

Sri Ranganaatha Mahimai

(Vol. II)



Annotated Commentary In English By
"SrI nrusimha sEva rasikan"

Oppiliappan kOil Sri.VaradAchAri SaThakOpan

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namperumAL with nAchchimArs at Sri Rangam

Part 1

Veda Purushan Sri Rangan Athan



One can visualize the PraNavAkAra vimanam to have 18 units : four Kalasams, each one standing for one of the Vedams, the Vimanam, Sri Ranganatha, Sri Ranganayaki and eleven AzhwArs who blessed us with 245 paasurams.

(Pic.Courtesy : ramAnuja dAsargaL at pbase.com/svami)



श्रीः

SRI RANGANATHA AS SAAMA VEDA SVARUPI

adiyEn will select illustrative verses that come close to Azhwaar's anubhavams.

SAAMAN 1

ECHO OF THIRUVIRUTTHAM PAASURAM

In the first paasuram of Thiruviruttham, NammAzhwar begs the Lord of Gods, Sriman nArAyaNaa to listen to his appeal:

இமையோர் தலைவா ! மெய் நின்று கேட்டருளாய், அடியேன்
செய்யும் விண்ணப்பமே

imayOr talaivA! Mey ninRu kEttaruLAI, adiyEn seyyum viNNappamE

In the AgnEya kaaNdam (आग्नेय काण्डम्) of Saama vedam (Decad III.29) a similar appeal is made to the Lord to hear well the appeal that is made by the devotee:

तं त्वा गोपवनो गिरा जनिष्ठदग्ने अङ्गिरः ।

स पावक श्रुधी हवम् ॥

tamm tvA gOpavanO girA janishThadagnE angira: |

sA paavaka Srudhee havam ||

MEANING:

O Sriman nArAyaNaa, who is inside agni and gives it its power to burn things! adiyEn as a devotee of yours is controlling my organs (Brahmacharyam) and speech and I am eulogizing you with reverence. O Splendorous Lord (Svayam



Jyothi), O banisher of the sin of avidhya! Please hearest Thou my invocation!
(In AgnEya Kaandam, the reference to agni stands for the power behind agni,
Sriman nArAyaNaa).



"Please! Hear Thou my eulogies!"

Shri. V.SaThakOpan SwAmi on Panguni Uthiram day
at
Shri RanganAthA Temple, Pomona, New York



SAAMAN 2

PROTECTION THROUGH VEDA ADHYAYANAM

पाहि नो अग्न एकया पाह्यत द्वितीयया ।

पाहि गीर्भिस्तिसृभिरूर्जां पते पाहि चतसृभिर्वसो ॥

paahi nO agna yEkayA paahyata dviteeyayaa |

paahi geerbhistisrubhirUrjAm patE paahi catasrubhirvasO ||

--AgnEya KaaNdam IV.36

MEANING:

O Lord! Protect us by One Vedam (Rg); Protect us by the Second (Yajur); Protect us by the three VedAs (Rg, Yajur and Saama). O VishNu! O Lord who pervades all the chEthanams and achEthanams! O SarvantharyAmi! O Power behind all powers! Protect us by all of Your four VedAs (Rg, Yajur, Saama and atharva). All the four kalasams of the PraNavAkruthi VimAnam are coming into our focus as we hear this Saaman.



"You Protect chetanAchetanams"

Sri Rangam gOratham

Pic. Courtesy :Sri.MuraLi BhaTTar

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SAAMAN 3

TATTVA TRAYAM

The three tattvams --ChEthanam, achEthanam and Isvaran -- are hinted by the following AgnEya Saaman:

कायमानो वना त्वं यन्मातृरजगन्नपः ।

न तत्ते अग्ने प्रमृषे निवर्तनं यद्दूरे सन्निहाभुवः ॥

kAyamAnO vanA tvam yanmAtrurajagannapa: |

na tattE agnE pramrushE nivartanam yad dUrE sannihAbhuva: ||

---AgnEya Kaandam V.53

MEANING:

O Lord, who plans in Your Yoga NidhrA the creation of your worlds for your enjoyment (BhOga mandalam)! As you control the minutest of the minute part of the mother Matter, we fail to comprehend the enormity and significance of Thy inscrutable leelA! Thou create the Universe, while being a supreme Tattvam distinctly apart from the chethanams and achEthanams and then you enter them.



SAAMAN 4

KING OF ALL AND GUEST OF MEN

मूर्धानं दिवो अरतिं पृथिव्या वैश्वानरमृत आ जातमग्निम् ।

कविꣳ सम्राजमतिथिं जनानामासन्नाः पात्रं जनयन्त देवाः ॥

mUrdhAnam divO aratim pruthivyA

vaisvAnaramruta aa jAtamagnim |

kavigum samrAjamatithim janAnAmAsanna:

pAtram janayanta dEvA: ||

----AgnEya kaandam VII.67

MEANING:

The truly learned recognize and speak of the Lord as the Head of Heaven, the emperor of the earth, the antharyAmi of all chEthanams and achEthanams, Omnipresent, Omniscient, the King of all, the compassionate guest of men and the top of it all, the One worthy of adulation.



"King of All"





SAAMAN 5

AINDRA KAANDAM BHAGAVATHA GHOSHTI'S GLORY

(ऐन्द्र काण्डम्)

यथा गौरो अपा कृतं तृष्यन्नेत्यवेरिणम् ।

आपित्वे नः प्रपित्वे तूयमा गहि कण्वेषु सु सचा पिब ॥

yathaa gourO apA krutam trushyannEtyavEriNam |

aapitvE na: prapitvE tUyamA gahi kaNvEshu su sacA piba ||

---aindra kaandam VI .252

MEANING:

Just as desert deer ravishing from thirst hurries towards the water of the pool in the oasis, so should You, the Supreme soul acquiring the friendship of us (bhagavathAs), awaken quickly from your debilitating slumber and enjoy with us the divine grace.

The spirit of this Saaman is similar to PeriyAzhwAr's pallAndu invoking BhagavathAs to come together to celebrate the glories of Sriman nArAyaNaa:

ஏடுநிலத்திலிடுவதன்முன்னம்வந்து எங்களுக்குழாம்புகுந்து

கூடுமனமுடையீர்கள் வரம்பொழி வந்தொல்லைக்கூடுமினோ

yEdu nilathtiliduvathan munnam vanthengaL kuzhAm puhunthu

koodu manamudayeerkal varam pozhi vanthollaikkUdiminO





SAAMAN 6

FIRST OF THE TEN MAHAA NAAMNYAARCHIKA SAAMANS

(महानाम्न्य आर्चिक सामन्)

विदा मघवन् विदा गातुमनुशसिषो दिशः ।

शिक्षा शचीनां पते पूर्वीणां पुरुवसो ॥

vidA magavann vidaa gaatumanusagum sishO disa: |

sikshA SaceenAm patE pUrveNAm purUvasO ||

MEANING:

O Lord! Thou art all-knowing! Bless us with true wisdom and guide us on the right path towards you! Teach us how to reach that supreme goal. O Omnipotent Lord! Teach us with patience your divine laws!



SAAMAN 7

SESHA - SESI RELATION (UTTARAARCHIKA - SAAMAN)

(उत्तर आर्चिक सामन्)

पवमानस्य ते वयं पवित्रमभ्युन्दतः ।

सखित्वमा वृणीमहे ॥

pavamAnasya tE vayam pavitramabhyundata: |

sakhitvamA vruNeemahE ||

MEANING:

O Lord, the purest of the pure! Thou fill the cavities of my heart with overpowering love for you. We strive to win Thy friendship and love.



bhAgavathALs eulogizing PerumAL at Sri Rangam



SAAMAN 8

TAMIZH MAARAI SEYTHA MAARAN (NAMMAAZHWAAR)

In this uttarArchika Saaman, "pavamAnA asrukshata sOmA:sukrAsa indava:, abhi visvAni kAvyA", the pure, noble and tranquil Yogis are described as visualizing all the Veda manthrams . NammAzhwAr sitting under the shade of the VimAnam of Aadhi nAthAn of KuruhUr visualized the Sanskritic Veda manthrams and transformed them into the FOUR Vernacular prabhandhams (Thiruviruttham, ThiruvAsiriyam, Periya ThiruvandhAthi and Thiruvaimozhi).



NammAzhwAr - Sri Rangam

Pic. Courtesy : Sri MuraLi BhaTTar

www.srirangapankajam.com





NamperumAL in gO Ratham
Panguni Uthiram -Sri Rangam
Pic. Courtesy : Sri.MuraLi BhaTTar
www.srirangapankajam.com



SAAMAN 9

THE LAST VERSE OF SAAMA VEDAM

स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः स्वस्ति न पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

svasti na indro vridhaSraVA : savsti na pUshA visvavEdA: |

savasti nastArkshyO arishTanEmi: svasti nO bruhaspatirdadhAtu ||

svasti nO bruhaspatirdadhAtu ||

MEANING:

“May the Master of vast knowledge, May Mighty Lord give us prosperity! May the nourisher of all, the author of all the Vedas give us prosperity! May He, the giver of all comforts like the horse, elephant and cattle give us prosperity May God, the Lord of all elements of Nature, vouchsafe us prosperity May God, the Lord of all the elements of nature vouchsafe us prosperity.

The second of the four Veda Kalasams decorates the PraNavAkruthi Vimanam holding Para VaasudEvA on one side and provides the shade for Sri RanganAtha having Yoga NidrA below. The second Veda kalasam represents Yajur Vedam, both Sukla and Krishna Yajur Vedams. We will select nine Yajur Veda mantrams to illustrate the Yajur Veda Svaroopam of the Lord.





NamperumAL in Karpagavruksha vAhanam
Pic.Courtesy: ramAnuja dAsargaL(pbase.com/svami)



SRI RANGANAATHA AS YAJUR VEDA SVARUPI

A PRAYER FOR PURIFICATION THROUGH VEDIC KNOWLEDGE

यत्ते पवित्रमर्चिष्यग्ने विततमन्तरा ।

ब्रह्म तेन पुनातु मा ।

yattE pavitramarcishyagnE vitatamantarA |

brahma tEna punAtu maa ||

---Yajur vEdam: Chapter XIX.41

MEANING:

O Lord! Purify me (the sinner and the impure one) with Thy pure and sacred Vedic knowledge diffused by Thy pure, resplendent luster (Svayam JyOthi).

adiyEn is reminded of the ThiruviNNagar Paasuram of NammAzhwAr here:

பரஞ்சுடர் உடம்பாய் அழுக்குப் பதித்த உடம்பாய்

கரந்தும் தோன்றியும்நின்றும் கைதவங்கள் செய்தும், விண்ணோர்

சிரங்களால் வணங்கும் திருவிண்ணகர் சேர்ந்தபிரான்

வரம்கொள்பாதமல்லாலில்லை யாவர்க்கும் வன்சரணே.

param sudar udambAi azhukkup pathittha udambAi

karanthum thOnRiyum ninRum kaitthavangaL seythum, viNNOr

sirangaLAI vaNangum ThiruviNNagar sernta pirAn

varam koLL paadhamallaal illai yaavarkkum vannsaraNE.

-----Thiruvaimozhi: 6.3.7

The Lord of ThiruviNNagar has an incomparable, supremely effulgent, aprAkrutha, Suddha Sattva form. He is thus paramjyOthi. He is also the indweller of the sinful and impure body of chEthanams. He stays inside this





impure body in a concealed manner. Even though He is hidden from view, He makes Himself visible as the resident of the heart cavity for those Yogis, who have His blessings of Vedic knowledge. AzhwAr asserts that for anyone aspiring for salvation (Moksham), there is no other path (naanya: panthA), no other recourse except the surely-helping sacred feet of the Lord of ThiruviNNagar (Sri VaikuntanAthan), Which are worshipped by the nithya sUris as well as by the Devas with lowered heads.

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THE TRUE (RUTHAM) AND THE MIGHTY (BRUHATH) LORD

हंसः शुचिषद्वसुरन्तरिक्षसद्धोता वेदिषदतिथिर्दुरोणसत् ।

नृषद्वरसदृतसद्वयोमसदब्जा गोजाऽऋतजाऽद्रिजाऽऋतम्बृहत् ॥

hagumsa: sucishadvasurantarikshasaddhOtA

vEdhisha datithirdurONasat |

nrushadvarasadrutasad vyOmasadabjA gOjA

rutajA adrijA rutam bruhat ||

---Y.V: 12.14

MEANING:

The Lord, Sriman nArAyaNaa is :

1. the destroyer of evil deeds;
2. the embodiment of purity;
3. the supporter of all that is virtuous;
4. firm and steadfast like an anchor rock in holding the laws of sAstham;
5. the promulgator of sathyam;
6. Omnipresent in every nook and corner of His creation as the indweller;
7. eminently adorable to invoke spontaneous eulogies from His bhakthAs;
8. indweller of the minds of those whom He adores such as His devotees and the Yogis;
9. He is forever tied with what is Truth and He is the creator of the vital prANans, the animals (two and four-footed),
10. the creator of the VedAs,
11. the harbinger of rain-laden clouds and He is the embodiment of Truth and



12. is mighty in form and sweep.

This is a tremendous conception of the Lord of Srirangam and His glories. He is the pUthAthmA (the ever-pure Self); hence, he destroys effortlessly all of our sins. He is the ParamAthmA and mukthAnAm paramA gathi: (supreme goal of the realized souls). He is the Purushan (the generous giver) and the SaakshI (witness) of all of our deeds. He is PradhAna PurushEsvaran (the Lord of primordial matter and the jeevans). He is indeed sathyam, Jn~Anam and Anantham and Brhamman. This Veda Manthram salutes this wonderful, multi-facetted Lord.

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NamperumAL in MoolasthAnam
Pic. Courtesy : Sri. Murali BhaTTar
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A PROFOUND PRAYER TO THIS LORD OF MANY ATTRIBUTES

तेजोसि तेजो मयि धेहि वीर्यमसि वीर्यं मयि धेहि

बलमसि बलं मयि धेह्योजोस्योजो मयि धेहि

मन्युरसि मन्युं मयि धेहि सहोसि सहो मयि धेहि

tEjOsi tEjO mayi dhEhi veeryamasi veeryam mayi dhEhi

balamasi balam mayi dhEhyO jOasyOjO mayi dhEhi

manyurasi manyum mayi dhEhi sahoasi saho mayi dhEhi

--Y.V. XIX.9

MEANING:

O Lord of Srirangam!

1. Thou art lustre! Please bless me with lustre.
2. Thou art manly valor; please grant me that valor.
3. Thou art the embodiment of Strength; please grant me strength to bear the vicissitudes of life on this earth.
4. Thou art the vitality; please bless me with vitality.
5. Thou art righteous indignation and anger; please give me the vivekam to have that righteous indignation.
6. Thou art forbearance; please bless me with forbearance to forgive those, who commit apachAras against Your laws and Your BhaagavathAs.





Ascent to the Highest Jyothi: The steps
ThirukkUDal ashTAnga vimAnam
(Courtesy: rAmAnuja dAsargaL at pbase.com/svami)



ASCENT TO THE HIGHEST JYOTHI: THE STEPS

प्रथिव्याऽहमुदन्तरिक्षमारुहमन्तरिक्षाद् दिवमारुहम् ।

दिवो नाकस्य पृष्ठात्स्वर्ज्योतिरगामहम् ॥

pruthivyA ahamudantariksham

aaruhamantarikshaad divamAruham |

divO nAkasya prushThAt svajyOtiragAmaham ||

--Y.V: XVII.67

MEANING:

Through the practice of YogA, from physical force (prANAyAmam et al prescribed in ashtAnga Yogam), I rise to the higher plateau of mental force; from mental force, I rise next to the even higher plateau of spiritual force; from spiritual force, I rise higher to YOU, the bliss-giving jyOthi.

Alternatively, this manthram has been translated to mean that a steadfast Yogi rises from earth to space, from space to the Sun, from the Sun to the height of happiness, Sri Vaikuntam.





THE LORD IS HIGHER THAN THIS EARTH AND HEAVEN

परो दिवा पर एना पृथिव्या परो देवेभिरसुरैर्यदस्ति ।

कस्विद् गर्भं प्रथमन्दघ्नऽपो यत्र देवाः समपश्यन्त पूर्वे ॥

parO divA para yEnA pruthivya parO

dEvEbhirasurairyadasti |

kagumsvid garbham prathamam daghra

aapO yatra dEvA: samapaSyanta pUrvE ||

---Y.V: XVII.29

MEANING:

God is higher (more profound and lofty) than this earth and heaven. He is higher than the learned living beings (scholars of the VedAs). He is beyond the divisions of Time (KaalAtheethan). It is through His action, the erring souls enter numerous births and assume different bodies. It is HIM, the realized ones see with their spiritual eyes.

The Lord of Srirangam, who is "SamsAra-Moksha-sthithi-bhandha hEthu:" (BhagavAn is at once the root cause for the bondage, release and sustenance of this universe) is a much higher principle than the prakruthi and chEthanams. This sakthimathAm srEshtan is not bound by time. He has no past, present or future. Yogis recognize this gathi sattaman (the best instructor of the path of dharmam) and see Him with their JnA~na dhrishtis.





A PRAYER TO THE ONE WHO IS CONNECTED TO REVATHI

Sri RanganAthan is said to have incarnated during the reign of the constellation of Revathi in response to the tapas of Brahma Devan. He is called therefore Revathi Rangan just as Sri VenkatEsan is saluted as SravaNa VenkatEsan. The following Yajur Veda Manthram recognizes Him as the embodiment of Vedic Speech (Revathi) and begs Him to remain in the altar of Srirangam, the MahA Yaj-na kshEthram and not to move away. The Yajur Veda manthram (I I I .21) is as follows:

रेवती रमध्वमस्मिन्योनावस्मिन्गोष्ठेस्मिल्लोकेस्मिन्क्षये ।

इहैव स्त मापगात

rEvaTl ramadhvamasminyOnAvasmin

gOshThEsmin IOkEsmin kshayE |

ihaiva sta mApagAta ||



Sri Rangan KOil gOpurams (Courtesy: Sri. Murali BhaTTar)

MEANING:

Oh Vedic Speech! May Thou Remain right here at this altar, in this Yaj-na, at this spot and in this house. Please remain here and travel not far from here!



A PRAYER FOR THE BOON OF TRUE (VEDIC) KNOWLEDGE

स्वयम्भूरसि श्रेष्ठो रश्मिर्वर्चोदाऽसि वर्चो मे देहि ।

सूर्यस्यावृतमन्वावर्ते ॥

svayambhUrasi srEshThO raSmivarcOdhA

asi varcO mE dEhi |

sUryasyAvrutamanvAvartE ||

---Y.V. II. 26

MEANING:

Oh Lord! Thou art self-manifested! Most supreme and self-effulgent! Thou art the grantor of true knowledge. Bless me with that true knowledge. I will follow your command.



ANOTHER PRAYER TO SRI RANGANAATHAN

अग्नेदब्धायोशीतम पाहि मा दिद्यो पाहि

प्रसित्यै पाहि दुरिष्ट्यै पाहि दुरद्वन्या

अविषं नः पितुंकृणु सुषदा योनौ स्वाहा

वाङ्मये संवेशपतये स्वाहा सरस्वत्यै

यशोभगिन्यै स्वाहा ॥

agnEdabdhAyOaSeetama paahi maa didyO paahi

prasityai paahi durishTyai paahi duradmanyA

avisham na: pitum kruNu sushadA yOnau svAhA

vAdagnayE samvEsapatayE svAhA sarasvatyai

yasObhaginyai svAhA ||

---Y.V II.20

MEANING:

Oh akshara Brahmam (immortal One)! Oh Omnipresent One! Please protect me from intense pain (of SamsAram), protect me from the bondages of sin and ignorance, and protect me from falling into the company of evil-minded people, protect me from partaking food that is injurious to (physical and spiritual) health. Make Thou our annam free from injurious ingredients (poison). Grant me the boon to live in a comfortable house praying to Thee and doing auspicious deeds prescribed by Your SaasthrAs. This is Our prayer to You, the Lord and Master of this universe. May we acquire pure knowledge through the study of the VedAs and be blessed with sarva mangaLams.





(PRANAVAM) IS MY NAME: THE LAST MANTHRAM OF YAJUR VEDAM

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।

योसावादित्ये पुरुषः सोऽसावहम् ।

ओं खम्बह्म ॥

hiraNmayEna pAtrENa satyasyApihitam mukham |

yOsAvAdityE purusha: sOasAvaham |

Omkam bhramma ||

MEANING:

O Earthlings! By Me--the resplendent protector--is covered the face of eternal cause, the matter. The moving spirit yonder in the Sun, that spirit dwelling inside the Sun is Me (Surya-nArAyaNan). I am vast in expanse like the atmosphere, greatest of all in merit, and nature is Me. Om is my name!

To that praNava SvarUpi resting under PraNavAkruthi VimAnam at Srirangam, we offer our salutations as we reflect upon the selected manthrams of Yajur Vedam.

adiyEn will conclude with Swami Desikan's prayer housed in the mUla manthrAdhikAram section of Srimadh Rahasya Thraya Saaram:

तारं पूर्वं तदनु हृदयं तच्च नारायणायेति

आम्नायोक्तं पद्मवयतां सार्थमाचार्यदत्तम् ।

अङ्गीकुर्वन् अलस-मनसां आत्मरक्षाभरं नः

क्षिप्रं देवः क्षिपतु निखिलान् किङ्करैश्वविघ्नान् ॥





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"PraNavam is My Name"

ParavAsudevan as He appears in PraNavAkAra VimAnam - Sri Rangam

(Pic Courtesy : Sri MuraLi BhaTTar)

www.Srirangapankajam.com





taaram pUrvam tadanu hrudayam tacca naarAyaNAyEti
 aamNAyOktam padamavayatAm sArddhamAcArya dattam |
 angl kurvan alasa-manasAm AatmarakshAbharam na:
 kshipram dEva: kshipatu nikhilAn kinkaraisvarya vighnAn ||

WORD BY WORD MEANING:

pUrvam- at first; thAram - praNavam; tadhanu - after that; hrudayam -
 namas sabdham; tat ca - after nama: sabdham; nArAyaNaaya iti - the word
 nArAyaNaaya.

aamNAyOktam padam - the word which is declared by the VedAs and
 saasthrams AcAryadattam - and given to us as upadEsam by our AchAryAs
 with its meaning.

avayatAm alasa manasAm na:, aatma rakshAbharam ankeekurvan Deva: --
 For us who reflect on the mUla manthram, for us, who are powerless and
 Akinchanaas, Our Lord has accepted the responsibility and burden of
 protecting us.

sa Deva: nikhilAn kinkara aisvaryam vignAn kshipram kshipatu -- May that
 Lord Of Ours, remove quickly all the obstacles that come in the way of our
 acquisition of the kaimkarya Sampath (the wealth of servitude to our Lord).

Sri RanganAthA has the sthAna VisEsha AdhikAram of Moola Manthram and to
 that Lord, who declared in the last manthram of Yajur Vedam that "Om is His
 name", we render our salutations and pray for His blessings.





SRI RANGANATHA AS RG VEDA SVARUPI

Homage to "Sri RanganAtha, the Rg Veda SvarUpi" as represented by the third kalasam on His praNavakruthi vimaanam at Srirangam.

We will focus on nine Rg Veda manthrams to salute Sri RanganAthA. I will focus on one manthram from the first nine kaandams of Rg Vedam. The marriage manthrams came from the 10th Kaandam and have already been covered extensively.

THE PRIMORDIAL LORD RANGANAATHAA

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।

एकं सद विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥

indram mitram varuNam agnim AhurathO

divya: sa superNO garutmAn |

yEkam sad viprA bahudhA vadantyagnim

yamam maatarisvAnamAhu: ||

---Rg. Vedam I.164.46

MEANING:

He (Sriman nArAyaNaa) is THE ONE, though the learned priests call Him by different names, such as IndrA, MithrA, VaruNA, agni, SuperNA, GaruthmAn, Yaman and Maatharisvan in their Yagnams.

Indra here refers to His resplendent feature; MitrA means the surveyor, the Visva Saakshi aspect of the Lord of Srirangam. VaruNA recognizes that He is the most venerable; agni covers His adorable attributes; He is the celestial one soaring skyward and beyond as the well-winged GaruthmAn (the great One). He (Sri Ranganathan) is the Yaman or the Ordainer of rewards and





punishments. He is the life behind the universe (cosmic breath) as inferred from His name as Maatarisvan. The learned priests call the Very same Para Brahmam by many names and yet the object of their adoration is the ONLY ONE: Sriman naarAyaNA.

The learned priests (ViprA:) is the equivalent of "Inn kavi paadum parama kavigal" saluted by NammAzhwAr. The object of salutation is "Periyavappan" of NammAzhwAr' Thiruvaimozhi (8.1.11). He is also called by AzhwAr as "tannoppArillappan" in Thiruvinnagr Thiruvaimozhi and as "ulahukkOr taniappan" (Grand Master of All DevAs and their in-dweller).

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"The Primordial Lord"

(Pic. Courtesy:: rAmAnuja dAsargal at pbase.com/svami)





THE ONE AND ONLY PROTECTOR: SRI RANGANAATHA

न तमहो न दुरितं कृतश्चन नारतयस्तितिरुर्न द्वयाविनः ।

विश्वा इद् अस्माद् ध्वरसो वि बाधसे यं सुगोपा रक्षसि ब्रह्मणस्पते ॥

na tamahO na duritam kutascana

nArAtayas titirur na dvyAvina: |

visvA id asmad dhvarasO vi

bAdhasE yamm sugOpA rakshasi brhamaNaspatE ||

----Rg Vedam II. 23.5

MEANING:

No one AND no power on earth or heaven will harm the person, whom, YOU, the Lord Omnipotent and Superscient have decided to defend and protect. Neither sin nor sorrow from any quarter, neither sworn enemies nor hypocrites or double dealers will ever succeed in harming the Bhaktha (like PrahlAdhA or GajendrA or Draupathi) that YOU have vowed to protect. You with Your infinite power drive away all treacherous and injurious harms that come their way.

This is the essence of abhaya PradhAna Saaram. "abhayam sarva bhUthEbhyO dadhAmyEthadh vratham mama" was the declaration of the Lord in Srimadh RaamAyaNam (Yuddha Kaandham 18.34). This is known as SaraNya abhiprAyam (the inner thought of the Rakshakan). That is why Prapatthi in essence is "Moksha Paryantha sakala purushArtha Saadhanam" in Swami Desikan's view.

Swami Desikan expresses the same Vedic thought in the 37th slokam of Sri VaradarAja PanchAsath: O Lord VaradarAja! "mayi rakshaNeeyE dharmAdhi bhAhya sahakAri gavashaNE na kim vaa? -- Bhavatha sankalpa yEva nipuNa; sahAya:". O Lord! I am an akinchanan. In the matter of protecting me, what is the point of seeking external help like nithya, naimmitthika dharmams? Your





own sankalpam (determination) is the most capable and unfailing assistance for me. There is nothing else.

The prayer of KaamasikhAshtakam, "tvayi rakshathi rakshakai: kimanyal : tvayichArakshathi rakshakai: kimanyai:" is also an echo of this sentiment. Swami asks rhetorically, "When You have vowed to protect one, where is the need for others? When You have decided not to protect one, what can be the use of other "protectors"?"

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ACHAARYA BHAKTHI: RG VEDAM III.27.1

This manthram reminds one of Mathura kavi AzhwAr, who rejected the Lord in favor of his AchAryA. "thEvu maRRaRiyEn KuruhUr Nambi paavinnisai paadit thirivEnE" is the statement of Madhura Kavi. The echoing Rg Veda Manthram is III.27.1:

प्र वाे वाजा अभिद्यवो हविष्मन्तो घृताच्या ।

इदेवन् जिगाति सुम्नयाः ॥

pra vOvAjA abhidyavO havishmantO grutAcyA

idEvAn jigAti sumnaya: ||

MEANING:

With the gifts of nourishing and tasteful food and with butter-yielding cows and other objects worthy of oblations, the worshipper (disciple) in search of happiness (true knowledge) approaches the enlightened AchAryAs.



Udayavar - Sri Rangam
(Courtesy : Sri. MuraLi BhaTTar)





INVOCATION AND INVITATION TO THE LORD

RG VEDAM--IV.29.1

आ न स्तुत उप वाजेभिर्जती इन्द्र याहि हरिभिर्मन्दसानः ।

तिरश्चिद अर्यः सवना पुरूण्यै अङ्गुषेभिर्गृणानः सत्यराधाः ॥

Aa na; stuta upa vAjEbhira Uti

indra yAhi haribhirmandasAna: |

tiras cid aryah: savana purUNyai

angUshEbhira grUNAna: satyarAdhA: ||

MEANING:

Saluted and eulogized with sacred hymns,
O Resplendent Lord, most auspicious
embodiment of truth (rutham, sathyam),
May Thou rush to our places of worship
and work with the speed of light and
powered by the ecstasy of Your
matchless strength and protect us.



"Eulogizing the Lord with sacred Hymns "

Sri. Murali Bhattar performing
AngUrArpaNa ritual during Panguni-
Uththiram 2007 festival at Sri Rangam





A PRAYER FOR LORD'S NOURISHMENT - RG VEDAM V.6.4

आ ते अग्न इधीमहि द्युमन्तं देवाजरम् ।

यद्ध स्या ते पनीयसि समिद् दीदयति द्यवीषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥

Aa tE agna idheemahi dyumantam dEvAjaram |
yaddha syA tE paneeyasI samid deedayati dyavisham
stOtrubhya Aa bhara ||

MEANING:

"O Adorable Lord! We kindle your bright, eternal light in our hearts so that its lustre shines deep in our hearts. May Thou grant nourishment to us who adore You!". The next manthram goes on salute this Lord of bright light as the bestower of bliss and protector of the righteous.



"We kindle your bright eternal light in our heart!"

Sri. Murali BhaTTar performing hOmam during Garuda PratishTai





DHRUVAM JYOTHI: THE STEADY LIGHT - RG VEDAM: VI.9.6

वि मे कर्णा पतयतो वि चक्षुर्वीदं ज्योतिर्हृदय आहितं यत् ।

वि मे मनश्चरति दूराधीः किं स्विद्वक्ष्यामि किमु नू मनिष्ये ॥

vi mE karNA patayatO vi cakshurveedam

jyOtir hrudaya aahitam yat |

vi mE manascarati dUraadhee:

kim svid vakshyAmi kimu nU manishyE ||

MEANING:

My ears are turned (tuned) to hear Him (His footsteps); my eyes are straining to behold Him (His approaching Form); the divine light shining in my heart is also eager to know (recognize) Him. My mind, the receptacle of distant objects, hastens towards Him (like a sprinting deer). What shall I speak (when I see Him)? How shall I comprehend Him and give Him His due accord?





THE LORD IS NEAR AND DEAR - RG VEDAM - VII.15.1

उपसद्याय मीळहुष आस्ये जुहुता हविः ।

upasadyaaya meeLahusha Aasye juhutaa havi: |

MEANING:

Oh people! Offer homage to the ever-present, adorable Lord, the grantor of boons (VaradarAjan) and the dispenser of auspicious blessings. Offer your homage directly as He is available (present) in our close proximity.



Thirukachchi VaradarAja PerumAL with ubhaya nAchchiyArs
taken during rA paththu festival in 2004
(Courtesy: rAmAnuja dAsargaL at pbase.com/svami)



ACHALA BHAKTHI - RG VEDAM -- VIII.1.1

मा चिद् अन्यद् वि शंसत सखायो मा रिषण्यत ।

इन्द्रमित् स्तोता वृषणं सचा सुते मुहुर्उक्था च शंसत ॥

maa cid anyad vi Samsata sakhAyO maa rishaNyata |

indramit stOtA vrushaNam sacA sutE muhur ukthA ca samsata ||

MEANING:

O Dear Ones! Do not offer worship to anyone but Him, the divine One (nArAyaNA). Let no grief or doubt perturb you. Praise Him alone and sing His glories. Eulogize Him alone, the radiant, and the shower of sadhanugrahams. During the course of your self-realization, continue to repeat uttering hymns in praise of Him.



"The radiant and the shower of sadhanugrahams"



A PRAYER FOR PURIFICATION - RG VEDAM - IX.67.25

उभाभ्यां देव सवितः पवित्रेण सवेन च ।

मां पुनीहि विश्वतः ॥

ubhAbhyAm dEva savita: pavitrENa savEna ca |

maam puneehi visvata: ||

MEANING:

O Impeller of auspicious thoughts! O Light supreme! Purify me by your processes of filtration and effusion both; purify me from every side.

Sri RanganAthA, the parama pavithran, is the Purifier that we seek in the state of wakefulness, sleep and sushphti.

The very same Sri RanganAthA, the indweller of Indran, VaruNan and others is requested by one of the manthrams of Sri MahA NaarAyaNOpanishad to destroy completely all the sins committed by a person and their family.

यन्मे मनसा वाचा कमर्णा वा दुष्कृतं कृतम् ।

तन्न इन्द्रो वरुणो ब्रुहस्पतिः सविता च पुनन्तु पुनः पुनः ॥

yanmE manasA vAcA karmANA vaa dushkrutam krutam |

tanna indrO varuNO bruhaspati: savita ca punantu puna: puna: ||

---Maha naarAyaNOpanishad (MNU): I.56





uchchishTa brahman



SRI RANGANATHA AS ATHARVA VEDA SVARUPI

The fourth kalasam on the praNavAkruthi vimAnam represents the atharva Vedam. Our Lord is also the atharva Veda SvarUpi. Let us reflect on selected atharva Veda Manthrams from the assembly of the total of 5933 Manthrams.

THE SACREDNESS OF ATHARVA VEDAM

atharva Vedam is the last of the four VedAs and it was fashionable to consider it as less important than other three vedams. Fortunately, this view has diminished in importance with time.

This Vedam is closely tied with sages atharvaNA and AngirA. The literal translation of the name of the above two sages (Rishis) have been given as:

atharvan - holy magic bringing happiness

Angiras - hostile or black magic

The manthrams however contain more “theosophical matter” than any other samhithA and it is unfortunate that the atharva Vedam was not considered as an equal to the other three by the Vedic priests for a long time. The Gopatha BrAhmaNam and the Mundaka Upanishad are associated with atharva Vedam and house some of the profound thoughts linked to atharva Vedam.

UCCHISHTA BRAHMAM AS THE COSMIC CREATOR

The concept of ucchishta bhrammam (Final Reality, Sarva Seshi, akshara Brahman, and the undecaying Self) is housed in this Vedam. In addition to housing Purusha sUktham like the other three VedAs, atharva Vedam salutes with great reverence the Cosmic form of the Creator in a glorious hymn known as “Skhamba sUktham” (AV X.7.1-44). The heights of imagination, the sacredness of the conceptions are matchless.

Our Lord SrIman nArAyaNaa is visualized in this Vedam as the Master Weaver,



who weaves the entire Universe with His divine thread (tanthu) of Unified Law (rOhithO dhyAvA pruthvee jajAna tathra tanthum paramEshtee tathAna).

Sriman nArAyaNaa, our Lord is conceived as the divine support (Skhambha) that sustains the Universe --the terrestrial, the interspaces and the celestial regions --in the most perfect manner. Great concepts of Mathematics are invoked to describe the way in which our Lord balances the entire creation and holds the six dimensions of space in a marvelous equilibrium (skhambhO dhAdhAra pravisA: shaDurvee skhambha idham bhuvanamA vivEsa). His leela of Creation at the auspicious stage (Srirangam) has been compared to the weaving of a Cosmic Cloth "with divine woofs and warps, shuttles and pegs, the art of two divine maidens (day and night) working incessantly in the parameters of Space and Time". What a lofty vision ! What a grand concept that wins over the unified Theory of Relativity!

SCOPE OF THE REST OF THE COVERAGE OF THIS KAIMKARYAM

The 5933 Manthrams of atharva Vedam are housed in twenty Kaandams. We will pay our salutations to eighteen of the manthrams from the different Kaandams.



THE WIFE'S VOW (PATHIVRATHA DHARMAM)

इदं खनामि भेषजं मांपश्यमभिरोरुदम् ।

परायतो निवर्तनमायतः प्रतिनन्दनम् ॥

idam khanAmi bhEshajam maampaSyamabhirOrudam

parAyatO nivartanamAyata: pratinandanam ||

--atharva Vedam: VII.39.1

MEANING:

I, the wife, the Sumangali, take this sacred vow that makes my wedded husband look at me, that deters him from straying afar from me, that bids him to return to me after being away and greet him with affection as he returns to my side.



Sri Rangam Serthi SEvai (Courtesy pbase.com/svami)





LORD OF THREE SPOKES AND THREE SUPPORTS

तस्मिन् हिरण्यये त्रयरे त्रिप्रतिष्ठते ।

तस्मिन् यद्यक्षमात्मन्वत्तद्वै ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ॥

tasmin hiraNyayE trayarE tripratishThatE |

tasmin yad yakshamAtmanvat tadvai brahmavido vidu: ||

---A.V X.2.32

MEANING:

Men deeply conversant with the knowledge about Brahman know that our Lord, who dwells in the multi-powered soul with three spokes and three supports.

One set of the triad of spokes has been described as:

1. sthaanam (Capacity),
2. naamam (Token, Sign) and
3. janmam (Existence).

The three supports have been interpreted as:

1. karma (Action),
2. upaasanaa (Contemplation) and
3. jn~anam (knowledge).

The SthAna VisEshAdhikAram, the naama SiddhAntham and Janmam as BhagavathA have been covered in the different sections of Sri Ranganaatha Mahimai volumes of ebooks.. Bhagavadh GitA is an epitome of Karma, Jn~Ana and Bhakthi YogAs leading to Prapatthi Yogam to acquire Moksham.

All of these concepts (tattvams) are covered in this profound manthram.





ETERNAL BRAHMAM AND ITS ACTIVITIES

अपादग्रे समभवत्सो अग्रे स्वराभरत् ।

चतुष्पाद् भूत्वा भोग्यः सर्वमादत्त भोजनम् ॥

apAdagrE samabhavat sO agrE svarAbharat |

catushpaad bhUtvA bhOgya: sarvamAdatta bhOjanam ||

-----A.V: X.8.21

MEANING:

Our Lord, the indivisible, existed before creating this world. He realized perfect joy prior to engaging in the act of creation of His world, just as a soul that experiences after being blessed with Moksham to perform nithya Kaimkaryam in Sri Vaikuntam. Being four-footed, our ruler of the Universe absorbed the whole universe that He created in Himself as food at the time of MahA praLayam.

While resting in the state of Yoga nidrA at Srirangam, He thinks with joy about Creation as a LeelA. He protects His creation and at the end of the cycle, protects the worlds by consuming them and releases them in the next cycle (Vatapathra Saayee).

The reference to Him being four-footed covers the concept of our Lord existing as:

1. PrakAsavAN (with lustre),
2. ananthavAn (limitless/infinity),
3. JyOthishmAn (Cosmic Intelligence) and
4. AayathanavAn (Immensity)".

These are the four metaphoric feet of our Lord as conceived by this mantram. He is as the Upanishad visualizes Him: Yesha sEthurvitharaNa: He is the





immense, intelligent, lustrous Brahma sEthu (bridge) that safely gets us across the turbulent seas of samsAram.

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"PrakAshavAn, anantavAn, jyOtishmAn and aAyatanavAn"

namperumAL in SEsha vAhanam

(Pic. Courtesy; rAmAnuja dAsargaL at pbase.com/svami)





HOMAGE TO THAT IMMENSE LORD AT THE THREE SANDHIS

नमः सायं नमः प्रातर्नमो रात्र्या नमो दिवा ।

भवाय च शर्वाय च चोभाभ्यामकरं नमः ॥

nama: sAyam nama: pratarnamO raatryA namO divA |

bhavaaya ca Sarvaaya cObhAbhyAmakaram nama: ||

--- A.V: XI.2.16

MEANING:

Salutations to the Lord at evening and at dawn, homage at night, homage by the day (noon). I have paid my humble obeisance to both His mighty powers of creation and dissolution.





HIS OMNIPOTENCE AND OMNIPRESENCE

अग्निरासीन उत्थितोऽश्विना ।

इन्द्रः प्राङ्तिष्ठन्दक्षिणा तिष्ठन्यमः ॥

प्रत्यङ्तिष्ठन्धातोदङ्तिष्ठन्त्सविता ॥

agnirAseena utthitOasvinA | -- A.V: IX. 7.19

indra: prAng tishThan dakshiNA tishThan yama: | -- 7.20

pratyang tishThan dhAtOdang tishThantsavitA || -- 7.21

MEANING A.V.IX.7.19:

In the seated position, He is the sacred Fire and in the standing position, He is Day and Night.

COMMENTS ON A.V. IX.7.19:

At ShOlingar, He is agni as the seated Yogapattai-Narasimhan; At ThiruviNNagar, He stands as Day and Night at the banks of AhOrAthra PushkaraNi.

MEANING: A.V.IX.7.20 AND 21:

Standing Eastwards, He is full of Glory; standing southwards, He is full of Justice. Standing (facing) westwards, He is the supporter, standing northwards, He is the Creator.

COMMENTS ON A.V.IX.7.20 AND 21:

Sri RanganAthA faces southwards (Therkku Paarkkum RaajA). As dharmO vighravAn, He is full of justice and blesses VibheeshaNA after destroying RavaNA. He established dharmam and met out justice. He faces southwards at





ThiruvitthuvakkOdu as well to hear the moving Prapatthi of KulasEkahra AzhwAr.



VibhI shaNA at Sri Rangam
(Pic.Courtesy: Sri. MuraLi BhaTTar)

At Kaancheepuram, on Garuda Sevai day, He emerges out of the western gate and always looks westwards as our supporter/rakshakan. Other Divya desams, where He faces west besides Kancheepuram are: ThiruvAli, ThirukkaLvanUr, DwArakai, ThirutthEvanArthogai, Thiru Nandhipura ViNNagaram, ThirunilAtthingaL thundam, Thirup ParamEsvara ViNNagaram, Thirup PaarthanpaLLi, ThiruvaNNvaNDUr, ThiruvAttAru and Thiruvehha.

At ThiruvallikkENi and many other Divya Desams, He faces eastwards and is full of glory (Indra:praangh tishtan). At ThiruvallikkENi, he is full of glory as the paramAchAryA, who gave us the charama sIOkam.

At ThirukkOzhi (UraiyUr), He faces northwards as Azhagiya maNavALan, the Creator, the beautiful bridegroom.



SAGUNA BRAHMMAM: SRI VISISHTAADHVAITHIC LORD

उच्छिष्टे नाम रूपं चोच्छिष्टे लोक आहितः ।

उच्छिष्टे इन्द्रश्चाग्निश्च विश्वमन्तः समाहितम् ॥

ucchishTE naama rUpam cOchishTE IOka aahita: |

ucchishTE indrasccAgnisca viSvamanta: samAhitam ||

-- A.V. XI.7.1

MEANING:

"God contains the name and form, and the world. Cloud and Sun and the whole Universe are comprised within Him". The Saareerika doctrine as elaborated in Sri Bhaashyam is covered by this profound manthram.



A PRAYER FOR THE VEDA PURUSHAN TO DWELL INSIDE US

ऋग्साम यजुरुच्छिष्ट उद्गीथः प्रस्तुतं स्तुतम् ।

हिङ्कार उच्छिष्टे स्वरः साम्नो मेदिश्च तन्मयि ॥

rg saama yajurucchishTa udgeetha: prastutam stutam|

himkAra ucchishTE svara: saamnO mEdisca tanmayi ||

---A.V: XI.7.5



NamperumAl with chief priest Sri Srinivasa Bhattar (a nanogenarian) at

Srirangam Temple

(Pic.Courtesy: Sri. MuraLi BhaTTar)

MEANING:

The recitation of the Rg, Yajur and Saama Manthrams as well as the chanting





of the Saama Saamans by UdhghAthA priest, the Saamans sung by the PrastOtA (a praiser) priest at the beginning of the Yaj~nam and the other Saama Saamans recited in laudatory mode, the reverberations (hum), the tone and the murmur of the Rks and Saamans, ALL REST IN HIM. May He reside in me, the soul!

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SRI RANGANATHA KAVACHAM (A.V : XII.3.24)

अग्निः पचन्नक्षतु त्वा पुरस्तादिन्द्रो रक्षतु दक्षिणतो मरुत्वान् ।

वरुणस्त्वा दृंहाद्धरुणे प्रतीच्या उत्तरात्तवा सामः सं ददातै ॥

agni pacan rakshatu tvaa purastAd indrO rakshatu

dakshiNatO marutvAn |

varuNas tvaa drumhAddharuNE prateecyA uttarAt tvaa

sOma: sam dadaatai ||

MEANING:

May the Omniscient Lord strengthening thee, protect thee from the Eastern direction! May the Opulent, splendid Lord guard thee from the Southern direction! May the supreme Lord support thee from the western direction with His strength and power! May our Lord, the cosmic creator hold thee together from the north!





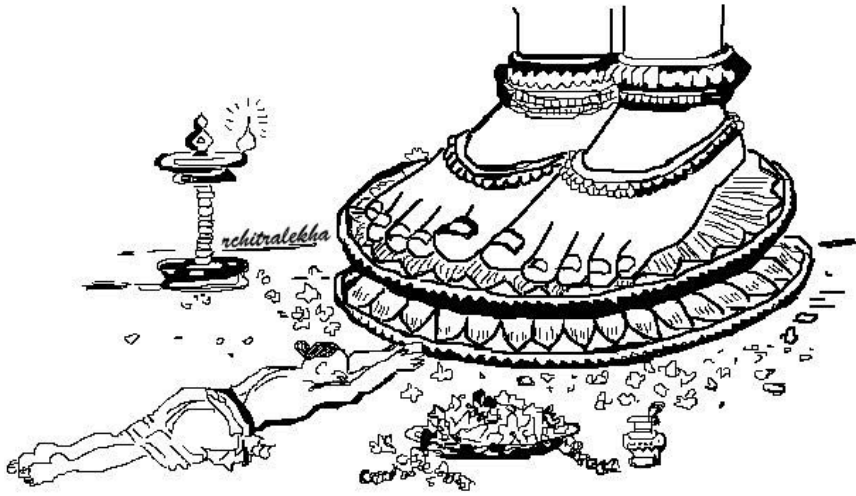
A PRAYER FOR PURIFICATION AND LONG LIFE - AV: XII.2.13

अस्मिन्वयं संकसुके अग्नौ रिप्राणि मृज्महे ।

अभूम यज्ञियाः शुद्धाः प्र ण आयूँषि तारिषत् ॥

asmin vayam samkasukE agnou riprANi mrujmahE |

abhUma yaj~niyA: suddhA: pra Na aayugumshi tArishat ||



sharaNam aham prabhadyE

(Art Work Courtesy :Sow. R. Chitraklekha)

MEANING:

We dissolve our blemishes away with the anugrahm of our Lord, the Omniscient. We have achieved the state of purity in His Company and have become qualified to do Yaj~nams. May the benevolent Lord give us long lives!





SRI RANGANATHA: SARVA SAAKSHEE - AV: XIII.2.41

सर्वा दिशः समचरद्रोहितोऽधिपतिर्दिवः ।

दिवं समुद्रमाद भूमिं सर्वं भूतं वि रक्षति ॥

sarvA disa: samacarad rohitOadhipatir diva: |

divam samudrAmAd bhUmim sarvam bhUtham vi rakshati ||

MEANING:

God, the Emperor of light penetrates all regions. He watches over the celestial region, the Oceans and the earth and all the beings, He has created.



The Emperor of Light!

(Pic .Courtesy: www.pbase.com/svami)



VEDIC KNOWLEDGE AND SRI RANGANATHA - AV: XV.6.9

ऋचां च वै स साम्नां च यजुषां च

ब्रह्मणश्च प्रियं धाम भवति य एवं वेद ॥

rucAm ca vai sa saamnAm ca yajushAm ca

brahmaNasca priyam dhAma bhavati ya yEvam vEda |

MEANING:

He who is Brahmaidh (Knower of Brahman) becomes the chosen abode of the four VedAs.

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"The chosen abode of the four vedAs"

(Pic.Courtesy: rAmAnuj a dAsargaL at pbase.com/svami)



A PRAYER FOR THE EMBRACE OF THE LORD - AV: XIX.15.4

उरूं नो लोकमनु नेषि विद्वान्त्स्वर्यज्ज्योतिरभयं स्वस्ति ।

उग्रा त इन्द्र स्थविरस्य बाहू उप क्षयेम शरण बृहन्ता ॥

urUm nO lOkamanu nEshi vidvAntsvAr-

yajjyOtirabhayam svasti |

ugrA ta indra sthavirasya bAhU

upa kshayEma SaraNA bruhantA ||

MEANING:

O Glorious Lord! Thou take us by hand to the vast riches, bliss and to your parama padham, where shines the light of knowledge, perfect peace reigns and one is free from fear of any kind. Your divine arms are strong and powerful. They are steadfast in coming to our rescue; your arms are firm in lifting us over all dangers. May we be blessed to find ample refuge as PrapannAs in Your strong arms!



"Refuge in His strong arms"



A CALL FOR LORD'S HELP - AV: 20.26.1

योगे योगे तवस्तरं वाजेवाजे हवामहे ।

सखाय इन्द्रमूतये ॥

yOgE yOgE tavastaram vAjE vAjE havAmahE |

sakhayA indramUtayE ||



Devoted bhAgavthAs

(Pic.Courtesy: Sri. MuraLi BhaTTar)

MEANING:

O Lord, As BhagavathAs devoted to your service, we seek your help and guidance in every act of meditation undertaken by us; we seek your assistance and blessings in every act of acquiring true knowledge about your commands and SaasthrAs.



ACHAARYAA'S COUNSEL TO THE PEOPLE - AV: 20.58.2

अनर्शरातिं वसुदामुप स्तुहि भद्रा इन्द्रस्य रातयः ।

सो अस्य कामं विधतो न रोषति मनो दानाय चोदयन् ॥

anarSarAtim vasudAmupa stuhi bhadra indrasya rAtaya: |

sO asya kAmam vidhatO na rOshati manO dAnAya cOdayan ||

MEANING:

O SamsAri! Worship the Lord, whose gifts are flawless. He is the generous grantor of riches and wealth beyond your imagination. He is VaradrAjan, the king of boon-givers. Those boons are the most auspicious and they are bountiful. He is the Lord of immeasurable fortunes. He does not turn down the wishes of His devotees in anger, but He has vowed to grant the boons that you seek.





namperumAL in jeerapuram
(Pic.Courtesy:Sri.Murali BhaTTar)



ACHAARYAA'S DESCRIPTION OF THE MIGHTY LORD

AV: 20.60.1

यो अद्रिभित्प्रथमजा ऋतावा बृहस्पतिराङ्गिरसो हविष्मान् ।

द्विबर्हज्मा प्राघर्मसत्पिता न आ रोदसी वृषभो रोरवीति ॥

yO adribhit prathamajA rutAvA

bruhaspatirAngirasO havishmAn |

dvibarhajmA prAgharmasatpitA na aa

rodasee vrushabhO rOraveeti ||

MEANING:

Our Lord (Sri Ranganatha) is the great protector of His vast universe. He is the Master of the Vedic knowledge. He is the banisher of the dark clouds of vipareetha jn~Anam and evil. He is the First revealer (prathamAchAryaa). He is indeed the ordained and the regulator of the laws of nature. He is the one, who enters the created beings as antharyAmi Brahmam. He is the one, who supplies the nourishment to the embryo in the mother's womb and food to the thErai (toad) inside the stone. He is firmly positioned in Heaven and Earth. He is resolutely linked to devotees, knowledge and action. He is the One, who provides the heat and light to the burning Sun. He is our protector and nourisher like a father to His children and showers His blessings on us unflinchingly. Hark! Listen! He loudly proclaims His instructions all around the earth and Heavens through His AchAryAs and sends His nithyasUris as His messengers to help us reach Him.





18. SVASTHI MANTHRAM (AV: 20.143.8)

In this manthram before the very last manthram of Atharva Vedam, benedictions to the world and its beings are housed and an appeal is made to follow the saastraic injunctions of our Lord RanganAthA:

मधुमतीरोषधीर्द्याव आपो मधुमन्नो भवत्वन्तरिक्षम् ।

क्षेत्रस्य पतिर्मधुमान्नो अस्त्वरिष्यन्तो अन्वेनं चरेम ॥

madhumateerOshadheer dyAva aapO

madhumannO bhavatvantariksham |

kshEtrasya patirmadhumannO

astvarishyantO anvEnam carEma ||

MEANING:

May the Oushadhis (plants and medicinal herbs) be sweet and efficacious to us! May the Heavens, the waters and the mid-regions be all sweet, healthful and invigorating for us! May the producer of food be sweet, friendly and helpful to us! Let us follow our Lord and engage in acts that please Him and stay away from acts that displease Him, perform Prapatthi and be free from the disease of SamsAram and chase away all of our troubles!

With this crescendo of a prayer, atharva Vedam comes to a close.



May the Lord of Srirangam accept this offering and sprinkle us with the pavithra theertham from His four Veda Kalasams and provide us the wisdom and strength to continue the Ahobilavalli likhitha kaimkaryam.

|| SRI RANGANATHO JAYATHI ||



Part 2
Sri Rangan Athaa and Upanishads



Sri Rangam rAja gOpuram
(Pic.Courtesy: Sri, MuraLi BhaTTar)



॥ श्रीः ॥

adiyEn will focus on the ways in which the Upanishads rush to salute Him. adiyEn will follow the path established by AchArya RamAnujA and his successors on this matter.

SRIMAN NARAYANAN OF SRIRANGAM IS SRI RANGANATHAN

AchArya RaamAnujA's darsanam is profound in many ways. Two of the key features of this darsanam are:

1. It harmonizes God's transcendence (parathvam) with His accessibility (Soulabhyam).
2. It inculcates "the highest form of devotion without belittling the part of intellectualism and social duties in man's spiritual life".

Sriman naarAyaNaa as Para VaasudEvan is readily accessible to us at His BhUIOka Vaikuntam on the island of Srirangam. The parathvam of His form at Sri Vaikuntam by the banks of the river VirajA comes together with the soulabhyam of His ArchA svarUpam at Srirangam (nithya -LeelA VibhUthis). This amalgamation of Parathvam and Soulabhyam at Srirangam is considered the central root (aaNi vEr) of our Sri VaishtAdvaithA tradition elaborated by our AzhwArs and developed further by Dankar, DramidAchAryA, Naathamuni, ALavanthAr, Periya Nambi and Acharya RaamAnujA and his successors in the mold of Upanishadic and Vedic tradition, the Ubhaya Vedantha tradition flourishes today from that amalgamation.

THE EMBODIED ISVARA TATTVAM AT SRIRANGAM

The epistemology, ontology, cosmology, theology and psychology of Sriman nArAyaNaa as the controller of all (SarvEsvarathvam), the Master of all SarvasEshithvam), the One worshipped by every religious act (Sarva KarmAradhyathvam), the bestower of all fruits of such worship (Sarva phala pradathvam), the sustainer of all (SarvAdharathvam), and the cause of all



effects (Sarva KaaryOthpAdhakthvam) is nowhere celebrated more than at Srirangam. It is no wonder that our AchAryAs, who were conversant with the nuance of Ubhaya VedAntham spent so much of their life time at Srirangam and worshipped Sri RanganAtha as the Jagadheesvaran.

SRI RAAMANUJA AND OUPANISHADA-PARAMA PURUSHAN

AchArya RaamAnujA recognized Sriman naarAyaNaa as the Oupanishada-Parama Purushan (the Supreme spirit revealed in the Upanishads). He is the same Parama Purushan celebrated by Sri GeethOpanishad in the chapter on PurushOttama Yogam. This Supreme spirit of the Upanishads has been saluted by AchArya RaamAnujA as "Sruthi-sirasi Videepthan" (the shining crown of the VedAs). The nectar churned out of the milky ocean of Upanishads by BaadarAyaNA's Brahma sUthrams was interpreted by AchArya RaamAnujA to strengthen the citadel Of Sri VisishtAdvaitham and fly high the flag of the supremacy of our Soulabhya Para VaasudEvan of Srirangam.

With great coherency and clarity, AchArya RaamAnujA commented on BaadarAyaNa sUtrAs in His Sri BhAshyam and elucidated "the philosophically central affirmations of the Upanishads". As an easier text for us to understand, AchArya RaamAnujA gave us VedArtha Sangraha, whose central purpose was to gather into focus the teachings of Upanishads. Sudarsana Suri, the author of Srutha PrakAsika, an elaboration of Sri Bhaashyam of AchArya RaamAnujA states that the great AchArya extracted the nectar of VedaanthA, meaning Upanishads. With his effective and clear synthesis of the bhEda, bhedAbhEda and abhEda sruthis, AchArya RaamAnujA was able to establish a coherent doctrine of Brahman. The essence of AchArya's thesis that is endearing and assuring is that the Brahman of the Upanishads is the paratattvA (Supreme Reality), parahita (the supreme way to redemption) and ParapurushArthA (the supreme goal).

For AchArya RaamAnujA, "the ultimate spirit holds ALL things within it and abides as indweller in ALL things----- such is the final substance and the entire



message of the Upanishads, according to RaamAnujA. For his way of thinking, the concept of Sriman NaarAyaNaa, properly comprehended, embodies in itself this philosophy completely. Hence one may, as well, conclude that the whole teaching of the Upanishads stands summed up in a supreme synthesis in the concept of nArAyaNaa”.

PERSONAL GOD AND THE UPANISHIDIC BRAHMAN

Sri RamAnujA postulated a personal God and defined Brahman this way: “By the word Brahman is denoted the highest person, who is, by nature, devoid of all evil, and is possessed of hosts of auspicious qualities, which are innumerable and unsurpassable in excellence”. He accepted a world that is real distinctly different from the world of illusion of the advaitins. Regarding the means of attainment, AchArya RaamAnujA accepted Bhakthi and Prapatthi, “wherein the Lord is considered both as a means and the object of attainment. Only he attains the Lord, whom he elects with grace”. This is the essence of Sri VisishtAdvaita Darsanam and Parama purusha prasAdham is central to it and the Samastha chidachidh vasthu sareeran as akhilAthman blesses us to gain Moksham. These then are the conclusions of AchArya RaamAnujA that we cherish as the distillation of the essence of the Upanishads on the upanishadic Parama Purushan reclining on His serpent bed at Srirangam.

THE SOURCE UPANISHADS FOR SRI RAAMANUJA’S SRI SOOKTHIS

The 15 upanishads quoted by AchArya RaamAnujA to develop his synthetic approach to reconcile the three categories of sruthis are:

1. Isa,
2. Kena,
3. Katha,
4. Prasna,
5. Mundaka,





6. MaandUkya,
7. aitarEya,
8. Taittiriya,
9. ChandOgya,
10. BrihadAraNyaka,
11. KaushItakI ,
12. SvetAsvaatara,
13. MahOpanishad,
14. SubAIOPanishad and
15. MahA naarAyaNOpanishad.

SRIMAN NARAYANA OF MAHA NARAYANOPANISHAD

I will conclude with select manthrams of MahA nArAyaNOpanishad. This Upanishad has moving revelatory passages on the identity of the ParamAthMan (Paramapurushan). In the very first manthram, which has profound meanings, the role of the Lord of creation is saluted.

अम्भस्य पारे भुवनस्य मध्ये नाकस्य पृष्ठे महतो महीयान् ।

शुक्रेण ज्योतींषि समनुप्रविष्टः प्रजापतिश्चरति गर्भे अन्तः ॥

ambhasya paarE bhuvanasya madhyE

naakasya prushThE mahatO maheeyAn |

SukrENa jyOtIgumshi samanupravishTa:

prajApatiscarati garbhE anta: ||

MEANING:

“The Lord of Creation, who is present in the shore less waters, on the Earth and above the Heaven and who is greater than the great, having entered the





shining intelligence of creatures in seed form, acts in fetus (which grows into the living being that is born)".

This Lord of Creation and the antharyami Brahman is recognized in the next manthram as the source of power by which all Gods remain enjoying their respective powers (Sarvam yasmin dEvA adhi visvE nishEdhu:). The Upanishad goes on to declare that certainly has been true in the past and will be true in the future (tadhrEva bhUtam tadu bhavyamA).

In section 12, the 17th manthram of this Upanishad we come across the connection of the Lord to PraNavam:

यो वेदादौ स्वरः प्रोक्तो वेदान्ते च प्रतिष्ठितः ।

तस्य प्रकृतिलीनस्य यः परः स महेश्वरः ॥

yO vEdAdou svara: prOkto vEdAntE ca pratishThita: |

tasya prakrutileenasya ya; para: sa mahEsvara: ||

This manthram asserts that this Lord of Creation is the supreme Lord, who transcends the syllable OM, which is invoked at the commencement of the recital of the VedAs, which is well established in Upanishads and which is dissolved in the primal cause during contemplation.

The next few manthrams identify this supreme Lord as Sriman nArAyaNaa:

नारायणं महाज्ञेयं विश्वात्मानं परायणम्

naarAyaNam mahAj~nEyam visvAtmAnam parAyaNam

This Supreme Lord, Sriman nArAyaNaa is declared as the One, who is supremely worthy of being known by the Jeevans and recognized as the supreme goal.

The thundering statements that follow are:





नारायणः परं ब्रह्म तत्त्वं नारायणः परः ।

नारायणः परो ज्योतिरात्मा नारायणः परः ॥

नारायणः परो ध्याता ध्यानं नारायणः परः ।

naarAyaNa: param brahma tattvam naarAYaNa: para: |

naarayaNa: parO jyOtirAtmA naarayaNa: para: ||

naarayaNa: parO dhyAtA dhyAnam naarayaNa: para: |

MEANING:

nArAyaNaa is the supreme reality designated as Brahman. nArAyaNaa is the loftiest of all principles. nArAyaNaa is the supreme effulgence described by Upanishads. nArAyaNaa is THE INFINITE SELF. He is the most outstanding mediator and meditation.





यच्च किञ्चिज्जगत्यस्मिन् दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा ।

अन्तर्बहिश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः ॥

yacca kinjijagatyasmin drusyatE SrUyatEpi vaa |

antarbahisca tatsarvam vyApya naarAyaNa: sthita: ||

MEANING:

Whatsoever that is comprehended through perception or known through hearing, all that is pervaded by nArAyaNaa within (indweller) and outside.

A CONCLUDING SALUTATION TO THE SAKALA UPANISHAD SVARUPAN

This Lord of Srirangam, who has been saluted as mahat yasa: (the great glory). He is the web and woof of creation saluted by the Upanishads. He reclines under PraNavAkruthi VimAnam and glorifies the meaning of PraNavam (PraNavArtha PrakAsakan). He is the Para Vaasudevan of Parama Padam. He is RangEsan. He has Srirangam as His temple by the side of KaavEri River and His other home is by the side of VirajA River in Sri Vaikuntam. That Sri RangAsAye is saluted by this famous sIOkam:

कावेरी विरजाशेयं वैकुण्ठं रङ्गमन्दिरं

स वासुदेवो रङ्गेशः प्रत्यक्षं परमं पदम् ।

विमानं प्रणवाकारं वेदश्रुङ्गं महद्भूतम्

श्रीरङ्गशायी भगवान् प्रणवार्थं प्रकाशकः ॥

kAvErI virajAsEyam vaikuNTham rangamandiram

sA vaasudEvO rangEsa: prathyaksham paramam padam |

vimAnam praNavAkAram vEdasrungam mahAdbhutam





SrirangasAyeE bhagavAn praNavArtha prakAsaka: ||

It is this Sri RangasAyeE saluted by Upanishads that Saint ThyagarAjA implored to come to him at Srirangam in his celebrated KaambhOji Raaga Krtihi: Oh RangasAyeE! PilachitE-Oh yanuchu raa raadhAA? (Oh Rangasaayee! When I implore you to come to me, why should you not respond?). Saint Thyagaraja composed the Sriranga Pancharathna krithis on this Lord reclining on Adhi SEshA at Srirangam.

Sriranga KshEthram is the puNya BhUmi. Like in VaraNAsi, anyone who breathes their last here reaches Parama Padam.

The great Vedantin, Appayaa Dikshithar, who wrote the commentary for Swami Desikan's YadhavAbhudhayam pointed out the significance of this Mukthi KshEthram this way:

इदं च रङ्गं त्यजतामिहाङ्गं

न विद्यतेऽङ्गं यदिजातुचाङ्गम् ।

पणौ रथाङ्गं शयने भुजङ्गं

याने विहङ्गं चरणेम्भु गाङ्गम् ॥

idham cha Rangam tyajathAmihAngam
na vidhyathEangam yadhi jAthuchAngam |
pANou rathAngam sayanE bhujangam
yaanE vihangam charaNEambhu gaangam ||

MEANING:

This is Sriranga KshEthram. There is no rebirth for those, who shake off their mortal coils here. If they perchance take up a body again, it will return to this earth as the ONE with Sudarsanam in its hand, resting on Adhi SEshA, riding





on Garudan and having the sacred feet from which the holy Ganga River flows.
That body will return with Suddha Satthvamaya Bhagavadh SaarUpyam.



Subamasthu!

Sarva MangaLAni santhu ithi mahAntO anugraNNanthu!

Sri RanganAtha charanou SaraNam prapadhyE

Anantha kOti PraNAMams to Sri Rangapura VihAran

Oppiliappan Sannidhi VaradAchAri SaThakOpan

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