. So, if a Prapanna harms Bhagavathas for any reason whatsoever, he would incur the wrath of the Lord as surely as would one who insults the prince in the presence of the emperor.

33. How an emperor would feel compromised if his wife were to beg from others (Saasthreeya Niyamana Adhikaaram):

ராஜா ஸார்வபௌமனாயிருக்க ராஜமஹிஷி க்ஷுத்ரஜந்துக்கள்
பக்கலிலே மடிப்பிச்சை புக்கால், ராஜாவுக்கு அவத்யமாய், அத்தாலே
அவளை அவன் வெறுக்குமாப் போலே

If for any material reason, a Prapanna serves a person who hates God, it is similar to an emperor's wife begging lowly commoners, which would seriously compromise the position of the emperor. Wouldn't he hate his wife then?

Similarly, a Prapanna is like a Royal Consort and has to behave in a befitting manner. When he has The Lord on his side why would he need mere mortals or even other smaller deities? It would be viewed by the Lord with total disfavour if the Prapanna were to switch loyalties.

34. How an ignorant person cannot differentiate between a gem and a coloured stone (Saasthreeya Niyamana Adhikaaram):





ரத்நத்துக்கும் பாஷாணத்துக்கும் வாசியறியாதாப் போலே

If a Prapanna has to serve an ignorant person immersed in worldly pleasures, the Lord would conclude that the knowledge which made him perform Prapathi was not followed through and he would be deemed as an incompetent person who cannot differentiate between a gem and an ordinary stone. Irrespective of their status in the society, Bhagavathas are the ones to be respected and served by the Prapanna.

35. How a person is let off with a thorn bite instead of a spear bite (Aparadha Parihaara Adhikaaram):

வேலிட்டுப் பாயவெண்டுமது முள்ளிட்டுப் பாய்ந்து கழியு'மென்கிற
கணக்கிலே

In this chapter, Swami Desika enumerates the things to be done by the Prapanna to right the wrongs that may possibly have been committed by him. It is comforting to note that through this analogy, the Acharya first assures us that we would never be punished — deservingly — once we have been accepted through Prapathi.

Like the king who hands out differing punishments to various offenders taking into account their physical capabilities, work place, relationship to him, etc., the Lord, with his inexhaustible quality of mercy, gives us a small punishment disproportionate to the nature of our offence — say a prick with a thorn instead of a plunge of the spear. A blind or lame person, a person who works in the queen's boudoir, a servant who carries the royal flag, etc. are dealt with leniently by the king and their crimes are pardoned with whipping, suspension, ex-communication, etc. as the case may warrant, instead of capital punishment.

So, if it appears that a Prapanna is suffering from certain misfortunes during his life, it is only to save him from worse and to prevent him from committing further offences.





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A prapanna reaches SrI Vaikuntam at the end of his life!





36. How it is only a matter of time before trees injected with asafoetida fade away (Aparaadha Parihaara Adhikaaram):

பெருங்காயம் வைத்த மரங்களுக்கு ஸ்தலாதி விசேஷங்களாலே
வாட்டத்துக்குக் கால தாரதம்யம் உள்ள மாத்ரம்

This analogy is particularly interesting as it comes with a gardening tip! We saw that the Prapannas get small punishments disproportionate to the sins they commit. They too accrue only in case of dire offences which were not regretted and atoned. The sins that were committed unwittingly do not count as sins at all. Even those that were committed with intent are pardoned if they were occasioned by unavoidable or mitigating circumstances. There is no cause for concern regarding fruition of Prapathi even in the case of deliberate offences which were not atoned.

Swami Desika assures us that these are not powerful enough to stop us from reaching our Ultimate Destination (Sri Vaikunta). Just like the trees injected with asafoetida die sooner or later, the escape from the clutches of Samsara is a given thing, the difference being only the time of departure for the Prapannas depending upon their destiny.

37. How when the personal maid to the queen loses her job she loses much more (Aparaadha Parihaara Adhikaaram):

ஸைரந்த்ரிகைக்கு ஸேவை தப்பின போது தாதாத்விகமான
பரிமளாதிகளையும் இழந்து பயாநுபவமும் உண்டாமாப் போலே

If a Prapanna is a famous person who influences people, then he has to atone for his sins publicly and not in the sly so as to not embolden others to commit offences. If he does not atone, it harms him in two ways. The Lord is displeased that he committed the sin and worse, he did not try to atone for it thereby signaling that he is ready to take punishment which is against the Saasthras.





A personal maid to the queen may try out perfumes, sandal paste and other beauty products etc. (officially) which are meant for the queen. But, if she loses her job, she loses these perks and fears the wrath of the queen too. Just like her two-fold loss, a Prapanna who commits an offence loses out on incurring the pleasure of the Lord and furthermore incurs His displeasure.

38. How there is an intrinsic difference between particular beings even if they belong to the same species (Aparaadha Parihaara Adhikaaram):

பகவத் பரிக்ரஹுமான் கோ-கோபஜாதிகளுடையவும் துளஸீ-
சம்பகாதிகளுடையவும் கோமய-ம்ருகமாதாதிகளுடையவும் வைஷ்ணவம்
போலே

The most important offence that has to be steered clear of by the Prapannas is Bhagavatha Apacharam - sin against Sriman Narayana's devotees. A Prapanna might be pardoned if he insults the Lord Himself but he would not be forgiven if he mistreats a Bhagavatha.

A Prapanna is in the same position as Sages Parasara, Vyasa, Suka, Sounaka, etc. insofar as his acceptance in Sri Vaikunta is considered, irrespective of the status as regards knowledge, qualities, creed, etc. However, just like the cow, basil leaf and cow-urine are considered sacred and superior to the buffalo, champak leaf and musk respectively, even though they belong to the same species, differences do exist among the Bhagavathas based upon their Varna and Asrama.

Hence, while it is imperative not to be offensive to a Bhagavatha, it also would not do to cross the boundaries and embrace proscribed actions in the name of honoring a Bhagavatha.

39. How a person trembles upon being caught in the jaws of death (Aparaadha Parihaara Adhikaaram):





மருத்யுவின் கடைவாயிலே அகப்பட்டாற் போலே

This is a simple analogy which denotes that a Prapanna should treat a sin against or an offence to a Bhagavatha as being equal to be caught in the jaws of death and strive to avoid it at all costs. The only remedy available is to atone for it by profusely apologising to the Bhagavatha, regret whole-heartedly that it happened and take utmost care to see that it is not repeated.

It is to be clarified here that an offence against a Bhagavatha includes not only direct ones like physical abuse but even indirect ones like an evil thought against him, gossiping about him, using demeaning words, etc.

40. How two wooden pieces are pasted up so that not even a crack is seen (Aparaadha Parihaara Adhikaaram):

ஈர்த்த வாய் தெரியாமல் வஜ்ரலேப-கடிதமானாற் போலே

This is in continuation of the previous subject and Swami Desika quotes a beautiful incident from Srimath Ramayana to illustrate how two Bhagavathas should behave towards each other if an offence had been committed.

Lakshmana was furious with King Sugriva that he was immersed in experiencing to the full all pleasures that had been denied to him thus far and was not making any effort to start the search for Sita Piratti. He roared upon reaching the palace that the path which Vali had taken was not closed yet. Immediately, upon Hanuman's wise counsel, Sugriva sent Tharai first to moderate Lakshmana's anger and then came out himself and extended his heart-felt apologies. Lakshmana immediately apologised to Sugriva and said that he had been forced to use harsh words since he was disturbed by the out-pourings of the heart-broken Rama. Thus the mutual apologies cleared the air and the search was kick-started by a repentant Sugriva.

Similarly, two Bhagavathas who have grievances against each other should resolve it by openly and mutually apologising so that they remain esteemed.





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Lord offers chances to the offender to redeem himself - Vaduvur Sri Ramar





Just like two wooden pieces which have been stuck using good paste do not sport even a crack, the future relations between the two should ever remain cordial.

41. How a person might stumble even while treading carefully (Niryaana Adhikaaram):

அவஹிதராய் நடப்பார் இடறுமாப் போலே

In this chapter (Niryaana Adhikaaram), Swami Desika talks about the final journey of the Jivan from which there is no come-back. For a Prapanna there is no cause for any delay after getting rid of his mortal coil (the body) in reaching Sri Vaikuntam. Unless he has committed any of the two irrevocable sins of praying to another God or an offence against a Bhagavatha, he can be confident of brooking no further delay in reaching the Lord.

But, even in those cases, the Lord offers some chances to the offender to redeem himself. The offender could atone for his sins and resort to Sriman Narayana with absolute faith in which case the Lord forgives him. A Prapanna would not be selfish or self-centred like an atheist. However, just as it is possible that a person might stumble even while treading carefully, a Prapanna might also slip up, but the Lord would ensure that he corrects himself.

42. How a hand-cuff is restricting irrespective of whether it is made of iron or gold (Niryaana Adhikaaram):

பொன்னும் இரும்புமான விலங்குகள் போலே

This is a very important analogy as it could give rise to many a question in the minds of laypersons like us and the context has to be understood properly.

While listing the series of aids conveyed upon the departing soul by the Lord to facilitate his journey towards Paramapadam, Swami avers that both the virtues and sins of the Prapanna were cleared at the time of Prapatthi itself leaving out





only that portion of previous sins whose effect he has to experience in this birth alone. (This is called Praarabhda Karma).

Here, one may ask why virtues (Punyams) have to be cleared like sins as they are considered good in general parlance. Swami comes up with a striking parallel to ask if a golden hand-cuff is any less painful than an iron one. So, as far as keeping us in this earth to experience material things, virtues constitute as much good riddance as the sins. Both virtues and sins prevent us from escaping the clutches of Samsara and hence both have to be given up.

This might again give rise to another doubt whether a Prapanna should stop doing good deeds and rituals as it would add to his virtues. As per the Saasthras, any action/ritual done with Saathvika Thyagam (specific manthras which proclaim that it is being done for the pleasure of the Lord without expecting any benefit) would not result in the accrual of virtue that ought to be disposed of later.

43. How a King personally escorts the prince out of prison where he had been incarcerated for a previous offence, cutting off the shackles himself (Niryaana Adhikaaram):

சிறை கிடந்த ராஜகுமாரன் திறத்தில் ப்ரஸந்நனான ராஜா, விலங்கை
வெட்டிச் சிறைக்கூடத்தினின்றும் கொண்டு புறப்படுமாப் போலே

This analogy is to explain the process by which the Lord takes the soul out from the body so that it may continue its onward journey towards rebirth or Moksha.

It is interesting to note that the process of separation of the soul from the body is the same for everyone irrespective of whether they have adopted any means for Moksha or not. The difference is that the timing and manner of death, i.e., whether it is a good one as per Saasthras like Uththarayanam, Sukla Paksham, etc. or a gruesome accident, etc. does not matter for a Prapanna as he is assured of reaching the Lord while these things matter for others who are





on the course for re-birth.

Just like the king who previously had to put his son in prison for some offence, personally cuts the shackles and escorts him out, once the time has come for the Prapanna's release, Sriman Narayana cuts off the shackles that bind him to this earth and escorts the soul out of the body, in his Haardha (one who resides in the heart) manifestation.

44. How a King strolls with an adorable baby in hand with cute baby talk (Gathi Viseshha Adhikaaram):

வார்த்தை சொல்லக் கற்கிற முகவச்யனான ராஜகுமாரனை,
ராஜா எடுத்துக் கொண்டு உலவுமாப் போலே

This chapter (Gathi Viseshha Adhikaaram) explains the actual route taken by the Prapanna to reach Sri Vaikuntam and his experiences forthwith. This analogy is in continuation of the previous one. Here the king strolls with a baby who is just learning to speak.

Similarly, the Lord cuddles the Prapanna's soul which is embarking upon this journey for the first time. (This route to Paramapadam called Archiraadhi Gathi is to be meditated upon by all Prapannas so that they can visualise all the treats in store for them and hence desist from getting entangled in the day-to-day happenings of their worldly life).

45. How the boat is left behind once the river has been crossed (Gathi Viseshha Adhikaaram):

ஆறு கடக்கைக்கு பற்றின தெப்பம் போக விடுமாப் போலே

Once the Prapanna leaves his body behind after death, he is said to assume an unmanifest body just for the journey from this world to Paramapadam. This is called Sookshma Sareeram. But once he reaches Viraja River which separates this world from the other world, he drops off that body too.





Just as the boat is used only to cross the river and then is left behind, the function of the unmanifest body is to help the Prapanna cross over to the Viraja River.

46. How a person keeps counting the days remaining for his/her marriage (Gathi Visesha Adhikaaram):

வரப்போகிற கண்ணாலத்திற்கு நாள் எண்ணியிருக்குமாப் போலே

Swami Desika describes in detail, the final journey undertaken by the Jivathma to Sri Vaikuntam and the experiences that await him.

Every Prapanna has to meditate upon this route with all its glory. For a person practising Bhakti Yoga, the meditation upon this route called Archiradhi Gathi is a part of his Yogam itself. Even though it is not so for a Prapanna, just as the countdown begins in the mind of a person soon to be wed, it would be beneficial for him to keep thinking about the pleasures and experiences in store for him. If he does that, he would not be greatly affected by any untoward happenings in this world.

Swami cites the example of Sita Piraatti, whose heart was so filled with thoughts of Sri Rama that she felt she was near him even while she was in Asoka Vanam.

47. How a person partakes of milk with joy once his liver malfunction is cured (Paripoorna Brahmaanubhava Adhikaaram):

பித்தோபஹதனுக்குப் ப்ரதிகூலமான பால் பித்தம் சமித்தால் அநுகூலம் ஆமாப் போலே

As per the Saasthras, once a Jiva becomes a Muktha, (reaches Sri Vaikuntam) all substances are beneficial to him irrespective of their nature (Swaroopam).

Now, a question arises as to how this is possible. The Nature, Form and





Qualities of the Lord and the substances in Sri Vaikuntam are inarguably beneficial as they are purely saathvik (without any mix of Rajas or Thamas). Be that as it may, how can it apply for substances in this world made of all three qualities, namely, Sathva, Rajas and Thamas?

Just as a person who could not drink milk when he had a liver malfunction, partakes of the same with joy once his disease is cured, for a Muktha, there is no substance that is harmful by nature as all are creations of the Lord and He resides in every one of them. Once his Karma is destroyed, he can enjoy even those things that appear to be harmful.

48. How a prince, once released from prison and crowned, considers the prison his inheritance (Paripoorna Brahmaanubhava Adhikaaram):

ஸார்வபௌமனான பிதாவினுடைய சிறைக்கூடம், சிறை கிடக்கிற
ராஜகுமாரனுக்கு அப்போது ப்ரதிகூலமாய் ராஜா சிறைக்கூடத்தினின்றும்
புறப்படவிட்டு உகந்து துல்யபோகனாக வைத்த அளவில்,
சிறைக்கூடமான கோப்புக் குலையாதிருக்கச் செய்தே பிதாவின்
விபூதியென்று அனுகூலம் ஆமாப் போலே

This is another analogy to reinforce the concept explained in the previous one.

If a prince was imprisoned for some reason and was later released, his attitude towards the prison would undergo a sea change, even though the restrictive and punishing nature of the prison remains the same. The prison hated by the prince during incarceration would then be deemed to be a part of inheritance and hence he might even enjoy a cursory visit keeping his authority intact.

Similarly, for a Muktha, the Samsaara which was untenable before, is also the Lord's creation now and hence to be viewed as such. If the Lord wills, he might even visit it again, but without any material bondage.





49. How a hundred is included in thousand (Paripoorna Brahmaanubhava Adhikaaram):

ஸஹஸ்ரத்தில் சதாதிகளைப் போலே

Here, a very interesting concept is explained by Swami Desika. What exactly is Moksha? Some people say that there are four types of Moksha namely, Saaloka, Saaroopya, Saameepya and Saayujya.

Saaloka means just inhabiting the same place as the Lord. Saaroopya is getting a form similar to that of the Lord. Saameepya is residing very near to the Lord. Saayujya is actually experiencing the Lord.

Sri Swami clarifies that Saayujya is the actual Moksham and all others are included in this just as hundreds are included in a thousand. Saayujya happens in Sri Vaikuntam and so Saaloka and Saameepya are taken care of. A Muktha can take any body (Sareera) he wishes to and hence Saaroopa is also possible.

50. How a farmer's progeny enjoy the fruits of his labour without any effort on their part (Paripoorna Brahmaanubhava Adhikaaram):

க்ருஷி பண்ணின பிதாவும் நிர்வ்யாபரரான புத்ராதிகளும் க்ருஷி பலத்தைப் புஜிக்குமாப் போலே

Just as two people who enjoy a dessert share its sweetness, the Muktha experiences along with the Lord, His Nature, Form and Qualities and also all the substances in the world.

Even though there is equality in all respects (the Knowledge of the Muktha equals the Knowledge of the Lord), since the creation of the world can be undertaken only by Sriman Narayana, how can a Muktha be said to have an equal experience?

This is explained by Sri Swami with a beautiful example. Just as a farmer's





progeny, without any slogging, are able to enjoy the fruits of their father's hard work, Mukthas, as children of the Lord, get to enjoy the pleasure arising from creation even without actually participating in it.



SrI Perarulalan with ubhaya nacchimars - Kanchipuram

51. How a thing previously stolen and returned to the rightful owner was again stolen (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

களவுகொண்டு கொடுத்த த்ரவ்யத்தை மீளக் களவு கொண்டாற்போலே

A Prapanna should take care to avoid mixing with argumentative people who sound off for the sake of argument, avers Swami Desika.

Some people who like to hear the sound of their own voice, raise questions about the existence of God, how one can be sure that it is Sriman Narayana, whether the universe in fact exists, if so at whose mercy and so on and so





forth. They don't go by the verbal testimony of the scriptures. If a Prapanna lets himself be influenced by these people, then the validity of his Prapathi is lost and so it would amount to stealing a person's property after it was returned to its rightful owner. This is a much more serious crime than petty pilfering. Once we have surrendered our soul to the Lord in full faith, to be assailed by doubts later on at the behest of these spurious philosophers would amount to reclaiming the soul again as ours, which is unpardonable.

52. How the great emperor indulges court jesters and clowns, which besides being the norm, is also an act of kindness (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

கூனர் குறளரைக் கொண்டாடி ரக்ஷிக்கை நிரபேக்ஷரான ராஜாக்களுக்கு
லீலையுமாய் க்ருபாகார்யமுமாய்க் காணாநின்றோமிரே

The Brahman is said to be in an eternal state of bliss as per the Sasthras. But it contradicts with the fact that Lord Rama was seen to be anguished and inconsolable at the loss of Sita. Swami says that it was only an act of pretense (as in a play) to confuse the Raakshasaas into thinking that he was indeed a man and not God. All acts of the Lord during His Avatharas are for the pleasure of His devotees and to the detriment of their enemies. These are also a source of amusement for the Brahman.

A question arises as to how the world could be construed as the playground for the Lord? This is illustrated by the example of a King who watches over the court jesters and clowns as is the norm but also with kindness. The creation, sustenance and destruction of the world are a sport (Lila) for the Lord but it is also an act of kindness. (Only after creation can the Jivas adopt a means to reach the Lord while after destruction the Jivas are rescued from further sins).

53. How a gem regains its lustre after being cleaned thoroughly, only by God's will (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):





ரத்நத்துக்கு அழுக்கற்றால் வரும் ஸ்வாபாவிகமான ப்ரபா-விகாஸமும்
அதுக்கு அநுரூபமான பகவத்ஸங்கல்பமாத்ரத்தாலே ஆனாற்போலே

One might argue that if by Prapathi the obstacle to complete bliss is removed, then the Jivathma qualifies automatically for his blissful experience of the Lord, and there is no role for the Lord as such, and hence He cannot be called the Means to Himself.

This argument is invalid because of the fact that the Jivathma regains his natural blemishless state and qualifies for the Ultimate Blissful experience only due to God's will that it be so. If a gem regains its lustre after being cleaned thoroughly, it was God's will that the gem had lustre in the first place. Bhakthi and Prapathi are only means to please the Lord who is the prime means to Himself.

54. How it is enough for an infant to cry for being breast-fed by its mother and there is no question of paying her for it (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

தாய்முலைப்பாலுக்கு ஆர்த்தனாய் அழுதல் செய்யுமளவன்றிக்கே கூலி
கொடுப்பாரைப் போலே

This analogy has to be studied carefully as Swami Desika uses it to buttress up the argument of the opponent and then proceeds to smash it.

"As we are all children of God, why should we adopt a means at all to reach Him? It would be like an infant trying to pay its mother for breast-feeds instead of just crying for it." This is the argument put forth by those who are against Prapathi. Swami picks holes in this argument and says that in that case, there should have been no Samsara at all.

Because we have been children of God since time immemorial, He should have given Moksha to everyone. If the argument is that it is His prerogative to give Moksha to whomever He chooses, then he would be guilty of partiality and





caprice. The answer to the question raised by this analogy is answered more fully through the next analogy.

55. How the infant has to actually drink its mother's milk to assuage its hunger (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

தாய்முலைப்பால் போலே வருகிற ஈச்வர ப்ரஸாதத்துக்கும்
ஸ்தநந்தயனுடைய முலையுண்கிற வ்யாபாரம் போலே

This is in continuation of the theme from the previous analogy. A mother's milk is always readily available to an infant. But the infant has to actually reach for the breast and drink the milk to have its hunger pangs relieved.

Similarly, Sriman Narayana is always there for us but we have to desire Him and surrender unto Him to reach Him. This does not take away the Lord's role as the Primary Means or Siddhopaaya.

56. How there is natural effulgence in both the sun and its rays (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

பாஸ்கரனுக்கும் ப்ரபைக்கும் ஸ்வதஸித்தமான தேஜஸ்த்வம் போலே

Swami Desika emphasises that both Sri and Narayana are the Upaaya or means to attain Sri Vaikuntam. There is no room for argument in this regard.

Some people might question that since in our philosophy the Upaaya or means is said to be one how can two individuals make up one Upaaya?

Swami answers thus: Just as the Lord's beautiful form and his innumerable attributes qualify him, Piraatti also qualifies Him and hence there is no contradiction in saying that Sriman Narayana is the only Upaaya. However, just as both the sun and its rays have their own natural effulgence (even though they cannot be differentiated by us) both Perumal and Piraatti have their own natural attributes too and complement each other to save us from Samsaara.





57. How the offerings in some Yagnas are meant for two Gods (Siddhopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

ஹவீர்விசேஷங்களிலே அக்நிவிஷ்ணு ப்ரப்ருதிகளைப் போலே

This is in continuation of the previous analogy. A question arises that if Sri is qualifier to the Lord then how could she be the Absolute Reality herself? Our Purvaachaaryas have held that the ownership of the world rests in both Sri and Narayana. Both are the Material Cause, Primordial Cause & Supreme Reality. The Duality is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. This can be easily understood by the example of husband and wife holding property together.

To give a more scriptural example, Swami shows that in some Yagnas the offerings are meant for two Gods irrespective of their position vis-a-vis each other. (As per the Vedas, in a Yagna called Agnirvaishnavam, the 11 cups of offerings are meant for both Agni and Vishnu even though Agni himself is a body to Sri Vishnu).

Similarly, the subservience inherent in the position of a wife does not hamper Piraatti's right to be the Acceptor of our Saranaagathi along with the Lord. (The Saranaagathi itself is a Yagna with our soul being the offering as per the scriptures).

58. How some set of Vedic laws are applicable to everyone (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

வைதிகங்களான ஸத்ய வசநாதிகள் போலே

As we saw in the previous analogy, Prapathi is also considered a Yagna in the Vedas with our soul being the offering. Since the privilege of conducting the Yagnas is restricted to certain people, how can everyone perform Prapathi?

Here, Swami Desika imparts many testimonies from various religious texts to

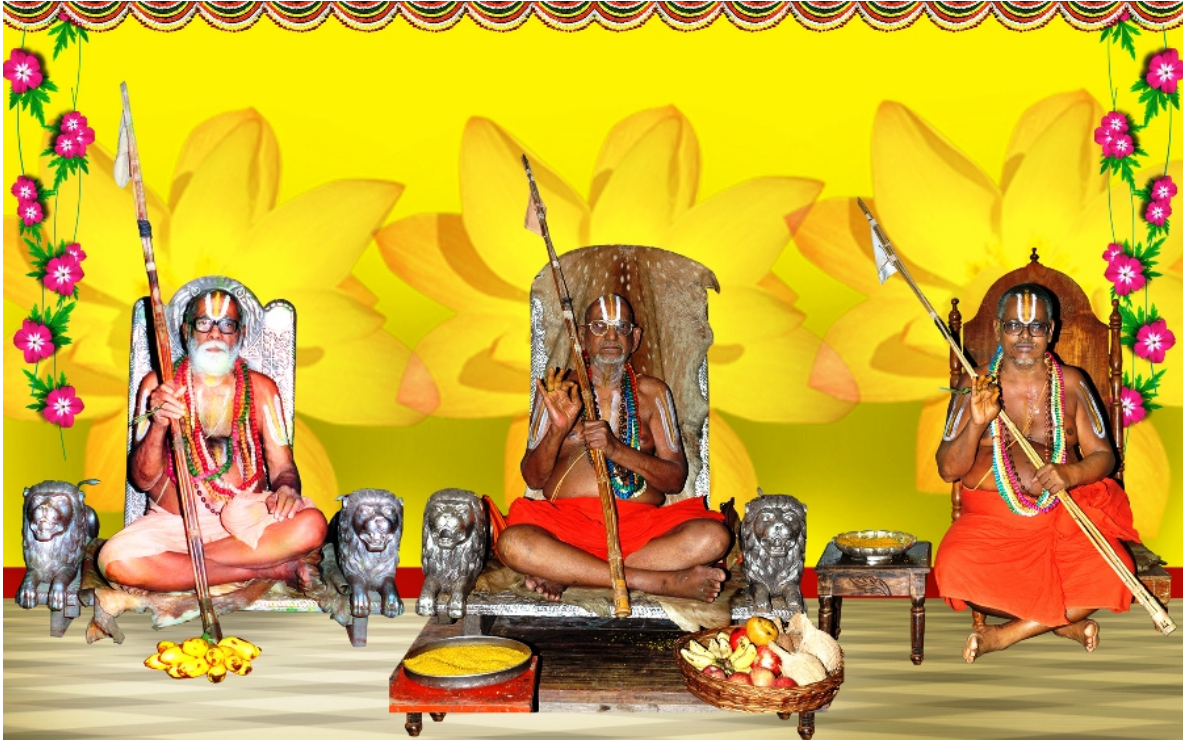




establish that Prapathi can be performed by anyone without any restrictions. To prove his point, Swami says that while some rules in the Vedas are specifically meant for certain people, some set of rules are applicable to everyone.

For example, speak the truth always, conduct yourself as per Dharma, etc. apply to all human beings. Similarly, Prapathi is the means available to everyone irrespective of their caste, creed, position, social status, etc. One need not even be a human! Did we not see a crow surrender to Lord Rama in Srimath Ramayanam? (An Acharyan can perform Prapathi on behalf of animals & birds too as evidenced in our Guru Parampara literature).

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A sadAcharyan performs prapatti on behalf of all living things
SrImad Azhagiya Singars of SrImad Ahobila Mutt

59. How a hapless man surrenders to a strong and accessible person to save himself (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

லோகத்தில் தன்னை ரக்ஷித்துக்கொள்ள விரகில்லாதே அழுந்துவான்





ஒருவன், அப்போது ஸந்நிஹிதநான ரக்ஷணஸமர்த்ததைப் பற்றுமாப் போலே

This analogy is given by Swami to illustrate the idea of some people who are against specifically invoking Prapathi as a rite. Their argument is that there is no need to specifically invoke Prapathi because weak people naturally tend towards the strong to protect themselves and similarly, the mortals would automatically turn towards the All-powerful Lord once they realise their vulnerability, vis-a-vis the invincibility of the Lord.

60. How a hapless man, while surrendering to a strong one, does it in a certain way (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

லோகத்தில் ஒருவனை ஒருவன் ஆச்ரயிக்கும்போது, இன்னபடியே ஆச்ரயித்தால் இவன் இரங்கும் என்னுமிடத்தை ஒரு ப்ரமாணத்தாலே அறிந்து ஆச்ரயிக்குமாப் போலே

This analogy is in reply to the question raised by the previous analogy. It is commonly seen that a weak person surrenders to a strong one to protect himself. But there is a certain procedure to it. Further, he has to be confident that the person to whom he is surrendering is capable and willing to protect him. This he might ascertain through friends, relatives, etc.

Similarly, there are certain pre-requisites, procedures, etc. for Prapathi also. The Prapanna has to be clear in his mind about his Prapathi which knowledge could be gained only through Saasthras. Only they can teach a person as to why, how, where, through whom and to whom he has to surrender.

61. How the do's and don'ts in the scriptures, though helpful in reaching limited goals are actually against the ultimate goal of reaching the Lord (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):





மோக்ஷ ப்ரதிகூலங்களான ராகாத்யுத்பாதிகளாலே வந்த காம்ய நிஷித்தங்கள் போலே

Some preceptors have held that performing Bhakthi Yoga is actually against the submissive nature of our soul. Swami Desika holds that this was said to emphasise the suitability of Prapathi for people like us (with limited knowledge and skills) with no disrespect towards Bhakthi Yoga. Otherwise it would mean questioning the veracity of the scriptures and the authenticity of great sages who have practised Bhakthi Yoga.

Swami presents various arguments to counter the above statement which if taken literally would mean that Bhakthi Yoga harms the soul. There are various means to be adopted and pitfalls to be avoided which are listed in the scriptures to fulfill one's desire for health, wealth, long life, good progeny, etc. But these are in effect impediments in reaching the ultimate abode of Sriman Narayana. However, Bhakthi Yoga is a means of attaining the Lord himself and totally unlike these other means which beget merely temporary pleasures (this is a negative analogy given by Swami to differentiate Bhakthi Yoga from other means).

62. How one has to quench his thirst and hunger as long as he resides in a body (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

சரீர ஸம்பந்தமேயடியாக வருகிற ஸுஷுத் பிபாஸாதிகளுக்குப் பரிஹாரம் பண்ணுகிற கணக்கிலே

This is a very pertinent and important analogy which answers the question that arises in everyone's mind. Since the soul and body are different and the soul doesn't have any characteristics as such and the differences of being a Brahmana, Kshathriya, Vysya, etc. pertain only to the body, why should we perform various Karmas meant for each division of people as per the scriptures?





Swami counters thus: It is commonly seen that as long as a person inhabits a body, he tends to that body and quenches his hunger and thirst in a timely manner. (There are no loving thoughts about the soul when one is hungry or thirsty. The bodily functions take precedence over everything!)

Similarly, he has to adhere to the scriptural commands as per the bodily divisions. He cannot claim intellectual exclusivity for relinquishing his duties. Then he would have to quit eating and drinking water!

63. How scriptures sanction harmful Yagnas under extenuating circumstances (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

அபிசாராதிகளை விதித்த கட்டளையிலே

This is again a negative analogy to condemn the argument that Bhakthi Yoga is untenable. Some say that Bhakthi Yoga is described in the Saasthras just as an example of means to be adopted only by select people under extenuating circumstances just like Yagnas which are done to maim or harm one's enemies, etc.

Swami rebuts this saying that those Yagnas are harmful because their goal is to harm somebody while the fruition of Bhakthi Yoga is attaining Srīman Narayana Himself.

64. How bathing in rivers etc is prohibited for the ill (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

ஆதாராதிகளுக்கு அவகாஹநாதிகள் போலே

Finally, in this analogy, Swami clarifies what would have been in the minds of those preceptors who held that Bhakthi Yoga was not to be performed. In the interests of their health, people who are ill are advised against taking head-bath, bathing in rivers, etc.





Similarly, to dissuade those who are ill-equipped to perform Bhakthi Yoga from attempting the same, it was said that Bhakthi Yoga was untenable. (It is an example of Swami's unparalleled magnanimity by which he would defend even opposing points of view by interpreting their true meaning in a non-contradictory way).

65. How even while conducting a big Yagna one has to perform regular daily rituals (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

க்ரத்வந்தராநுஷ்டாநம் பண்ணினவனுக்கு மேலுள்ள நித்ய-
நைமித்திகங்கள் போலே

Having established the greatness of Bhakthi Yoga, Swami proceeds to show that as a means Prapathi is even better than Bhakthi Yoga since as per the Vedas and our preceptors, there is nothing left to be done by a Prapanna once he has performed Prapathi. But Bhakthi Yoga has to be continued through the ensuing lives till its fruition.

However, it has to be noted that performance of a big Yagna does not obliterate the need for daily rituals, and the regular Nithya (day-to-day) and Naimiththika (obligated upon a particular happening) rituals are to be performed without fail by the Prapanna. This is to obey the orders of the Lord as given by Him through Saasthras, as these rituals are not part of Prapathi.

66. How a mental bath described in the Saasthras conveys purity, cleansing of sins and at once divine experience (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

அவகாஹநாதிகளில் ஸமர்த்தன் அல்லாதவனுக்கு 'மாநஸம் விஷ்ணு
சிந்தநம்' என்று பகவத் சிந்தநத்தை ஸ்நாநமாக விதித்தால், அது
ஸ்நாநாந்தரங்கள் பண்ணுகிற சுத்தியையும் பண்ணி,
பாபாந்ஹரங்களையும் சமிப்பித்து, அப்போதே பகவதநுபவ ரஸத்தை





உண்டாக்குமாப் போலே

There are seven types of baths prescribed in the Saasthras (Avagaahanam, Divyam, Maanasam, Manthram, etc.) of which immersion in rivers is the prescribed one for able-bodied men. However, for those who are not fit for that, the other baths convey equal benefits and are in no way considered inferior. For instance, mental bath for an ill person is one wherein he is required to contemplate that the Lord's feet is above his head and pure water flows from His feet on to his head. This bath not only conveys purity upon the body but also results in the cleansing of sins and a divine experience at once as the contemplation of Lord's feet is involved.

Swami Desikan employs this analogy to establish that Prapathi is even greater than Bhakthi Yoga or Upaasana. One might wonder as to how Prapathi (which is a one-off, short and easy ritual) could be considered equal to Bhakthi Yoga? Further, how could the end-result possibly be the same for both? Even more baffling could be the fact that Prapathi ensures Moksha much faster as Praarabhdha Karma extending to further births are destroyed, which is not the case in Bhakthi Yoga.

The answer is that for those who are not qualified enough to do Bhakthi Yoga, Prapathi conveys the fruit of Moksha in its place and also the added benefit of getting it at the requested time just like the mental bath for a diseased person (An interesting fact to be noted here is that though we usually request for Moksha at the end of this birth, the Lord will grant our wish even if we request for it at a specific time say after a month, year or even a particular date. In this Kali Yuga, there have been instances of great Bhagavathas who have requested for Moksha on specific dates and departed on that date for all those present to observe).

67. How a seed cannot produce a different plant (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):





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Offer all fruits unto Him ! - Kanchi SrI Perarulalan thiruvadi





விதைக்கின்றவனுடைய அபிஸந்தி பேதத்தாலே ஒரு விதை வேறொரு பலத்தைக் கொடுக்கக் கண்டோமோ?

This is an analogy shown by some who raised an objection as to how Bhakthi Yoga and Prapathi beget opposite fruits namely wealth and pleasures in this world and Moksha?

As per the Saasthras, one can perform Bhakthi Yoga or Prapathi to achieve anything desired, namely, wealth, exclusive realisation of one's own soul (Kaivalya) or Moksha. (The Brahma Suthra - 3.2.37 — Phalamatha Upapathe: All fruits unto him — signifies this).

The opposing argument is this: Just as a mango seed cannot produce a coconut tree, the means should produce either one type of the end or the other. It cannot produce both. The answer is provided in the next analogy.

68. How selling something to the king and gifting it to him produces different results (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

லோகத்திலும் தர்மசீலனாய் உதாரனான ராஜாவுக்கு விலையாக ஏதேனும் ஒன்றைக் கொடுத்தால் பெறும் விலை கிடைக்கவும், அது தன்னையே உபஹார புத்தியாலே கொடுத்தால் வேண்டுவதெல்லாம் கிடைக்கவும் காணாநின்றோம்

This is a beautiful analogy provided by Swami Desika as answer to the above question. If a person, say, a merchant sells a gem to a generous king, he will get a good price for it. However, on the other hand, if he gifts it to the king with a eulogy, the gratified king would grant his heart's desire which might be worth more than the gem.

Similarly, Bhakthi Yoga or Prapathi enchants the Lord and thus the practitioners beget any fruit for which they were performed be they material





things or the ultimate bliss.

69. How milk is beneficial for both the healthy and the health-conscious (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

அரோகனுக்கும் ஆரோக்யார்த்திக்கும் சுஷீரம் ஸேவ்யம் என்றதோடு
ஒக்கும்

In this analogy, the issue debated upon is whether the continual meditation upon Lord Narayana as propounded by Sage Vyasa would apply for a Prapanna. A Prapanna might also meditate upon the Lord for the sake of it without considering it as a means since he has already performed Prapathi as the means.

Just as milk is beneficial for both healthy persons and the health-conscious, contemplation of the Lord's nature, form, etc. would dazzle Bhakthas and Prapannas alike.

70. How the Mukthas experience creation, etc. of the world without actually participating in it (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

ஜகத் வ்யாபாரம் பண்ண அதிக்குதனான ஈஸ்வரனுக்கும் முக்தருக்கும்
போலே

This is very bracing and heartening for those who are disqualified for certain Kainkaryams to the Lord as per the Saasthras. They can help those who are so enjoined and derive the same pleasure and fruit without nursing a sense of grievance.

Swami Desika adverts to a Saasthraic analogy for this. The Mukthas (Jivas who have performed a means and reached Sri Vaikuntam) are blessed with immeasurable freedom to do anything they wish to, except for creation of the world, its protection and destruction, etc. (Jagath Vyaapaara Varjam — Brahma Suthra - 4.4.17).





Here, a question might arise as to whether it contradicts the fact that Mukthas experience equal bliss as the Lord. The answer is that even though they do not actively participate in creation, etc., they can experience it on an equal footing with the Lord. Incredible, isn't it?

71. How the stalk of the eight-nodal sugarcane is used by all after removing the leaves and the root (Saadhyopaaya Sodhana Adhikaaram):

எட்டுக் கண்ணான கரும்பிலே வேர்ப்பற்றும் தலையாடையும் கழிந்தால்,
நடுவுள்ள அம்சம் ஸர்வோபஜீவ்யமாகிறாப் போலே

The Ashtaakshara Manthram or Thirumanthram is prescribed differently for various classes of people as per their status of birth. For example, ladies are required to pronounce the Pranavam (ஓம்), the first part of the manthra as "am" (அம்) instead of the full enunciation.

However, the central portion of the manthra, namely, "Namo Narayana" can be uttered by one and all to contemplate the Lord. The sugarcane has eight nodes like the eight lettered Thirumanthra. The stalk is consumed by all after removing the leaves on top and the root. Similarly, the use of words "Namo Narayana" from the Ashtakshara is permissible for all.

72. How the Kamadhenu is but a cow (Prabhaava Vyavastha Adhikaaram):

திருஸுரபியானாலும் கோத்வம் கழியாதிநே

The esteemed Kamadhenu is but a cow and the species does not change. Similarly, of the two aspects of caste and creed for a Bhagavatha, the creed may change from that of an agnostic or atheist to a Vaishnava, but not the caste. (பண்டைக் குலத்தைத் தவிர்ந்து பல்லாண்டு பல்லாயிரத்தாண்டு என்மினே! – Periyazhwar Thirumozhi 1-1-5)

The Bhagavathas of lower caste, no doubt, have to be appreciated and





respected. However, a staunch conformist of Saasthras that he was, Swami Desika held that a person's caste, which arises from birth, never changes.

73. How a person is guided towards the correct route during a pilgrimage (Prabhaava Vyavastha Adhikaaram):

தீர்த்த யாத்திரையிலே வழி திகைத்தாரை வழியிலே சேர்த்த மாத்ரம்
அவர்களைத் தெளிவித்து விட்டார்களித்தனை

All the restrictions which are imposed upon us by the Saasthras as per our Varna and Asrama have to be implicitly followed and hence Saasthraic knowledge has to be obtained only from one's designated Acharya.

One might wonder as to how Vidhura and Dharmavyadha (a butcher) would qualify to preach about justice (Vidhura Neethi) and knowledge considering their birth and occupation. The answer is that their advice was similar to guiding a person who has already embarked on a pilgrimage towards the correct route lest he may be confused about the path to take.

They did not take it upon themselves to impart the highest knowledge. When asked by Dhridharashtra, Vidhura desisted from going the whole hog about Bhakthi Yoga and implored him to learn about it from Sage Sanathsujatha. Similarly, Dharmavyadha, the butcher, advised Sage Kausika (who infamously cursed the crane to fall dead for inadvertently puking upon him) about concepts in the broad sense only.

74. How a touch by the hand of a great Bhagavatha purifies even the Lord's idol before consecration (Prabhaava Vyavastha Adhikaaram):

திருப்ரதிஷ்டையில் மஹாபாகவத ஸ்பர்சம் போலே

It is said that a Bhagavatha purifies everything. Swami Desika clarifies the purported meaning of this statement by giving examples. This will apply only where it is prescribed by the Sasthraas and not to those actions specifically





prohibited, i.e., eating fig fruits has been expressly forbidden and one cannot claim that it had been purified by the touch of a Bhagavatha and consume it.

A touch by the hand of a great Bhagavatha is enlisted before the consecration of the Lord's idol in a temple as per the Sasthraas. However this premise is not to be misused, misinterpreted or generalised.

75. How it is wrong to embrace asceticism to shirk family responsibilities (Prabhaava Vyavastha Adhikaaram):

குடும்ப பரணாதிகளுக்கு அலைந்து ஸந்யாஸாதிகளைப் பற்றுவாரைப் போலே

This is a very important analogy in that it emphasises upon the continuance of Nithya and Naimiththika Karmas for a Prapanna as demonstrated by our Acharyas till their departure from this world.

To forego all rituals through ignorance is Thaamasika Thyaga. To give up because of laziness and misconception that they are time-consuming and exhausting is Raajasika Thyaga. For this Swami cites the example of an ascetic who takes to Sanyasa for shirking his family duties and not for the renunciation of material pleasures in favour of God.

76. How it is better to eat when one is hungry instead of eating as if in a contest (Prabhaava Vyavastha Adhikaaram):

இது பசித்து உண்பார் மாத்ரம். இங்ஙனல்லாத போது ஒட்டத்துக்கு அப்பம் தின்பார் மாத்ரம்

The Saathvika Thyagam is part of our Nithya Karmas and it is said to be the recitation of the fact that those actions sanctioned by the Saasthras are done because of the Lord, for the Lord's pleasure and there is no fruit involved for the doer.





Swami Desika cites the ultimate cornerstone of Saathvika Thaayagam as desisting from requesting even Moksha and carrying out the actions as fulfilling the Lord's dictum since Moksha has already been granted by the Lord as the fruit of Prapathi. This is equivalent to the Kainkaryams of the Mukthas. This is how it should be for all Prapannas, i.e., a divine experience; otherwise it would be like participating in a pie-eating contest instead of assuaging one's hunger.

In a contest, there would be no tasting of the food in the race against time whereas if one is hungry the food is really savoured. Hence, a Prapanna should relish his Kaingaryams and perform them with the sole aim of pleasing the Lord.

77. How a father disciplines his son through punishment (Prabhaava Raksha Adhikaaram):

ஸந்நிஹிதமான கசாதிகளைப் போலே துணையாகக் கொண்டு
பித்ராதிகளைப் போலே

A question which may arise in our minds is answered by Swami Desika in this analogy. Prapannas are God's favourite children and their mistakes are pardoned by the Lord indulgently. Moksha is assured for them. Why then should they suffer from miseries and difficulties during the rest of their stay on the earth? Why can't they enjoy a blissful life without any problems?

Swami says that if it were so, a Prapanna would begin to love his materialistic life and become indifferent towards the Lord. Further, the sorrows and distress caused are due to his misdeeds in the previous births and they have to be borne so that he refrains from repeating them for fear of retribution.

Just like a father who disciplines his son through mild caning etc. with his welfare in mind, the Lord rebukes us by handing out these miseries and this is actually a blessing in disguise for the Prapanna.

78. How one must accord due respect to even fake Bhagavathas till such time their true colours are revealed (Prabhaava Raksha Adhikaaram):





உள்ளொரு பசையற்றுப் பசுத்தோல் போர்த்துப் புலிப்பாய்ச்சல் பாயும்
கணக்கிலே பாகவத பாவதை பண்ணித் திரிவாரையும் உள்ளறியுமளவும்
உபரிசராதிகள் அஸுராதிகளை ஆதரித்தாற் போலே

We all know the story of how once a tiger clad himself with the cow's skin and jumped on unsuspecting cows to prey upon them. There are some people who bear the name and form of Bhagavathas without the real hallmarks — a kind heart or tolerant behaviour. They tend to show their true colours sooner or later. Till then, it is best to accord them due respect.

Bhagavatha Apacharam is so dangerous that it is to be avoided at all costs and hence it is best not to offend even those people who only seem like Bhagavathas in their outward appearance.

Here Swami Desika cites the examples of King Uparicharas who treated Asuras with respect when they approached him in the garb of Bhagavathas and Sita Piraatti who welcomed Ravana as per protocol when he came for alms in the guise of a Sannyasi.

79. How refreshing it would be when one sights an oasis amidst a desert (Prabhaava Raksha Adhikaaram):

மரு பூமியில் தண்ணீர் பெற்றாற் போலே

A Prapanna should look for good attributes in the Bhagavathas and gloss over their imperfections if any and rejoice in their company as if an oasis is sighted amidst a desert. He has to revere them with his body, mind and talk.

On this earth, it is rare to find Bhagavathas and they are to be considered superior even to the Lord. It is improper to sit in judgment about other Bhagavathas.

80. How Arjuna' is the focal point in his chariot and Lord Krishna is in Raasa





Mandalam (Moola Manthra Adhikaaram):

அர்ஜுந ரதம் போலே ப்ரணவம் சேஷப்ரதாநமாகையாலும், ராஸ
மண்டலம் போலே நாராயண சப்தமாகையாலும்



Lord Krishna and Arjuna at Kurukshetra

Swami Desika researches the etymology of Ashtaakshara and establishes that it is the foremost Manthra in our Sampradaya for grammatical reasons also. A query arises about whether it is repetitive to denote the Jivan in the second and third parts of the Manthra, namely, nama: & Narayanaya (the "ma:" in nama: and "nara" in Narayanaya denote the Jivathma).

Swami concludes that the Jivathma is proved by Paramathma and vice versa and in Nama:, the Jivathma is the focal point just like Arjuna is in his chariot because the Lord is seated down on the charioteer's place and Arjuna gets to





direct the course of the chariot. In Narayanaya, Srīman Narayana is the focal point just like the Raasa Mandalam in which Krishna was sandwiched between two Gopis. There is no repetition since the import is different in the two words.

81. How one's desire to serve the king does not automatically translate into a desire to serve his subjects (Moola Manthra Adhikaaram):

நரபதியைப் பற்ற கைங்கர்யத்தை அபேக்ஷித்தானென்றால் நரரைப் பற்றக் கைங்கர்யம் அபேக்ஷிதம் ஆகாதாப் போலே

Here Swami Desika answers a very interesting question. The etymology of the word Narayana indicates that He is the One residing in all sentient and non-sentient beings. So, if we pray to serve Him, does it mean that we pray to serve all sentient and non-sentient beings? If so, would it not include lesser gods, atheists and even animals?

Swami replies with a resounding 'no'. If a person expresses a desire to serve the king and seeks his employ, it does not automatically mean that he wishes to serve the entire kingdom. Similarly, the Prapanna's desire to serve the Lord as per the Saasthras would apply to the Lord and those who are dear to the Lord i.e., those who have accepted His supremacy and do not seek material things from Him. In effect, it would mean service to Srīman Narayana and Bhagavathas.

82. How the spreading of the effulgence natural to a gem is also due to the Lord's wish (Moola Manthra Adhikaaram):

மாணிக்கத்தில் ஒளியும் நியதையான ஈச்வர இச்சையாலே பரம்புமாப் போலே

The effulgence of a gem which we consider natural to it is due to the Lord's wish that it be so and its far and wide spread is also due to the same reason. Similarly, the inseparable attribute of knowledge present in our soul, its





contraction upon birth in this world and the ultimate expansion of it in Sri Vaikuntam upon the performance of Bhakthi Yoga or Prapathi is per the Lord's dictum. Even those things which are not limited by time (Jivaathmas) and space (time & ether) remain so only because of the Lord's intent.

Hence, it is a given that the redemption of the soul and the resultant expansion of its attributive knowledge to its ultimate state of unlimitedness is dependent upon His will.

83. How the lady dove taught its mate that it was imperative to save a Saranaagatha even by sacrificing one's own life (Dhvaya Adhikaaram):

கபோதத்தைக் கபோதி கேட்பித்தாற் போலே

This analogy pertains to a heart-rending story depicting the importance of Saranaagathi which is found in detail in Sri Abhaya Pradhaana Saaram (one of the Chillarai Rahasyas of Swami Desika from Srimath Ramayana).

The word 'Sri' which is Piraatti's name has six meanings, one of which is that she compels her husband to listen to our entreaties at the proper time. In this respect, Swami cites the example of a lady dove which advised its mate that one should be prepared to sacrifice even one's own life to protect or save a Saranaagatha.

A hunter who had unintentionally taken refuge from heavy rains under the tree in which the doves resided was considered as a Saranaagatha by the lady dove even though he had captured it. Upon the advice of the lady dove, the male dove lit a fire with sticks and fell on it so that it could become food for the hunter.

Our preceptors aver that Sri Rama left this earth with a grievance in his heart that the dove had bested him by forgiving and helping the hunter who had abducted its mate while he did not get the opportunity to forgive and accept Ravana into his fold since Ravana refused to surrender.





84. How Dhadhipandan adamantly refused to give up without getting Moksha for himself and his pot from Sri Krishna (Dhvaya Adhikaaram):

ததிபாண்டாதிகளைப் போலே ஹடாத்தாரம் பண்ணியும் அநுபந்தி-
பர்யங்கமாகப் பரமபுருஷார்த்தத்தை அபேக்ஷிக்கைக்கு உறுப்பாம்

This endearing story from Sri Krishnaavathara is cited by Swami Desika while explaining one of the twelve attributes of the Lord denoted by the word 'Narayana' in the first part of the Dhvaya Manthra.

The Lord is the greatest philanthropist who doesn't compare unfavourably the easy means adopted by us in relation to the great benefit we get. In fact, he feels that He has not done enough. This quality emboldens us to demand and get our desire, namely, Moksha, just like Dhadhipaandan who helped little Krishna hide in his big pot to escape from his mother and demanded in exchange, Moksha not only for himself but also his pot!

85. How gambling etc is taken up by materialistic people (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):

லெளகிகரானவர்கள் த்யூதாதிகள் பண்ணுமாப் போலே

This is a negative analogy to illustrate the point of view that 'since a Prapanna is not like a materialistic person who takes up gambling for his own personal gain, why should he take up Kainkaryams which are not considered a must?'

For example, Sandhyavandanam, Thiru Araadhanam, etc. are Nithya Karmas non-performance of which would result in great irredeemable sin. However some other Kainkaryams are given in the Saasthras which are beneficial but do not result in sin if not undertaken (e.g.: endowing temples, digging up a pond, well, etc. for use by Bhagavathas and so on).

These do not constitute Bhakthi Yoga, or a component of Prapathi; do not result in disfavour with the Lord if not done. A Prapanna needs neither fortunes nor





virtues (Punyams) since they are also impediments to the ultimate goal of Moksha. Should he then desist from such Kainkaryams? Await the answer in the next analogy!



AthmA bandhu

86. How one cherishes the company of well-wishers, relatives, etc. (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):

ஸுஹ்ருத்-புத்ராதி உபலாலநங்களிற் போலே

In the previous analogy, Swami Desika had raised a question as to the need for a Prapanna to take up Anugya Kainkaryams (unlike Nithya Karmas, these do not result in sin if not undertaken) when he has nothing else to wish for.





Swami answers the same with this analogy that if a person is in the company of his well-wishers, sons, relatives, etc. he celebrates with them playing the perfect host and making them feel welcome. Similarly, Srīman Narayana is the Only Relative to the Soul (Athma Bandhu) and for His pleasure a Prapanna might take up Kainkaryams like endowment of temples, digging up wells for public benefit etc., as per Saasthras.

Even though these Kainkaryams do not result in sin if not performed, they do result in His pleasure if undertaken, which is the ultimate fruit for all Prapannas.

87. How those taking up Sannyasa Asrama, are required to give up some rituals while taking up a few new ones (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):

ஸந்ந்யாஸ ஆஸ்ரமத்தர்க்குப் பண்டுள்ளவை சிலவற்றை நிஷேதித்துப் புதியனவாகச் சிலவற்றை விதிக்குமாப் போலே

This is a very important analogy. Swami decries those arguments which condone the non-performance of Nithya-Naimiththika Karmas on the grounds that a Prapanna is a favourite of the God and has gained true knowledge of the soul; that he may or may not perform them; and that even if he does not, he would not attract any punishment except for His displeasure, and so on.

There are certain rituals laid down in the Saasthras for Gruhasthas (married people), Brahmacharis, Sannyasis, etc. A person while taking up Sannyasa is required to give up Agni Karyams (rituals involving fire) while it is incumbent upon him to take up new ones like Biksha (seeking alms), etc.

Similarly, a Prapanna is enjoined to take up certain things due to his status as a Bhagavatha and leave out certain things but these are strictly as laid down in the Saasthras as per his Varna and Asrama. He cannot take it up on his own to leave out Nithya Karmas like Sandhya Vandhanam, etc. with a holier-than-thou attitude on flimsy grounds that they contain Manthras pertaining to other





lesser gods.

It is said in Dhaksha Smruthi that "A person who does not perform Sandhya Vandhanam is unfit for any ritual and any ritual that he conducts will not be productive".

88. How grass is easily available yet cheap and the Meru Mountain is great yet unattainable (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):

கேவல ஸுலபமான த்ருணாதிகளைப் போலன்றிக்கே ஸ்லாக்யனுமாய்,
துர்லபமான மேருவைப் போலுமன்றிக்கே ஸுலபனுமாய்

Here, Swami gives a combination analogy to show the Lord's easy accessibility and greatness and thus emphasises the importance of understanding that the purpose of Lord's descent into the world is only to uplift it.

Sriman Narayana is easily accessible to all during his Avatharas, as anybody can see Him with their bare eyes. Grass is available everywhere but it is of no value. The Lord's form and attributes are visible to all during his manifestation but they are innumerable and invaluable.

On the other side of the picture is the Meru mountain which is considered great due to its golden peaks and its immense height protecting the earth itself. However it is inaccessible to mere mortals. But the Lord, with his infinite quality of Mercy, is accessible in His human/animal form during the Avatharas to everyone.

This is what a Prapanna should meditate upon, the Lord's greatness yet accessibility (Avathara Rahasya) to spend the hours fruitfully during his remaining sojourn on the earth.

89. How the non-sentient too bear attributes as per the Lord's dictum (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):





அசித்துக்கள் சப்தாதிகளை ஈச்வரன் உண்டாக்க சுமக்கிறாப் போலே

Some people raise this argument which seems intelligent - How can a Jiva who is entirely dependent upon the Lord for all his actions be ordered to perform Bhakthi Yoga/Prapathi as per the Saasthras? It is not in him to do anything on his own since the Lord controls his actions and thoughts. Only an independent person can be asked to do something as it is within his choice to accept or refuse.

In Sri Bhashyam - the commentary by Sri Ramanuja to the Brahma Suthras, it has been laid down clearly that the Jiva has independence in the first second of any action, to decide to proceed with it if it is Saasthraic and to desist from it if it is not. In the first second of any action, the Lord is just a spectator and he allows and helps the Jiva in whatever decision he takes, i.e., to proceed or desist.

Just as a non-sentient matter like Ether bearing the attribute of Sabdha or sound or air (Vayu) bearing the attribute of Sparsa or touch, the Jivas bear this moment of independence as per the Lord's will but within the spectrum of the Lord's Omnipotency.

Hence, in his every action a Jiva is subject to rules and regulations of the Saasthras which he can obey or disobey.

90. How a strong man helps carry the load of a weaker person (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):

இளந்தலை சுமக்குமவனுக்குப் ப்ரபலன் பெருந்தலை சுமக்குமாப் போலே

Swami defines the five positions of the Lord vis-à-vis a Jiva when he embarks upon any action. 1) He is an Enabler as without His will, the Jiva cannot even move; 2) He is the Doer in giving fruits for the Jiva's actions as per his Karma and in the creation, protection and destruction of the world, etc.; 3) He is the Indifferent one in that he doesn't prevent the Jiva from any action; 4) He is





the Allower as he accepts the Jiva's decision to embark upon a particular action and 5) Last but not the least, He is the helper in all the Jiva's actions - Just like the strong man who helps to carry the load of a weaker person, the Lord assists the Jiva in all his actions so that he may complete it.

91. How removing the obstacles in realising one's desire and actually attaining it are two sides of the same coin (Charama Sloka Adhikaaram):

அநிஷ்ட நிவ்ருத்தியிலும் இஷ்ட ப்ராப்தியிலும் ஒன்றைச் சொல்ல
இரண்டும் வருமாப் போலே



"Maa SuchaH" (SrI Oppiliappan Perumal and SrI Bhumidevi thAyAr)

In his Charama Sloka Lord Krishna says "Maa Sucha:" - "Do not worry," which is meant to galvanise us into adopting a means to reach Him. This in turn implies





that one of the qualifications for adopting the means or Upaaya is to be concerned or worried about our salvation. However, in Jithanthe Stotra 1.8 and 1.6.4 of Periya Thirumozhi (Vambulam Koondhal), fear for our deplorable state in this Samsaara is slated as the qualification for doing Prapathi.

Swami Desika clarifies by saying that just like the attainment of one's desire and removal of any obstacles thereof, being two mutually inclusive and dependent goals (one pre-supposes and follows the other), fear and worry are two inter-dependant states of the mind and when one is stated the other is implied too (worry arises from fear and fear follows the worry).

92. How the breast-milk of a lioness is unthinkable for any other animal except its cub (Acharya-Kruthya Adhikaram):

ஸிம்ஹி-ஸ்தந்யம் போலே

Swami Desika emphasises that the Acharyan is greater than the Lord and explains how a Sampradaya Acharya imparts knowledge only to worthy disciples.

Sriman Narayana is the first preceptor in our Sampradaya (which is a unique feature) and the precepts are handed down from Him in an unbroken lineage from time immemorial. Only the lion cub gets to taste the lioness' milk as a matter of right and it is unthinkable for other animals to overpower the lioness to get at it.

Similarly, the illustrious concepts and doctrines of our Sampradaya are saved in the minds of our preceptors who do not divulge it to people of other Sampradayas as they may not appreciate them but these are handed down to devoted disciples without any constraint. (Kalakshepam of Rahasya Granthas is meant only for those who have had Pancha Samskaram (Samaasrayanam) from their Acharyan).

93. How water saved in a skeleton-head is unusable (Sishya-Kruthya Adhikaram):





கபாலஸ்த-தோயாதிகளைப் போலே



How to conduct oneself towards one's AchAryan!
Madhurakavi azhvar with Swami Nammazhvar

Sishya-Kruthya Adhikaram contains valuable instructions about how we should conduct ourselves towards our Acharyan and Swami reiterates forcefully, that one can never hope to recompense one's Acharyan for all that he does for us.

Swami gives out strong analogies to point out what a Sishya should not do which is more important than what he ought to do. The first analogy is about how, even if one suffers from dehydration and thirst, one would not like to drink water saved in a skeleton-head.

Just as the container is as important as the content, a Sishya's body and mind are as important as his soul and to protect the Rahasya Grantha knowledge, he should strive to keep his mind and body pure through Anushtaanams. If not, his





knowledge would be wasted as it cannot be passed on.

94. How a prostitute's make-up, sandal paste sold for profit, puffed rice scattered in the ground publicly, garland in a monkey's hand, etc. are considered deplorable and appalling (Sishya-Kruthya Adhikaram):

கணிகாலங்காரம் ஆக்குதல் - விலைச்சாந்து ஆக்குதல் - அம்பலத்தில்
அவற்பொதி ஆக்குதல் - குரங்கின் கையில் பூமாலை ஆக்குதல்

It is one of the foremost duties of a Sishya to protect the Rahasya Grantha knowledge and see to it that it does not fall into the hands of ignoramus who could exploit it for material gain. To impart such illustrious concepts for monetary gain is equivalent to 1) a prostitute's make-up, as they may be couched in ornamental language for the listeners' benefit; 2) sandal paste sold for profit which is dished out proportionately as per the monetary gain; 3) puffed rice scattered in the ground publicly for the use of all and sundry instead of being offered as alms to worthy people and 4) the famous example of garland in a monkey's hand which proceeds to destroy it as it cannot appreciate the beauty and fragrance of the same.

In short, if a Sishya does not protect his knowledge but passes it on to the wrong person without examining his motives, he is guilty of sinning against his Acharya.

95. How one cannot wear a stolen ornament without fear (Sishya-Kruthya Adhikaram):

களவு கொண்டு ஆபரணம் பூண்டாற் போலே

This is a very apt analogy from our Swami who equates the knowledge gained through underhand means without the consent of the Acharyan to a stolen ornament. One cannot wear a stolen ornament in public as one would be scared of getting caught.





Similarly, if a Sishya gains Rahasya knowledge without requesting and getting express permission to do so either by listening outside doors or on his own by looking up the concepts from the books he cannot exhibit his knowledge freely without the fear of being contradicted. His knowledge is of no use as he would not be confident enough to answer queries for the fear of his understanding and interpretation being faulty.

96. How one cannot wear an ornament received as charity without any misgivings (Sishya Kruthya Adhikaaram):

காலன் கொண்டு ஆபரணம் பூண்டாற் போலே

Swami continues to caution the Sishyas about acquiring knowledge beyond the acceptable methods.

As per the Saasthras, a Sishya has to approach an Acharya in all humility and do his bidding without demur and wait for the right time to clear his doubts and so on. If he does not follow this and somehow acquires knowledge, then while imparting the same to others, he would be derided.

Here in the analogy, Swami indicates a ritual wherein a person who is too ill, donates a small idol decorated with ornaments after imbibing it with Manthras, etc. for his well-being to a poor man. The person who receives this gift out of desperation cannot wear the ornaments in public as he would be subjected to ridicule. Knowledge acquired by improper means is similar to these ornaments. It might lead to undesirable results.

97. How a rootless creeper parasite on a tree is to be destroyed (Sishya Kruthya Adhikaaram):

வேரில்லா கொன்றன் போலே

If a Sishya has acquired Sasthraic knowledge by proper means, then he should always glorify his Acharya when he becomes a teacher himself. If this is not





done, the import of his words would be suspect and not understood properly. He is likened to a creeper parasite which is rootless — as he has forgotten his roots, i.e., from whom he acquired his knowledge. Further, not glorifying one's Acharya is considered one of the 32 unpardonable sins (Bhaagavatha Apacharams).

98. How a person who holds the lamp to show the way to the king has to entrust it to someone dependable before going on the king's errand (Sishya Kruthya Adhikaaram):

விளக்கு பிடிக்குமவன், தன்னை ராஜா ஒரு கார்யத்துக்குப் போகச்
சொன்னால் தன் கையில் விளக்கை அதுக்குப் ப்ராப்தரானார் கையிலே
கொடுத்துப் போமாப் போலே

This is a very apt analogy in that Swami compares the passing of knowledge to the passing of lamps between two competent people so that there is no darkness of ignorance.

If a king sends the lamp-bearer on an errand, then he would transfer his lamp to a competent person and then leave. He would not dare to leave the king in darkness.

Similarly, a person who has received knowledge from an Acharya has to pass it on to competent Sishyas so that such knowledge is spread through proper channels. But he has to shed light on his Acharya's qualities and attributes and glorify his name before proceeding to impart the knowledge acquired from him.

99. How a prince would proceed for his coronation on invitation from the King in all pomp and splendour (Nigamana Adhikaaram):

பிதா யௌவராஜ்யத்திற்கு முடிசூட்ட அழைத்துவரவிட்ட ராஜகுமாரன்
போமாப் போலே





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A prapanna travels through Archiraadhi Margam to reach Parama Padam
Kanchi Sri Perarulan in Sesha Vahanam





In this final chapter, Swami Desika consolidates all the concepts expounded by him in the earlier chapters and gives the gist of each chapter in a short and crisp manner.

After the means has been adopted by a Prapanna, once he leaves his mortal coil, he will proceed on a way which is called Archiraadhi Maargam which is filled with celestials who welcome him and celebrate his arrival with various gifts and offerings. In short, he is like a prince who is on his way to coronation, proceeding in all pomp and splendour.

100. How one undergoes on this earth what all the cottonseed endures and how one's life is similar to a Persian wheel drawing buckets of water from a well (Nigamana Adhikaaram):

பருத்திப்பட்ட பன்னிரண்டும் பட்டுப் பூட்டைக் குண்டிகைப் போலே

A fitting finale emphasising on the imperativeness of Prapathi, as the series draws to a close.

Once a Jiva enters the mother's womb, he undergoes tortuous processes similar to what a cottonseed endures before it can be made to cloth. For e.g., the cotton is pulled from the seed, stretched on both sides, expanded and contracted, the knots are undone, it is rolled and deflowered, cleaned and pounded to flat shape.

The Jiva is just like a small bubble at first, then he grows and gets his organs and so on. After all this, does it get over? No. Just like the Persian wheel which draws water from the well and pours it into the fields and again goes inside the well to draw more water and empties the bucket, again goes into the well, the process is endless. He is born, he dies, he is again born, again he dies, again he is born, again he dies... and so on.

The only way to get out of this vicious circle is to perform Prapathi by approaching one's Sampradaya Acharya, concludes Swami Desikan.





Swami Desikan in swarna simhAsanam - Thiruvendipuram

If we reflect upon Swami Desika's command over the concepts, it takes our breath away. Indeed, [Lord Venkateswara Himself descended on the earth as the great Acharya](#) to show us this easy path of Saranaagathi and redeem us from the muddy waters of Samsara. There is a treasure-house of Granthams authored by Swami Desika and a life-time will not be enough to learn even a few thoroughly. For the hitherto uninitiated, it will be a step in the right direction to make a start by participating in Kaalakshepams or discourses by a Sampradaya Acharya.

ஸ்ரீமதே நிகமாந்த மஹாதேசிகாய நம:

