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यद्वक्त्रमानससरः प्रतिलब्धजन्म-
भाष्यारविन्दमकरन्दरसं पिबन्ति ।
प्रत्याशमुन्मुखविनीतविनेयभृङ्गाः
तान् भाष्यवित्तकगुरुन् प्रणतोऽस्मि मूर्ध्ना ॥

The nectar of The Bhashya Lotus, born from the pure Manasa sarovar (Manasa lake) Face of HIS, is drunk by the longing, enthusiastic and humble disciple bees.

I offer my salutations to that Guru (Adi Shankara Bhagavatpada), an extraordinary exponent of The Bhashya with head bowed in reverence.



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என் கடமை



எல்லாவற்றுக்கும் முதலில் சொன்னபடி, வேதியர் வேதம் ஓதுவதற்கானதைப் பண்ணி விட்டாலே ராஜதண்டம் பாதிவரதய தர்மம் (கற்பு நெறி) இந்த இரண்டுங்கூடத் தன்னால் ஸரியாகிவிடும் என்ற நம்பிக்கையில்தான், வேத ரக்ஷணத்தில் தீவிரமாக முயற்சி பண்ணிக் கொண்டிருக்கிறேன்.

இதற்கு உங்கள் பசங்களைக் கொடுக்க வேண்டும். பணத்தையும் கொடுக்க வேண்டும். பணமில்லாத குடும்பத்துப் பசங்கள் வேதவியைக்கு வருவதற்காக அவர்களுக்குத் தர வேண்டிய நிதி உதவியானது உங்களில் பணமுள்ளவர்களிடமிருந்துதான் வரவேண்டும். கற்றுக் கொடுக்கும் வாத்தியார் சம்பளம், புஸ்தகச் செலவு, பாடசாலைப் பராமரிப்பு எல்லாவற்றுக்கும் பணம் வேண்டும். இதற்காக ரொம்பவும் ஸ்வல்ப அளவிலேயே ஆரம்பித்து காணிக்கைத் திட்டம் வைத்திருக்கிறோம். மாஸம் ஒரே ஒரு ரூபாய்* செலுத்தினால் போதும். அதற்குப் பிரதியாக, நீங்கள் வேதமாதவுக்குச் செய்கிற கைங்கரியத்தின் புண்ணிய பலனோடு கூட, இங்கே மடத்தில் நடக்கிற சந்திர மெளச்வர பூஜாப் பிரஸாதம் (விபூதி, குங்குமம், மந்திராக்ஷதை) உங்களுக்குத் தபாலில் அனுப்பப்படும். உங்கள் நக்ஷத்திரத்தைத் தெரிவித்துப் பணம் அனுப்பி

னீர்களானால், மாஸந்தோறும் உங்கள் நக்ஷத்திரத்திலேயே பிரஸாதம் அனுப்பப்படும். அதனால் இதற்கு 'நக்ஷத்ரக் காணிக்கை' என்றே பெயர் வைத்திருக்கிறது.

திருப்பதி வேங்கடாசலபதி பேரைச் சொல்லி chain letter என்று போடுகிறார்களே - "இந்த லெட்டரைக் காப்பி பண்ணி இத்தனை பேருக்கு அனுப்பாவிட்டால் கண்போய் விடும், கால் போய்விடும்" என்று மிரட்டி எழுதுகிறார்களே, வேங்கட ரமண ஸ்வாமியின் பேருக்கு பயந்து கொண்டு, அநேகம் பேர் காப்பி பண்ணி அனுப்புகிறார்களே - அந்த மாதிரி ஏதாவது மிரட்டி உருட்டியாவது இந்த வேத தர்மத்துக்கு வசூல் பண்ண முடியுமா என்று எனக்கு இருக்கிறது!

அதிகம் வேண்டாம்! மாஸத்துக்குத் தலைக்கு ஒரு ரூபாய் தான் கேட்கிறேன். பிடிக்கிறதோ, பிடிக்கவில்லையோ ஸர்க்கார் வரி போட்டு விட்டால் கொடுக்கிறீர்களா இல்லையா? அப்படி இதை நான் போட்டிருக்கிற Tax என்று வைத்துக் கொள்ளுங்கள். நான் நடத்துகிற கடுகத்தை ஸர்க்காருக்குத் தரவேண்டிய வரி இது. இதற்காக பீச்சு, ஸினிமா இத்யாதியில் துளி குறைத்துக் கொண்டால் போதும். உங்கள் கடமை, என் கடமை இரண்டிலும் ஒரு பங்காவது பூர்த்தியானதாக ஆகும்.

முடிவுரை

வேதத்தின் மஹிமை எல்லையில்லாதது. லௌகிகத்தில் அதனுடைய பெருமை ஒரு விதத்தில் புலப்படுகிறது. அதற்கு ஈடும் இல்லை இணையும் இல்லை என்று காட்டுகிறது. அதைச் சொல்லி முடிக்கிறேன்.

உலகத்தில் உள்ள சேக்ஷத்திரங்களுக்குள் காசிதான் அதிக மஹிமையுடையது என்று நினைக்கப்படுகிறது. வேறு சேக்ஷத்திரங்களைப் பற்றி ரொம்பவும் உயர்த்திச் சொல்லும் பொழுது அவை காசிக்கு ஸமானமானவை என்றே சொல்கிறார்கள். அதனாலேயே காசியினுடைய மஹிமை தெரிகிறது. தக்ஷிண தேசத்திலுள்ள ஒரு ஸ்தலத்தை தக்ஷிண காசி என்று சொல்வார்கள். உத்தரகாசி என்று ஹிமாசலத்தில் ஒரு ஸ்தலத்தைச் சொல்கிறார்கள். விருத்த காசி என்று விருத்தாசலத்திற்குப் பெயர். சித்தூர் ஜில்லாவிலுள்ள புக்கே என்னும் ஊரும் ஒரு காசி என்று சொல்லப்படுகிறது. தென்காசி என்ற ஓர் ஊர் திருநெல்வேலி ஜில்லாவில் இருக்கிறது. மற்ற ஸ்தலங்களை 'இது காசி சேக்ஷத்திரத்திற்கு ஸமமானது' என்கிறார்கள். கும்பகோணத்தைப் பற்றியோ 'இது காசியிலும் வீசம் அதிகம்' என்று சொல்லுகிறார்கள். கும்பகோணம் ஸ்தலத்தைப் பற்றி ஒரு சுலோகம் உண்டு.

அந்ய சேக்ஷத்ரே க்ருதம் பாபம் புண்ய சேக்ஷத்ரே விந்ச்யதி
புண்ய சேக்ஷத்ரே க்ருதம் பாபம் வாராணஸ்யாம் விந்ச்யதி
வாராணஸ்யாம் க்ருதம் பாபம் கும்பகோணே விந்ச்யதி
கும்பகோணே க்ருதம் பாபம் கும்பகோணே விந்ச்யதி

என்பது அந்த சுலோகம் "ஸாதாரணமான ஒரு ஊரில் பண்ணும் பாபம் புண்ணிய சேக்ஷத்ரத்துக்குப் போனால் போய் விடும். புண்ணிய சேக்ஷத்திரங்களிலேயே பாபம் பண்ணினால்? அந்தப்பாபம் வாராணஸி என்ற காசிக்குப் போனால் போய்விடும். காசியிலும் பாபம் செய்தால்? அது கும்பகோணத்துக்குப் போனால் நசித்துவிடும். ஸரி, அந்தக் கும்பகோணத்திலேயே பாபம் பண்ணிவிட்டால்? அதுவும் கும்பகோணத்திலேயே அழிந்து போய்விடும்" என்று அர்த்தம் காசியை விடக் கும்பகோணம் அதிக மஹிமையுடையது என்பது இதன் கருத்து.

.... (தொடரும்)

- நாராயணஸ்ம்ருதி

* தற்போதைய சந்தா விவரமும் அதனை அனுப்பிவைக்க வேண்டிய வேத ரக்ஷண நிதி டிரஸ்டின் முகவரியும், "புரீ காஞ்சி காமகோடி சங்கர மடம், காஞ்சீபுரம்" என்ற முகவரிக்கு எழுதிப் பெற்றுக்கொள்ளலாம்.

ROLE OF JAGADGURU IN SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal



माता च पार्वती पिता देवो महेश्वरः

Siva and Parvati are parents for the whole world. Parvati is called Jaganmata because She is the Mother for the whole world. Likewise, Siva is the father for the whole world. He is there in the form of Dakshinamoorti to give us His guidance. Dakshinamoorti was the first guru. In the Dakshinamoorti stotra we have

चित्रं वटतरोमुले वृद्धाशिश्याः गुरुर्युवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

What is the type of upadesa which He gives and how does He give it? He imparts His upadesa by silence, and the strange thing is that his disciples are fully freed from all doubts. So, Dakshinamoorti was the first Jagadguru.

कृष्णं वन्दे जगदुरुं

In the Dwaparayuga, Krishna was our Jagadguru.

नमामि भगवत्पादशंकरं लोकशंकरं

In the Kaliyuga, we have Adi Sankara as our Jagadguru. He had incarnated as an amsa-avatar of Siva for the welfare of the whole world. Veda Vyasa had codified the Vedas and had composed several sutras or aphorisms like the Brahma-sutras. Adi Sankara has written bhashya or commentary on the Brahma-sutras, which is called the Sri-Bhashyam, commentary on the Bhagavad Gita called the Gita-Bhashyam, and the commentary on the ten principal Upanishads, called the Dasopanishad-Bhashyam. He has also given upadesas to us in his other works such as the Vivekachudamani, Aparaoakshanubhuti and Upadesa-sahasri. In his Bhaja Govindam He sings.

गेयं गीतानामसहस्रं ध्येयं श्रीपतिरुपमजस्रं ।
नेयं सज्जनसंगे चित्तं देयं दीनजनाय च वित्तं ॥

Bhagavad Gita and Vishnu-sahasranama are to be recited every day. Meditation should be done on the form of Vishnu. Thirdly, the mind has to be led towards satsang or the company of holy men, and fourthly, wealth has to be given to the poorer people.

He also says:

भगवद्गीता किंचिदधीता गंगाजललवकणिका पीता

If the Bhagavad Gita is studied even a little bit, it is good; similarly, drinking even a drop of the Ganges water is good. Then worship of the Ishtadevatas should be done by offering whatever one could. As Shri Krishna says in the Gita:

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहतं अश्रामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

Leaves, flowers or water or whatever little thing you can offer you should offer. Then some pooja-path should be done, and then meditation should be practised. If a person does these things, his life will go on smoothly and all the difficulties and troubles he is encountering will become a thing of the past. If a person does these things regularly, then there will be no scope for any dispute with the yama-dhootas at the time of death. No doubt, during the time of living, life should go on smoothly, but the time of death also, life should go away peacefully. That is possible only if a person does all these things during his lifetime.

Nārāyaṇa smṛtiḥ

ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி காமகோடி பீடம் ஸ்ரீஸ்ரீஸ்ரீ சங்கர விஜயேந்திர ஸரஸ்வதி சங்கராசார்ய ஸ்வாமிகள் அருளிய ஆசிச்செய்தி



Water is considered as the most important among the Pancha Bhootas. Two diseases disturb the mankind. One is hunger, another is thirst. For mitigating hunger our ancestors performed Annadana at temples. Entertaining guests by offering food before eating is our Sampradaya (cultural tradition). This is India's unique culture.

Tanks and lakes were built by our ancestors to quench the thirst of not only of the mankind but also of the cattle. The tanks came into existence as symbols of promoting love and affection and humanness among mankind. Our ancestors who built large number of tanks, lakes, temples also performed the deed of Annadana. By performance of Annadana one is bound to reach Swarga. We have to protect these unique treasures. Tanks and lakes have to be maintained periodically by removing of slush and other particles which pollute them.

(Speech of His Holiness Pujyasri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamiji delivered in December 2001 in Pammal to mark the occassion of purifying tank belonging to Suri Amman temple).

DID YOU KNOW

History is called Itihaasa in Sanskrit. The term Itihaasa is derived by the combination of three words - Iti, He and Aasa - Iti "in this manner", He "they say"; and Aasa "it happened". We associate Itihaasa with two words, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha. They embody the history of our religion, culture, dharma and traditions.



THE ACHARYAS OF ŚRĪ KĀNĀCHĪ KĀMAKOTĪ PĪTAM

SRI UJJVALA SANKARENDRA SARASWATI (329 – 367) A.D., SIXTEENTH PONTIFF

He was known as *Achyuta Kesava*, a Maharashtrian Brahmin by birth; was a great fighter of heretics. He attained *mukthi* at *Kalapuri*, Kashmir. Since then the place is known as *Ujjvala Maha Yatipura*.

IN ADORATION OF KAMAKSHI

Dr. R. Asha

'Saugandhini'

Raga – Saugandhini

Tala – Adi

Pallavi

*Kamakotipithavasini saugandhini
Mamava guruguhajanani ranjani*

Charanam

Saamagaanalole shribale sadgunashile kripalavale

Madhyamakala Sahityam

*Shyamale atikomale atilalite
Sakalabhuvanajanani duritabhanjani*

'Sugandha' means fragrance. Couched in the raga 'Saugandhini' is this kriti by Sri Muttusvami Dikshita on Devi Kamakshi. Using the ragamudra itself as a name, Dikshita addresses Devi as 'Saugandhini - O Fragrant One!' What is the fragrance associated with Devi? Why, everything, Her very form, very abode exudes divine fragrance not to speak of the kumkum, turmeric, scented paste, taambula, various kinds of flowers which bedeck Her head, ears, adorn Her as garlands, are profusely used in Her worship, etc.

To start with, She is described in the Lalita Sahasranama as 'mahapadmaatavisamstha kadambavanavasini' and in descriptions of Her abode, we find references to gardens of sweet smelling celestial flowers abounding in it. Coming to Her form, we find a beautiful and imaginative description of Her glorious dark tresses in the Saundaryalahari (43) -

*Dhunotu dhvaantam nastulita-dalitendeevara-vanam
Ghanasnighda-slakshnam chikura nikurumbam tava shive
Yadeeyam saurabhyam sahajamupalabdhum sumanaso
Vasantyasmin manye valamathana vaati vitapinaam*

Here, Acharya uses the words 'saurabhyam sahajam' meaning 'natural fragrance', indicating thereby that the fragrance exuded by Devi's tresses is inherent naturally and not acquired externally by means such as wearing flowers etc. In fact, Acharya further says that the celestial flowers reside in (adorn) Her hair in order to acquire their fragrance and not vice versa! [In this connection, one may recall the well known episode related to Madurai, wherein the poet Nakkeerar hotly debates with Lord Siva (in disguise) as to whether Devi's hair is naturally fragrant or not and gets defeated]. The word Acharya uses for flowers here is 'sumanaso' which also means a good mind; a mind full of good qualities, a noble mind.

If we look further down in the kriti of Dikshita given earlier we find words like 'sadgunashile' 'kripalavale', 'atikomale' and 'atilalite' indicating that Devi is soft, graceful, compassionate, full of good qualities, etc. Such a mind is a fragrant mind, a 'blossomed' mind which opens out to humanity. Our minds are constricted by vaasanas (impressions) which like dirt obscure the real self. And so, in this Saundaryalahari shloka, Acharya prays that 'May these dark tresses of Devi remove our internal darkness of nescience – avidya – dhunotu dhvaantam.' (Interestingly, in Trichy, Devi is called as 'Sugandha Kuntalambika').

A sadhaka who meditates thus on the fragrant glorious, dense tresses of Devi will soon have his mind cleansed of all undesirable vaasanas which are the cause for bondage. As saattvic vaasanas increase, the mind becomes purer, subtle and the sadhaka finally achieves vaasana-kshaya, destruction of all vaasanas and thereby the mind. When the mind is destroyed or merged in the Supreme Self (none other than Devi Herself), liberation ensues.

The mind is the prime factor for bondage or liberation. It is the controlling factor of all the sense organs. While in the shloka under consideration, the object of the sense of smell, i.e., fragrance is discussed, ultimately what is needed is that all the sense organs should be merged in experiencing Devi. This too, the Acharya expresses in a later shloka (90) where he equates the jiva with a bee (which has six legs denoting the mind and the five sense organs) and prays that it may get merged in the feet of Devi comparable to a bunch of mandara flowers.

*Tavaasmin mandara-stabaka-subhage yaatu charane
Nimmajjan majjeevaha karnacharanaha shatcharanataam*

One should immerse oneself in the amritanubhava of Devi by seeing Her form (feet) with his eyes, by listening to Her glory with his ears, smelling the fragrance of the flowers offered as worship, singing Her praises, experiencing the touch of the dust of Her feet and by meditating on Her in one's mind. This is atma-samarpana, the ultimate.

(The writer can be reached at ashass@live.com)

Adi Sankara Jayanthi celebrations on the Vaishaka Shukla Panchami day at Zeashta Mata Mandir in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir in which His Holiness Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamiji of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham participated.



Veda Saptaham was held at Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham Sri Sankara Matam, from 6 to 12 April, 2012. The Saptaham was done by Mahamahopadhyaya Brahasri Mullaivasal Krishnamurthy Sastrigal. Their Holinesses Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamiji and Pujyasri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Sankaracharya Swamiji blessed the gathering with Anugraha Bhashanam.

A week-long Samskruti Saptah programme was organized by Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham at the ancient Jyeshta Devi (Zeashta Mata) Mandir in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir from 20 to 26th April 2012. The Saptah was held in the benign presence of His Holiness Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamiji. Veda Parayan, Purana and Stotra Parayans, Bhashya Parayan, Yagnas, Upanyas and cultural programmes were held as part of the Sammelan



Stotras of Adi Sankaracharya, a book published by Adi Sankara Advaita Research Centre, Chennai was released by His Holiness and the first copy was received by Sri Acharya Govindigiriji.



OUR SAGE SPEAKS

The devoted worship of any deity that has come to be worshipped in each family for generations, and meditation over the truths that deity symbolises, will lead to our happiness and the happiness of the world.

Cintana - 7

By Krishnan Sugavanam

Pramāṇam - 1

Pramāṇam the word means, "means of knowledge". Pratyakṣam is direct knowledge – indriya viṣaya sannikarṣa jñānam - the knowledge gained by using the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The sequence in which the senses are listed is meaningful and relevant, as it goes from gross to subtle. Eyes can see hundreds of meters; ears can hear within tens of meters; nose can smell upto a few meters; taste and touch have to be immediate and intimate.

In knowing, the means and the knowledge, there is no option –one has no choice over what one sees, the moment one opens one's eyes.

As the object, so the knowledge, true to the object, and therefore knowledge is called "vastutantram". We live our lives true to the knowledge gained from operating these senses. For example, if we "see" a cow in the middle of the road, while driving, we swerve and avoid hitting the cow. We do not, even for a moment, doubt what the eyes report, or look for corroboration from other means of knowledge as to its truth.

Vastutantram can be restated as pramāṇatantram (as the means of knowledge, so the knowledge), provided the pramāṇam is valid. However, in instances such as blue sky, sun rise, and mirage etc. the knowledge that is gained by operating the pramāṇam appears to be untrue. That is established by the other type, "Indirect Knowledge", which is based on the Pratyakṣam, the mūlaprāṇam, but has further levels of analysis.

Indirect means of knowledge includes, anumāna – one-step inference, upamāna – similarity, arthāpattiḥ – multi-step inference, and anupalabdhiḥ – knowledge of non-existence of something.

And then there is "sākṣi pratyakṣam", yet another means of knowledge by which emotions, hunger, etc are known.

All these means of knowledge gives one the knowledge of "objects". What is the means of knowledge by which one can know the true nature of the "subject"? Especially, since there is so much confusion about what one's true nature is.

Veda as a whole, and not merely Vedānta, is counted as the 6th Pramāṇam, and it requires the seeker to be endowed with the infrastructure of reasoning as he has to use all these Pramāṇams in order to understand the purport of the Veda.

Vedās say that "You are the Whole", and the "Subject and Object are one and the same". This cannot be understood by operating the any of the 5 Pramāṇams. The subject matter dealt with by the Veda, is nithya parokṣa, outside the range of the sensory field, and therefore not a subject to be known by either Pratyakṣa Pramāṇam, or the Indirect means of knowledge, since they are in turn dependent on Pratyakṣam.

It is only with āstikhya buddhiḥ, having śraddhā on the Vedās, can one accept revelations such as puṇya is sukha hetuḥ, pāpa is duḥkha hetuḥ. puṇya and pāpa are adṛṣṭmam, outside the scope of the known means of knowledge, and only its effects in the form of pleasure and pain can be experienced. Even then the relationship between puṇya / pāpa and pleasure / pain is a matter of śraddhā.

Veda is neither scientific nor illogical – since it doesn't make any statements that fall within the field/scope of science or logic. It has its own vision for the good of humans. It is Anadhigata – non-contradictible, Abhādita – non-negatable and hitārtha bodhakatvam – says what is good for the Humans. What it says cannot be negated by any other, for its subject matter is outside the scope of all the other pramāṇams. One can't even say one does not believe in Veda, for he has to have a basis/ reason for his non-belief. One can at best say he doesn't care, since that's his privilege, without dismissing what the Vedās say. Vedās can neither be dismissed not proved – for it is above reason, but not irrational.

We shall see more on this in the next article.

The author can be reached on his email krishnan.sugavanam@gmail.com

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Q. Where was Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya born?

A. He was born at Kalady in the Kerala State in India.

Q. Does the Advaita Vedanta philosophy recognize idol worship?

A. Surely, it does recognize idol worship. Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya had advocated and recognized idol worship as a means for attaining the state of the Paramatman or the Ultimate Reality. Prior to Adi Sankaracharya's time, idol worship was not recognized, but in the Vedas, Shastras and Puranas, there is a good deal of reference to idol worship, and hence Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya had accepted idol worship as a means for attaining the Ultimate Reality.

119th Jayanthi Mahotsavam of Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamigal

The 119th Jayanthi Celebrations of His Holiness Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamigal, the 68th Acharya of our Peetam are to be conducted from 2nd June 2012 to 4th June 2012.

We solicit all the devotees and disciples of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam to participate in the Jayanthi Celebrations on all the three days and obtain the blessings of Their Holinesses. Devotees are requested to contribute their mite to the Guru in kind or money and our most earnest appeal is that devotees should participate in the functions with their family and friends. Your contributions may please be sent through cheque or demand draft drawn in favour of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. Phone: 044-27222115.

PRĀRTHANĀ

शिवानन्दलहरी

ŚIVĀNANDALAHARĪ

சிவானந்த லஹரி

ஸ்தவை: ப்ரஹ்மாதீநாம் ஜயஜயவசோபிர்நியமிநாம்
கணாநாம் கேலீபிர்மதகலமஹோக்ஷஸ்ய கருதி ।
ஸ்திதம் நீலகீர்வம் த்ரிநயநமுமாம்ஸ்லிஷ்டவபுஷம்
கதா த்வாம் பஸ்யேயம் கரத்ருதம்ருகம் கண்டபரஸூம் ॥

stavaḥ brahmādinām jayajayavachōbirniyaminām
ghanānām khelībhirmadakalamahōkshasya kakudhi
sthitham neelagrīvam trinayanamumāslistavapusam
khadā tvām pasyeyam kharadrtamrgam khantaparasum

கதா வா த்வாம் த்ருஷ்ட்வா கிரிஸ தவ பவ்யாங்க்ரியுகலம்
க்ருஹீத்வா ஹஸ்தாப்யாம் ஸிரஸி நயநே வக்ஷஸி வஹந் ।
ஸமாஸ்லிஷ்யாக்ராய ஸ்ஃபுடஜலஜகந்தாந்பரிமலா
நலப்யாம் ப்ரஹ்மாத்யைர்முதமநுபவிஷ்யாமி ஹ்ருதயே ॥

khadā vā tvām drstvā ghirisa tava bhavyānkriyughalam
grhītvā hastābhyām sirasi nayane vakshasi vahan
samāslīshyāgrāya sphutajalajagandān parimalā
nalabhyām brhmādyairmudamanubhavisyāmi hrdaye

கரஸ்தே ஹேமாத்ரௌ கிரிஸ நிகடஸ்தே தநபதௌ
க்ருஹஸ்தே ஸவர்பூஜாமரஸுரபிசிந்தாமணிகணே ।
ஸிரஸ்தே ஸீதாம்ஸௌ சரணயுகலஸ்தேகிலஸுபே
கமர்தம் தாஸ்யேஹம் பவது பவதர்த்தம் மம மந: ॥

kharaste hemādrau ghirisa nikataste dhanapatau
grhaste svarpūjāmarasurabhicintāmanighane
siraste sītāmsau saranayughalaste khīlasubhe
khamartam dāsyeham bhavatu bhavardham mama maṇa

ஸாரூப்யம் தவ பூஜநே ஸிவ மஹாதேவேதி ஸம்கீர்தநே
ஸாமீப்யம் ஸிவபக்திதுர்யஜநதாஸாம்கத்யஸம்பாஷணே
ஸாலோக்யம் ச சராசராத்தமகதநுத்யாநே பவாநீபதே
ஸாயுஜ்யம் மமஸித்தமத்ர பவதி ஸ்வாமிந் க்ருதார்தோஸ்யஹம் ॥

sārūbhyam tava phūjane siva mahādeveti samkīrtane
sāmpiyam sivabhaktituryajanatāsāmghatyasambhāsane
sālokyam ca charācharātmakatanudyāne bhavānīpate
sāyujyam mamasiddamatra bhavati svāmin kṛtārtōsmyaham

SIMHACHALAM

By Ramdevan V Krishnaswamy



Archway at the beginning of the road leading to the temple.

Pilgrims in large numbers flock to have a darshan of the Lord Varaha Lakshminarasimha at Simhachalam on Vysakha Sudha Thadiya, the sandal paste that has been applied throughout the previous year is removed, an auspicious occasion of the Chandana Visarjana and the devotees are allowed darshan of the idol which is called 'Nija Roopa Darshan'. This holy appearance in true form is given to the devotees for only 12 hours in a year; noteworthy that on the remaining 364 days and 12 hours, the lord is covered with the sandalwood paste shaped like a Shiva lingam. Of the four layers of Chandanam to be applied to the deity, the first layer is applied after Sahasra Ghatabhishekam at 9 pm on Akshaya Tritiya day when, three mounds of sandal paste (roughly about 36 Kgs.) is applied for the first time. Then three layers of three mounds each are added. The second layer is applied on Vaisakha Purnima, the third on Jyesta Purnima, and the final layer is applied on Aashada Purnima.

Simhachalam is situated about 16 kms from the city of Visakhapatnam, at a height of 244m on Simhagiri Hill. The deity at Simhachalam, the lion-man incarnation of Lord Mahavishnu appears like a Sivalinga when covered with sandalwood paste. The original shape of



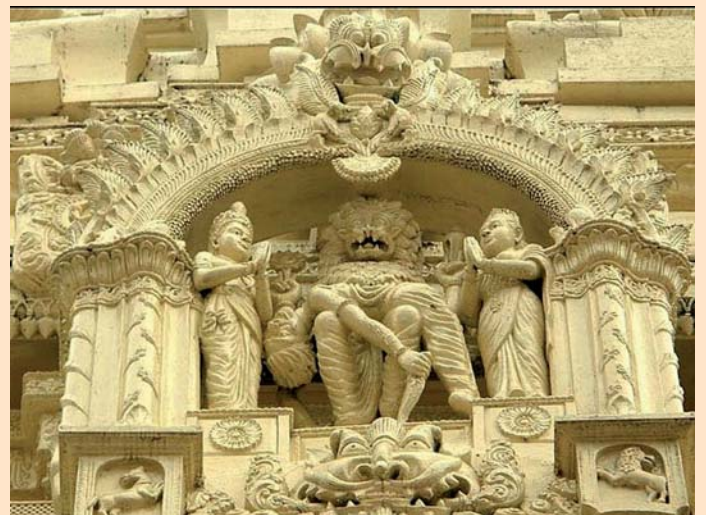
Depiction of the Lord Narasimha

the deity in the tribhanga posture has two hands with the head of a lion on a human torso.

Close to the top of the northern side of the hill, in a wooded hollow surrounded by a wide circle of higher ground resembling an amphitheatre, is the temple of the Lord Varaha Lakshminarasimha. This is one of the richest and the best sculptured shrine of the Northern Circars and the Rajahs of Vizianagaram, who have endowed to it with lands etc. For the last three centuries to the current day "The Pusapati Gajapathi's" are its hereditary trustees, though the temple has been



Road to the temple



Narasimha on the walls of the temple



Entrance to Sanctum Sanctorum



Varaha murthy on the temple walls

brought under the purview of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act under a special scheme.

After entering the Archway for the temple, the winding roads up the hills are replete with billboards of the Sanskrit incarnate names of Vishnu, with the translated meanings in English all along the way. There is also a broad flight of well kept stone steps, about a thousand in number, on either side of which, trees have been grown to provide shade for those pilgrims wishing to walk up the Hills to the Shrine.

The legend goes that Jaya and Vijaya, the gate keepers of the celestial abode of Lord Vishnu, were cursed to be born as demons by the Lord for the disrespect they showed to some visiting sages. They were born as Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha to the sage Kasyapa and grew into mighty demon lords bent upon disturbing the peace of the world.

The younger of the two, Hiranyaksha, seized the earth and carried it to another region. Lord Vishnu delivered the earth from the clutches of the demon by assuming the Boar incarnation (Varaha Avatara). Aggrieved by the death of his brother, Hiranyakasipu wanted to avenge the death of his brother. He added to his might the power of penance and began to punish the gods and sages, and the

devotees of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu was once again prevailed upon to rescue the world from the menace of this demon. The Lord made one of his servants, Sumukha, to be born as a son of Hiranyakasipu. This son of Hiranyakasipu, named Prahlada, became a devotee of Vishnu even after his birth to Hiranyakasipu and thus brought upon himself the wrath of his father. Hiranyakasipu tried to mend the ways of his erring son, but when he found him to be adamant, made him undergo several hardships. He made elephants trample over him and set poisonous snakes against him. Prahlada protected as he was divine grace, stood firm. Hiranyakasipu, as a last resort, asked his servants to throw his son into the sea and place a mountain over him.

His servants chose to drop Prahlada in the sea near the mount Simhagiri with a view to place the mountain over him. But before they could complete their act Lord Vishnu rescued him by jumping over the hill and lifting up Prahlada from the sea. Simhagiri is thus the place where the Lord rescued Prahlada. The form of Varaha Narasimha was assumed by him, then at the prayer of his devotee Prahlada, who wanted to see both the aspects of the Lord, the one by which he had already



Gopuram at the entrance to the temple



Narasimha staute behind the sanctum sanctorum



Carving on pillar

killed Hiranyaksha and the other by which he killed Hiranyakasipu.

According to the Sthalapurana, Prahlada was the first person to construct a temple round the Deity. He accomplished this after his father's death at the hands of Narasimha. But at the end of that life-cycle (Krita Yuga), the temple was neglected and began to decay. Even the Deity was not taken care of and crests of earth slowly gathered round the image. But, at the beginning of another life cycle, the Lord once again was discovered by Pururava of the Lunar Dynasty.

Pururava, with his spouse Urvasi, riding on an aerial chariot over the hill of the South was drawn to the Simhachalam by a mysterious power. He discovered the Lord on the hill in crests of earth and an ant hill that had formed. He cleared the earth and the ant hill around the image of the Lord. Then he was addressed by the Akasavani not to expose the image but cover it with sandal paste. It also added that the Lord should be worshipped in this form, and only once in a year, on the third day in the month of Vysakaha his Nijaswarupa can be revealed. Acting under the instructions of Akasavani the King applied over the image an amount of sandal wood paste which is equal to the earth he had removed, then worshipped the deity and built the temple once again around the image.



Stone chariot drawn by horses

An inscription dated as far back as 1098 AD of the Chola King Kuloththunga provides some clue as to its antiquity. Another inscription shows a Queen of the Eastern Ganga of Kalinga (ancient Orissa) (1137-56 AD) covering the image with gold while a third inscription says the eastern Ganga King of Orissa Narasimha Deva built the main/central shrine in 1267 A.D. With more than 525 inscriptions in Oriya and Telugu describing the antecedents of the temple, it is a historically important monument.

Sri Krishna Deva Raya after defeating the Gajapati ruler of Orissa, Gajapati Prataparudra Dev, visited the shrine twice in 1516 AD and 1519 AD and offered numerous villages for maintenance of bhogam (worship) along with valuable jewelry of which an emerald necklace is still in the temple.

This temple is built in Odhisi and Dravid traditions of Vastu and occupies an unparalleled place in temple architecture. The inner temple and the open hall (pavilion) in front of the inner temple are built in Odra



Beautifully carved pillars inside the temple.

(Oria) style. The canopy with five facets built over the sanctum sanctorum is built in Dravida style. The artwork on the walls has elements of similarity with that of Konark. Elephants, flowers and plants are portrayed in plenty. The outer walls of the sanctum depict images of a royal personality (said to be King Narasimha) in various postures. Narasimha, the man lion incarnation of Vishnu is seen in several depictions throughout the temple. The Kalyana Mandapa within the temple has 16 pillars with bas relief depicting the incarnations of Vishnu. This temple boasts of a beautiful stone chariot drawn by horses.

In the temple hall, the pillar called 'kappa sthambha', installed over the most powerful 'santhana gopala yantra' is considered auspicious. It is believed that the couples, who embrace this pillar, will be bestowed with offspring and happiness.

In a recent visit to Vishakhapatnam I had the opportunity to visit the holy shrine of Lord Varaha Lakshminarasimha at Simhachalam, and have his 'Nija Roopa Darshan.'



VARAHA LAKSHMI NARASIMHA OF SIMHACHALAM

Compiled by Ramdevan V Krishnaswamy for Adi Sankara Advaita Research Centre, Room No. 7, Second floor, 'SANKARALAYAM', New No.66, Mayor V.R. Ramanathan Salai, Chetpet, Chennai - 600 031. Ph.: 2836 6962 / Cell: 98407 66538 and printed by R. Natarajan at Gopali Printers, Quanta Zen Apt., No.38 (Old No.2), Thomas Road, Off South Boag Road, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017. Ph.: 24330979 / 42024951.