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Title : *Saṅkrānti* Under Yogic & Vedic Heritage FESTIVALS OF BHĀRATA - A collection of Festivals of India, Original in Kannada by Sri Sri Rangapriya Sri Srih, Translated into English by Prof. K.S. Sridharan, Dr. Hungi Eswara, and Viswanatha Sharma, and Published by Bharatha Samskruthi Prakashana, Bangalore-560 027.

E-Edition : January 2016 No. of pages: 62 Price: 30

We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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Published by:

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Cover Design : Chandranatha Acharya

Inside Pictures : Basavaraj R Algur

Copies available at :

Bharatha Darshana,

No.163, Manjunatha Road,

2nd Block, Thyagaraja Nagar,

Bangalore 560 028; Ph: 080-26765381

Printed By :

Laser Line Graphics,

Bangalore 560027

Transliteration followed in this book

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह								
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



Saṅkrānti (Makara Saṅkrānti, Uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla)

The name and significance of this *parva*:—
Saṅkrānti is one of the most important festivals of the *Sanātana Ārya Bhāratīyas*. In scriptures it is called by other names such as *Saṅkrānti*, *Makarasaṅkrānti*, *Makarasaṅkramaṇa*, *Makarasaṅkramaṇa*, and *Uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla* also. In Tamil Nadu it is called *Pongal*. Common people also call this as ‘*Ellina Habba*’. Though the distribution of sesame is in vogue in the next festival also i.e. ‘*rathasaptamī*’, it is only *Saṅkrānti* which is renownedly associated with the significance and fame pertaining to the gifting of sesame, and thus is well known as *Ellina habba*. The Kannada proverb ‘*Ellu bellava tindu olleya māthanāḍu*’ owes its origin to this festival.

The entire *uttarāyaṇa* is very dear to deities, and auspicious for *Devakāryas* and auspicious functions. The *śāstras* purport that it is best to perform auspicious functions such as *caula*, *upanayana*, *vratacatuṣṭaya* which is done at the end of *Brahmacarya*, *Godāna* and marriage etc., during this time, which is dear to the *devatās*.

उदगयन पूर्वपक्षाहः पुण्याहेषु कार्याणि (आपस्तम्ब गृह्य 12)

उदगयने आपूर्यमाणपक्षे कल्याणे नक्षत्रे

चौलकर्मोपिनयनगोदानविवाहाः (अश्वलायन गृह्य 1-4-1-2)

उदगयन आपूर्यमाणपक्षे पुण्याहे कुमार्याः

पाणिं गृहणीयाद्यालक्षणसंपन्ना स्यात्” (जैमिनि V-8-23)

It is natural that this day of *Makara Saṅkrānti* on which the *uttarāyaṇa* begins, is regarded highly in the *śāstras* and in traditions. Scriptures declare that religious and spiritual activities such as bath, meditation, gifting, *Homa*, worship of Gods, *tarpaṇa* and *śrāddha* etc performed with faith and devotion, fetch greatest benefits. And, *jnānis* preach that those who abstain from the above said sacred deliberations and indulge in unholy acts, will incur worst sins.

सङ्क्रान्त्यां पक्षयोरन्ते ग्रहणे चन्द्रसूर्ययोः।

गङ्गास्नातो नरः कामात् ब्रह्मणःसदनं व्रजेत्॥ (भविष्यपुराण)

रविसङ्क्रमणे पुण्ये न स्नायाद्यस्तु मानवः।

सप्तजन्मन्यसौ रोगी निर्धनश्चोपजायते॥

सङ्क्रान्तौ यानि दत्तानि हव्यकव्यानि मानवैः।
तानि नित्यं ददात्यर्कः पुनर्जन्मनि जन्मनि॥ (देवीपुराण)
राहुदर्शनं सङ्क्रान्तिविवाहात्ययवृद्धिषु ।
स्नानदानादिकं कुर्युर्निशि काम्यव्रतेषु च ॥ (गोभिल)
धेनुं तिलमयीं राजन् दद्याद्यश्चोत्तरायणे।
सर्वान्कामानवाप्नोति विन्दते परमं सुखम्॥
उत्तरे त्वयने विप्रा वस्तुदानं महाफलम्।
तिलपूर्वमनङ्वाहं दत्त्वा रोगैः प्रमुच्यते॥
तस्मात्तस्यां तिलैः स्नानं कार्यं चोद्धर्तनं बुधैः॥
देवतानां पितृणां च सोदकैस्तर्पणं तिलैः।
पुरा मकरसङ्क्रान्तौ शङ्करो गोसवे कृते।
तिलानुत्पादयामास तृप्तये सर्वदेहिनाम्॥
(विष्णुधर्मोत्तर and शिवरहस्य)

Even making gifts on the night of this day is very auspicious.

The term *Saṅkrānti* (*saṅkrama*, *saṅkramaṇa*) means, the sun appearing to move from one *rāśi* (a division of the zodiac) to another.

रवेः सङ्क्रमणम् राशौ सङ्क्रान्तिरिति कथ्यते।
स्नानदानतपःश्राद्धहोमादिषु महाफला॥
मेषादिषु द्वादशराशिषु क्रमेण संसरतः सूर्यस्य
पूर्वस्माद्राशेः उत्तरराशौ सङ्क्रमणम् प्रवेशः सङ्क्रान्तिः।

It is not just the Sun that moves from one *rāśi* to the other, but the planets also enter into

stars and *rāśis*, during this auspicious time of *Saṅkrānti* only.

Even then, it is customary to specially call the movement of the sun alone from one *rāśi* to another as *Saṅkrānti*.

न केवलमादित्यस्यैव सङ्क्रमायने पुण्यकालः।

किन्तु सर्वेषां ग्रहाणां नक्षत्रराशिसङ्क्रमे पुण्य -
कालो भवति सर्वग्रहाणां राश्यन्तरसङ्क्रमण -
वाचिनोऽपि सङ्क्रान्ति शब्दस्य-सङ्क्रान्तेः पुण्यकालस्तु
षोडशोभयतः कलाः इत्यादि शास्त्रे रविसङ्क्रमण मात्रपरत्वम् । (स्मृतिकौमुदी)

These *Saṅkrāntis* are twelve in number viz - *Mesha*, *Vṛshabha*, *Mithuna*, *Kaṭaka* (*Karkātaka*), *Simha*, *Kanya*, *Tulā*, *Vṛścika*, *Dhanus*, *Makara*, *Kumbha* and *Mīna*.

Among these, *kaṭaka* and *Makara* *saṅkramaṇas* are *ayana Saṅkrāntis* and *Mesha* and *Tulā* are *Vishuva saṅkrāntis*. *Mithuna*, *kanyā*, *Dhanus* and *Mīna* *saṅkramaṇas* are *Shadaśīti* or *shadaśītimukha Saṅkrāntis* and *Vṛshabha*, *simha*, *vṛścika* and *kumbhasaṅkramaṇas* are classified as *Vishṇupadī* or *Vishṇupadasaṅkrāntis*. Though the *saṅkramaṇas* are twelve in number, common people refer to *Makara*— *Saṅkrānti* alone as *Saṅkrānti*, because of its exceptional sacredness.

Those who cannot afford to observe other *Saṅkrāntis* must necessarily observe this

Saṅkrānti. Thus *Makara Saṅkrānti* is a *Parva Viśeṣa*, renowned as the holiest of the holy.

This *parva* is called *uttarāyaṇapūṇyakāla*, as it is an auspicious moment from which the sun God (*SūryaNārāyaṇa*) begins his journey from south to north (*uttarāyaṇa*). This is famous in Tamilnadu as ‘*pongal*’ as it is the day on which milk is boiled and made to overflow, as per a special precept. The custom of common people calling it, ‘*eḷḷina habba*’ has come into vogue, as it is the day on which sesame is mixed with jaggery and other condiments, and gifted and consumed also.

ii) When and at what time should this be observed?

Saṅkrānti is a *sauramāna* festival. It’s observance is on the first day of the month of *Makara*. According to the lunar calendar it falls in the month of *pushya*. The festival occurs generally on one of the days i.e. on the 12th, or 13th or on the 14th of January. Even though it may be stated approximately as the day of the festival of *Saṅkrānti*, it is difficult to decide the precise moment at which this *pūṇyakāla* should be observed (by means of *jnāna*, *dāna*, *dhyāna*, and *tarpaṇa* etc.) The specific *kālaviśeṣa* at which the sun enters one zodiac from the other is extremely subtle. It is as minute as the one thousandth part of

a *truti*. It cannot be made out by people with the help of ordinary eyes. Only *yogis* can notice it. As it is impossible for ordinary people to detect that important time, they should perform the rituals at a suitable time which is very close to it, either just earlier to that or just after that. Scriptures state that closer the time of observances to the time of *Saṅkrānti*, better are the results.

सङ्क्रान्तिसमयस्सूक्ष्मः दुर्ज्ञेयः पिशितेक्षणैः। (देवल)

वृटेः सहस्रभागो यः स कालो रविसङ्क्रमे। (देवीपुराण)

अतः अनुष्ठाने मुख्यकालासम्भवात्

सङ्क्रान्तिसम्बन्धिनौ पूर्वोत्तरकालौ गृहीतव्यौ (कालनिर्णय-हेमाद्रि)

या याः सन्निहिता नाड्यः तास्ताः पुण्यतमाः स्मृताः (शातातपस्मृति)

The time duration of thirty *nāḍis* before the onset of *saṅkramaṇa* and immediately after that are very sacred. Sixty *ghaṭikās* in *śaḍaśīti saṅkramaṇas* and sixteen *ghaṭikās* in *Vishṇupadī saṅkramaṇas* are very sacred. These durations have been specified with the intention that ordinary people should not transgress them.

तद्योगादप्यधश्चोर्ध्वं त्रिंशन्नाड्यः पवित्रिताः। (देवल)

षडशीत्यामतीतायां षष्टिरुक्तास्तु नाडिकाः।

पुण्यायां विष्णुपद्मां च प्राक् पश्चादपि षोडशा॥ (वृद्धवासिष्ठ)

This is the ordinary *pūṇyakāla*. Then which is the most meritorious time? The times i.e. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 or 12 *ghaṭikās* nearest to the occurrence of the *pūṇyakāla* respectively, are most auspicious.

त्रिचतुः पञ्चसप्ताष्ट नव द्वादश एव च ।

क्रमेण घटिका होतास्तत्पुण्यं पारमार्थिकम् ॥ (देवीपुराण)

And to the question—"How long the meritorious time prevails during *saṅkramaṇa*," we see an ordinary answer in scriptures as, "the time duration which is sixteen or fifteen *ghaṭikās* just before the *saṅkrama*."

अर्वाक् षोडश विज्ञेया नाड्यः पञ्चाच्च षोडश ।

कालः पुण्योऽर्कसङ्क्रान्ते विद्वद्भिः परिकीर्तितः ॥ (शातातप)

सङ्क्रान्तौ पुण्यकालस्तु षोडशोभयतः कलाः॥ (मरीचि)

अतीतानागतो भोगो नाड्यः पञ्चदश स्मृताः ॥ (देवीपुराण)

After a study of all the rules regarding the duration of *puṇyakāla*, a treatise by name *Dharmasindhu* states the conclusion as follows:-

On the *puṇya dinas* of *Vishu*, ie. During *Mesha* and *Tula saṅkramaṇas*, the *puṇyakāla* will be for a duration of 15 *ghaṭikas* before and after the occurrence of the *puṇyakālas*, 16 *ghaṭikās* preceding the *Vṛshabha*, *simha*, *vṛścika* and *kumbha saṅkramaṇas*, 16 *ghaṭikās* succeeding the *mithuna*, *kanyā*, *dhanus* and *mīna saṅkramaṇas*, 30 *ghaṭikās* preceding the *karkātaka saṅkramaṇa* (*dakṣiṇāyana puṇyakāla*), and 40 *ghaṭikās* succeeding the *Makara saṅkramaṇa* (*uttarāyana puṇyakāla*); the preceding and the succeeding 30 *ghaṭikās* in all the *saṅkramaṇas*, the succeeding sixty *ghaṭikās* in the *śaḍaśīti puṇyakāla* and, the

preceding and succeeding sixteen *ghaṭikās* in *Vishṇupadīpuṇyakāla*.

Even though the determination of the time of only the *Makara Saṅkrānti* is relevant to this article, we have narrated the matter pertaining to other *Saṅkrāntis* also, as we feel that it is necessary at this juncture.

Regarding the time of observation of rituals during *uttarāyana puṇyakāla* (*Makara Saṅkrānti*) and *dakṣiṇāyana puṇyakāla* (*karkātaka Saṅkrānti*), the following rule is followed in South India. Rituals can be observed till a period of 20 *ghaṭikās* from the birth of *uttarāyana puṇyakāla* and in the duration of 20 *ghaṭikās* preceding the birth of *dakṣiṇāyanapuṇyakāla*. Any way, in both the cases the rituals are performed in *uttarāyana* only; “अयने विंशतिः पूर्वं अयने विंशतिः परम्”

The duration of the *puṇyakālas* should be understood as follows: If *Saṅkrānti* sets in during day time at 2 *ghaṭikās* to sunset or before, the *puṇyakāla* will be before *Saṅkrānti* itself, in the *mithuna*, *kanyā*, *dhanus* and *mīna saṅkramas*. If it sets in at two *ghaṭikās* to sunrise or before that time, then the *puṇyakāla* in the *vṛshabha*, *vṛścika*, *kumbha* and *karkātaka saṅkramaṇas* will be after the *Saṅkrānti*. If *Saṅkrānti* sets in

during night hours before midnight, the *puṇyakāla* will be in the latter half of the day time of the previous day. If the *Saṅkrānti* sets in at mid night or later, the *puṇyakāla* extends to both the days (i.e. the latter half of the previous day and the first half of the next day.) This rule applies to all *Saṅkrāntis* except *Makara* and *karkātaka Saṅkrāntis*. If *uttarāyaṇa* sets in *Makara māsa* at night, the *puṇyakāla* will be on the first day of *Saṅkrānti* and if *karkātaka Saṅkrānti* sets in the night, the *puṇyakāla* will be on the previous day. If *Makara Saṅkrānti* sets in at dusk, (i.e. during three *ghaṭikās* before sunset), the *puṇyakāla* will be during the previous day. If *karkātaka Saṅkrānti* sets in at dawn (i.e. during three *ghaṭikās* before sunrise) the *puṇyakāla* will be during the following day.

The time of *puṇyakāla* should be determined as per the above rules, and during that time, holy bath, *japa*, and meditation, *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa* should be performed.

As it is possible only for *yogis* to know the exact time of the *saṅkramaṇas*, the above said directions are given by the scriptures with regard to the performance of rituals, keeping in mind the ordinary people. **We humbly remember here that ŚrīGurudeva who was a supreme yogi, and a**

supreme preceptor of the science of *nādi*, had demonstrated by experimental science to a few intimate disciples of his, that the exact and most infinitesimal time of the setting in of *saṅkramaṇa* and the exact extent of its duration can be known not only by *yoga dhyana* but also by the practice of *nāḍī vijnāna* taught by *yogis*.

Here we would like to briefly describe the modalities of the observation of the festival.

1) *Śāstras* state that as *Saṅkrāntis*, like eclipses, are considered very great *puṇyakālas*, it is highly meritorious to take a bath in the holy *tīrthās*. By this, all are benefitted with *puṇya* and *purushārthas*. Not only this. If one does not take a bath at that time, he will be struck with adversities also. And diseases and misfortunes arrive. The *Purāṇās* proclaim—"If one takes a bath in the holy *Gaṅgā* on that day, he will attain *Brahmaloka*. If he does not take a holy bath, he will be afflicted with diseases for seven lives (to come)" and also will be afflicted with penury.

गङ्गास्नातो नरः कामात् ब्रह्मणः सदनं व्रजेत्
रविसङ्क्रमणे पुण्ये न स्नायाद्यस्तु मानवः ।
सप्तजन्मन्यसौ रोगी निर्धनश्चोपजायते''॥

It should be remembered here that this is not merely a *Malāpakarshaṇa snāna* that washes off

the dirt of the body, but a *puṇyasnāna* which washes off blemishes of the mind also. So, it is more meritorious to have *abhyāṅgana* with cold water instead of hot water. Only persons who are weak should take bath in hot water. Those who can afford to go to the *puṇyatīrthas* like *Gaṅgā* etc., take a bath with a *saṅkalpa*.

2) After the holy bath, those who are *adhikāris* for performing *śrāddha* should perform it with *tarpaṇa*, and should do *dānas*. It is a very auspicious time for meditation of God, as Mother Nature naturally turns the mind inwards at that time. It is also an excellent time for performing *mantra*, *japa*, *pūjā* and *pārāyaṇa* which foster meditation. It is also a very good time for receiving *Dhyānadīkshā* and *Mantradīkshā*.

3) On the day of this festival known as '*Ellina habba*', only sesame seeds are used in several forms. Bathing is done with sesame. Sesame is used for *tarpaṇa*. An image of a cow made of sesame seeds may be gifted. *Dāna* of only sesame seeds, or sesame seeds mixed with condiments like jaggery, dry cocconut, groundnuts etc is done. To ward off evil spirits, sesame seeds are showered on babies. The practice of showering jujube fruits on children is also there. *Ārati* is performed to children and blessings from teachers and elders are obtained after offering salutations to them.

4) Worship of God is specially done and *prasāda* is taken.— A dish by name '*Huggi*' which is made with rice and green gram (also called *pongal*), happens to be a prominent one among the items offered to God and taken as *prasāda*. The inaugural *naivedya* is done with this item, which is offered to God as *naivedya* on all the days of *Dhanurmāsa*, which is the month previous to that.

5) This festival is celebrated with a lot of bustle and excitement and enthusiasm in Tamilnadu. The word *pongal* means overflowing. The auspicious custom of boiling milk in a utensil on an oven that is cleaned with water and smeared with cow dung and making it to over flow, is specially observed.

6) Cows are specially worshipped on that day. They are bathed and their horns are painted and decorated. They are fed with enjoyable fodder of grass, cereals, coconuts and jaggery which are dear to them, good to them and which are full of juice. They are made to leap (jump) through burning fire to ward off evils. This is called '*kiccu hāyisuvudu*' (leaping through a blaze).

7) There is a custom of distributing sesame seeds mixed with condiments, pieces of sugar cane and images made of sugar. People speak (sweetly) with their dear ones and friends. To remind all those who receive sesame seeds and jaggery that

they must speak only sweet words, the Kannada proverb "*Elḷubellava tindu olḷemātanāḍu*". is quoted. There are proverbs in Hindi and Marathi languages also carrying a similar meaning.

8) Not only the day of *Saṅkrānti* but the previous day and the day next to it are also celebrated as connected festival days. The preceding day is called "*Bhogiya habba*" (*Saṅkrānti* is a festival dear to both *yogis* and *bhogis*.) The day next to *Saṅkrānti* is famous by the name '*kanūhabba*'. People who follow the tradition of the Tamil country specially celebrate it. It is women who observe the custom of *Kanū* festival. This is a special custom followed to please the *bhūtas*. In this festival, the leftover food items viz *bhakshya*, *Bhojya*, *coshya* and *lehya* that were offered to God as *neivedya* on the day of *Saṅkrānti*, are taken and mixed with handfuls of multicoloured preparations such as red and yellow rice made from left over rice and pieces of fruits, sugar cane etc, are placed on leaves outside homes, and are offered to *Bhūtas*. These are offered before bath in the morning and then a bath is taken. The practice of offering it after bath is also there. The custom of women getting together in gardens and parks on that afternoon or evening, and sharing with each other the food

prepared in each of their homes and partaking is also there. The custom of women uttering strange wishes and words such as 'Marriage of the crows, *Sīmanta* to the sparrows' etc., while placing the *kanū* rice *balis* is in vogue.

9) Though the *uttarāyaṇa* that begins on *Makara Saṅkrānti* is dear to *devatās* and is auspicious for sacred functions such as *upanayana*, *cūḍākarma* etc, they should not be celebrated on the day of *Makara Saṅkrānti*. It is a special auspicious time only for *Dhyāna*, *dāna*, *japa* etc.

10) There is a custom of honouring astrologers on that night after *devatāpūjā* and listening to them after they are requested to read out the *Svarūpa* of *Saṅkrāntimūrti* and the outcome of the effect of *Saṅkrānti* of that year. Then the astrologer worships the almanac and describes the *mūrti* of *Saṅkrānti* as having three heads, two faces, five mouths, three eyes, dangling ear lobes and eye-brows, red teeth, long nose, eight arms, two legs, ugly shape, dark complexion, body of half man and half woman. Then he interprets the effects brought out by the special name of *Saṅkrānti*, of the following:- the week of arrival of *Saṅkrānti*, the fortnight, the *tithi*, the star, the *Yoga* and *Karaṇa*, the gaze of *Saṅkrānti*, the direction of its journey, it's time (duration), the

benefit of taking the holy bath, clothes, applying unguents, flower, decoration, food, carriage, weapon, seat, birth, direction, the state of the age etc.

11) As *Saṅkrānti* is best for *pitṛupūja*, persons who perform *tarpaṇa* etc should eat only once (and fast in the other part of the day). It is best for others also to take light food at night and spend more time in meditation and worship of God.

We will now critically analyse a well known problem related to the significance of *uttarāyaṇa*, and discuss the modalities of the observance of the festival.

The problem of *uttarāyaṇa*

Ayana means a path. “अयनं वर्त्ममार्गाध्वपन्थानः पदवी सृतिः” *uttarāyaṇa* means the way towards the north. The special time during which the Sun appears to be travelling in the path of the northern direction is called ‘*uttarāyaṇa*’ technically. This time starts when the Sun enters the *Makararāśi* and continues till the time he enters into *karkaṭa rāśi*. Similarly the special time in the Sun’s journey from the *karkaṭa rāśi* to his entry into *Makara rāśi* is called ‘*dakṣiṇāyaṇa*’.

उत्तरायणमप्युक्तं मकरस्थे दिवाकरे ।

कर्कटादिस्थिते भानौ दक्षिणायनमुच्यते ॥

The word *uttara* also means the best (supreme). Therefore *uttarāyaṇa* means the best path and, the time during which the sun travels in that path also becomes ‘*uttarāyaṇa*’. Both these meanings i.e. the time during which the sun travels in the northern direction and the best time, agree in sense for the term ‘*uttarāyaṇa*’. The first meaning is visible to the eye. The second one is a matter that has to be known from scriptures and by experience. This indeed is the issue which is posing a problem here.

What is special about the supremacy in the duration of time of *uttarāyaṇa*? It is referred to as ‘the day of the *devatās*’ and the best time for the performance of ‘*vedavrata*’, marriage, *cūdākarma*, *upanayana* etc, which are dear to the *devatās*. Opposed to this the ‘*dakṣiṇāyaṇa*’ which is called the night of the *devatās* is best for *tarpaṇa*, *śrāddha* etc. which are dear to *pitṛ devatās*.

दैवे राज्यहनी वर्षं प्रविभागस्तयोः पुनः ।

अहस्तत्रोदगयनं रात्रिः स्यादक्षिणायनम् ॥

The *śāstras* are of the opinion that *uttarāyaṇa* is best for *devatā kāryas* like *dhyāna*, *dāna*, worship, *mantropadeśa* etc. There is not much of an objection to this. But another well known thing about *uttarāyaṇa* has lead to discussions and criticisms. What is that well known thing? It is the assertion by the scriptures that those

who pass away in *uttarāyaṇa* attain *moksha*. This assertion has indeed created a confusion. We come across statements in scriptures, which say that people who pass away in *Kāśī* attain *moksha* and also that people who pass away in *uttarāyaṇa* attain salvation. We see an opinion in the *Mahābhārata* that the great yogi *Bhīshma*, who was felled to a bed of arrows at the time of *dakṣiṇāyana*, held on to his *prāṇa* till the time of the arrival of *uttarāyaṇa*, for the above said reason only.

“धारयिष्याम्यहं प्राणान्यतितोऽपि महीतले उत्तरायणमन्विच्छन्
सुगतिप्रतिकाङ्क्षया” ।

(The words of *Bhīshma*—"Though I have fallen on the ground, I am waiting for the arrival of *uttarāyaṇa*, as I am desirous of *Sadgati*. I will hold on to my *prāṇās* till then"). It is the clear opinion of the *upanishats* that there is no salvation for a person who leaves his body in *dakṣiṇāyana*. He travels in the path of *pitṛs* and is merged in *candra*. Whoever attains *candra* will be born again.

अथ यो दक्षिणे प्रमीयते, पितृणामेव महिमानं गत्वा
चन्द्रमसस्सायुज्यं गच्छति (तै.उ.)

तेषां यदा तत्पर्यवैति अथैतमेवाध्वानं पुनर्निवर्तन्ते (छां.उ.)

The *Upaniṣats* clearly declare that the need of *uttarāyaṇa* is there for a *yogi* who desires a

place in the *Brahma sthāna* which is free from rebirths.

अपूर्वमाणपक्षाद्यान् षडुदङ्केति मासांस्तान् ॥ (छां. 4-115-5)

In the *Bhagavad-Gīta* which is the essence of *upanisats*, there is a teaching.—"Listen to me. I will tell you the time, when departing, the *yogis* attain salvation which is free from rebirth and also the time, when departing, they are subject to rebirth. *Yogis* who are *Brahmavids* who travel through *agni*, *jyoti*, day, bright fortnight and during the six months of *uttarāyaṇa* will attain the *Brahma*, and the *yogis* who travel through smoke, night, dark fortnight and the six months of *dakṣiṇāyana* will reach the light of *candra*, return to *samsāra* again."

यत्र कालेत्वनावृत्तिं आवृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।

प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥

अग्निर्जोयितरहःशुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।

तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः॥

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिः योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥

The path of *uttarāyaṇa* is also called "*Archirādimārga*", because it begins with the *darśana* of 'Agni jyoti'. As it delivers to the abode of *paramātman* the of God of Gods, from which there is no return, it is also called as '*Devayāna mārga*.' Likewise, we see that there are two

names for the path of *dakṣiṇāyana* viz 'dhūmādi mārḡa' and 'pitṛyāna mārḡa'. Among these, the *devayāna mārḡa* transports one to *mukti*. The second one makes a person to return to *samsāra*, the *upanisats* clarify further.

“ते ये एवमेतद्विदुः ये चापि अरण्ये श्रद्धां सत्यमुपासते तेऽर्चिरभिसम्भवन्ति, अर्चिषोऽहः अह्ना आपूर्यमाणपक्षं, आपूर्यमाणपक्षाद्यान् षण्मासान् उदङ्ङादित्य एति मासेभ्यो देवलोकम्, देवलोकादादित्यं आदित्याद्वैद्युतम्, तान्वैद्युतान् पुरुषो मानस एत्य ब्रह्मलोकानामयति, तेषु ब्रह्मलोकेषु पराः परावतो वसन्ति तेषां न पुनरावृत्तिः।

अथ ये यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा लोकान् जयन्ति ते धूममभिसम्भवन्ति. धूमाद्रात्रिं, रात्रेरपक्षीयमाणपक्षं अपक्षीयमाणपक्षाद्यान् षण्मासान् दक्षिणामादित्य एति, मासेभ्यः पितृलोकम्, पितृलोकाच्चन्द्रम्, ते चन्द्रं प्राप्य अन्नं भवन्ति ताग्ं स्तत्रदेवा यथा सोमं राजानमाप्यायस्वापक्षीयस्वेति” बृहदारण्यक 6-1-14-15

On the whole, it has been clearly proclaimed in the *upanishats*, *Gīta* and *Itihāsas* that those who give up their *prāṇās* in the path of *uttarāyana* (time) will attain salvation and those who give up their *prāṇa* in the *dakṣiṇāyana* path are reborn. Then, if a *Brahmajnānī* dies accidentally in *dakṣiṇāyana*, does he return *samsāra*? And, if an *ajñāni* accidentally dies in *uttarāyana* will he get *mukti*? If one kills an *ajñāni* in *uttarāyana*, will it help him to obtain *mukti*? Is it possible to avert the *mukti* of a *Brahmajnāni* by killing him in *dakṣiṇāyana*? What is the relationship between the special times of *uttarāyana* and *dakṣiṇāyana* and *mukti* or

samsāra? Is there no place for *jnāna*, *ajñāna*, *punya*, sin and so on here? These questions invade our minds.

1. Some have given up finding a solution to the problem saying "I do not understand why it has been stated like this in the *Gīta* and the *upanishats*. This is a riddle which I cannot solve".

2. Regarding this problem the *pūrvācāryas* have presented their conclusions as below after making a study of the above said (treatises viz) *Gīta*, *upanisats*, *Itihāsa vākyas* and also *Brahmasūtravākyas* by reasoning, which conform to the *śāstras*, as follows.:

(*Brahmasūtra* ch. 4 *sūtra* 507, 508, 512
“अतश्चायनेऽपि दक्षिणे” “योगिनः प्रतिस्मर्येति स्मर्ते चैते”
“अतिवाहिकास्तल्लिङ्गात्”)

We can summarize their conclusions thus: There are two types of people who attain *mukti* viz. those who attain *mukti* immediately and those who attain salvation progressively There is neither *Gati* nor *Agati* for those great souls who belong to the first category who are *pūrṇabrahmajnānis* and have *samyagdarśananishṭhā*. Their *prāṇās* have already merged in *brahma* and they have become *Brahmamayas* and *Brahmabhūtas*. "Na tasya *prāṇa* *utkramanti*" They have either *arcirādigati* or *Dhoomādigati*. Regarding them, the *śāstras* make

no mention of the *uttarāyana* and *dakṣiṇāyana gatis*.

The *uttarāyana* path is for the *Brahmopāsaka yogis* who attain progressive emancipation. They attain *mukti* in the course of time. They travel through the path viz the *devatā* of day time who is the presiding deity of time, *suklapakshadevatā* and *uttarāyana devatā*, and attain *Brahman*. *Yogis* who have followed the path of *karma*, travel by the route viz *Dhūmābhīmānidevatā*, *Rātryabhīmānidevatā*, *Kṛshṇapakshadevatā* and *dakṣiṇāyana devatā*, and reach the *Candrajyoti*, and with the waning of their *puṇya*, return to the world again.

The renown that death in *uttarāyana* is auspicious, applies only to persons who are not *jnānis*. Though *Bhīṣma* was a *jnāni* he kept waiting for arrival of *uttarāyana*. It was in the interest of protecting the *Śiṣṭacāra* and also to demonstrate to the world the (power of) the boon of *svecchāmarāṇa* granted by his father. The *Kālaviniyoga* stated in the *smṛti* (the *Gīta*) as *Anāvṛttiphala* is with reference to *Yogis*. These *Yogasāṅkhyas* are only *smṛtis* and not *śruti siddhas*. This division of time stated in the *smṛtis* does not apply to the *upāsanas* related to the *Vedas*. Or, there will be no contradiction if the words of the *Smṛtis* also are understood to mean

that *agni* and others are *Ātivāikadevatās*, as stated the *Vedas*.

‘प्रकृतानां योगिनां प्रणवावेशितब्रह्मबुद्धीनां कालान्तरमुक्तिभाजां ब्रह्मप्रतिपत्तये उत्तरो मार्गो वक्तव्य इति यत्र काले इत्यादि । योगिनः इति योगिनः कर्मिणश्च उच्यन्ते अग्निः कलाभिमानिनीदेवता, तथा अहर्देवता अहरभिमानिनी ब्रह्मविदः ब्रह्मोपासनपरा जनाः क्रमेण इति वाक्यशेषः न हि सद्योमुक्तिभाजां सम्यग्दर्शननिष्ठानां गतिरगतिर्वा क्वचिदस्ति न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति इति श्रुतेः ब्रह्मसंलीनप्राणा एव ते। ब्रह्ममया ब्रह्मभूता एव ते, प्राशस्त्य प्रसिद्धिः अविद्वद्विषया भीष्मस्य प्रतिपालनं आचारप्रतिपालनार्थं पितृप्रसादलब्ध स्वच्छन्द मृत्युताख्यापनार्थं च। श्रुतेस्त्वर्थं वक्ष्यति अतिवाहिकास्तल्लिङ्गात् इत्यत्र योगिनः प्रति चायं अहरादिकालविनियोगः अनावृत्तये स्मर्यते, स्मार्ते चैते योगसाङ्ख्ये न श्रौते, अतो विषयभेदात् प्रमाणविशेषाच्च नास्य स्मार्तस्य काल विनियोगस्य श्रौतेषु विज्ञानेष्ववतारः - यदा पुनः स्मृतावपि अग्न्याद्याः देवता एवातिवाहिक्यो गृह्यन्ते तदा न कश्चित् विरोध इति।’ (श्रीशङ्करभाष्य)

The ones who have realized the *Ātmayāthātmya* and the ones who are *paramapurushanishṭhas* travel in the path of ‘*arcirādigati*’. They do not have to return to the worldly life. They attain *mukti*. The world *kāla* indicates the path. It means, "in the path filled with *kalābhīmāni devatās*". So it is the *uttarāyana mārṅa* and *dakṣiṇāyanamārṅa* that have been stated hereby. The one that is stated for the *yogis* is the *arcirādimārṅa*, the *devayāna mārṅa*. And for the *puṇyakarmis* it is the ‘*punarāvṛtti mārṅa*’ and the *pitṛyāna mārṅa*. For (*jnānis*) and *puṇyakarmis* it is *śukla arcirādi*,

anāvṛtti mārga and *Kṛshṇa (Dhūmādi, Āvṛtti) mārgas* respectively. A *Yogi* must have the knowledge of both the paths during travel. Awareness of this will free him from delusion. He travels only in his *Devayāna mārga* and attains *mukti*.

A *brahmajñāni* is assured of *moksha* even if he dies in *dakṣiṇāyana*. Only those who are not *jnānis*, travel by the *pitṛyāna mārga*, reach *candra* and return to *samsāra*. Even if *jnānis* reach *candra*, it will be only a resting place for them. From there they attain *Parabrahma* only, from which there is no return. Only persons like *Bhīṣhma* and others had the *svacchanda maraṇa śakti* by the power of *yoga*. They (*Bhīṣhma* in particular) just waited for the *uttarāyaṇakāla*, only to pioneer *Dharma* and to demonstrate the importance of *uttarāyaṇa*.

No mention has been made here with regard to people who are nearing death, about the distinct time in which they should die. It is only stated that *Yoganishṭhas* should remember these *devayāna* and *pitṛyāna paths*. As a part of *yoga* they should remember these two paths. By doing so, they will be freed from *moha*.

In “यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिम्” etc, the word ‘*kāla*’ refers to *ativāhaka devatās* who are *kāladyabhimānis*.

Agni and others are not *kāla*, but are *devatās*. What has been said here clearly is about the remembrance of *devayāna* and not the distinct time of death.

“अविदुषाम्” पितृयानेन पथा चन्द्रं प्राप्तानामेव पुनरावृत्तिः, विदुषस्तु चन्द्रं प्राप्तस्यापि तस्माद्ब्रह्मणो महिमानमाप्नोतीति वाक्यशेषात् तस्य दक्षिणायनमृतस्य चन्द्रप्राप्तिः ब्रह्मप्रपित्सतः विश्रामहेतुमात्रमिति गम्यते। भीष्मादीनां योगप्रभावात् स्वच्छन्दमरणानां धर्मप्रवर्तनाय उत्तरायणप्राशस्त्यप्रदर्शनार्थस्तथा विचारः ।

नात्र मुमूर्षून् प्रति मरणकालविशेषोपादानं स्मर्यते, अपि तु योगनिष्ठान् प्रति स्मृतिविषयभूते, स्मर्तव्ये देवयानपितृयाणाख्ये गती स्मर्यते योगाङ्गतया अनुदिनं स्मर्तुं तथाह्युपसंहारः। “नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुह्यति कश्चन”

अथ आत्मयाथात्म्यविदः परमपुरुषनिष्ठस्य च साधारणीं अर्चिरादिकां गतिमाह, द्वयोरप्यर्चिरादिका गतिः श्रुतौ श्रुता सा चाप्युपनरावृत्तिलक्षणा.... अत्र कालशब्दो मार्गस्य... कालाभिमानिदेवताभूयस्तया मार्गोपलक्षणार्थः.

एतौ मार्गौ जानन् योगी प्रयाणकाले कश्चन न मुह्यति. अपि तु स्वेनैव देवयानेन पथा याति. तस्मादहरहरर्चिरादिगतिचिन्तनाख्ययोगयुक्तो भव” (श्रीरामानुज भाष्य)

3. Though it is stated that those who die in *dakṣiṇāyana*, reach heaven and those who die in *uttarāyaṇa* obtain *parabrahma*, it is also proper for *jnānis* to pass away in *dakṣiṇāyana*.

“दक्षिणे मरणाद्याति स्वर्गं ब्रह्मोत्तरायणे” - इति उक्तेः ज्ञानिनः दक्षिणायनोत्क्रान्तिः युज्यते”

Both these *Gatis* with regard to *yogis* are mentioned in the *smṛtis*. These depend on remembrance. *Brahma* and *candra gatis* are not

merely in the hands of *Kāla*. They are different as per the division, as *Jnānyogis* and *Karmayogis*.

“न केवलं कालादिकृते ब्रह्मचन्द्रगती स्मर्येते किन्तु ज्ञानयोगिनः कर्मयोगिनश्च....”

It is said here that those who have (attained) the *abhimāna devatās* such as *kāla* and others, attain *āvṛtti* and *anāvṛtti*; *Agni* and others are the *abhimāni devatās*.

“यत्कालाद्यभिमानिदेवता गताः आवृत्त्यनावृत्ती गच्छन्ति ता आह अभिमानिदेवताश्च अग्न्यादयः” (श्रीमध्वभाष्य)

4. "The word 'Yatra' indicates the (path) of the *yogis*. It also indicates the meaning—"I will tell you of the path and also the *kāla*" (*Śrī Vāmanaṭīkā*).

5. Such of those *brahmajñānis* who have attained *Brahmabhāva* in this world itself, do not have much to benefit from the path of *uttarāyaṇa*. And *Punarāvṛtti* is certain for *Karmayogis*. There is nothing special from *dakṣiṇāyaṇa* for them. That is why they are referred to as 'yogis'.

Even if a *Brahmajñāni* happens to die in *dakṣiṇāyaṇa* itself, he can attain *Brahmaloka*, and an example for this is found in *Mahābhārata* itself. It is described that *Droṇācārya* who gave up his body by *yogadharma* in the battle field on the fifth day from the fall of *Bhīshma*, attained *brahmaloka*.

द्रोणोऽपि शस्त्राण्युत्सृज्य परमं साङ्ख्यमास्थितः ।

दिवमाक्रमदाचार्यः साक्षात्सद्भिर्दुराक्रमम् ।

ब्रह्मलोकं महद्दिव्यं देवगुह्यं हि तत्परम्” (अविगीता)

Here we have briefly quoted some attempts made by the ancient *acāryas* to solve the issue related to the attainment of *mukti* with regard to people passing away in *uttarāyaṇa*, and the *Punarāvṛtti* of people passing away in *dakṣiṇāyaṇa*. It is very clearly stated in *Gīta* and *Upaniśads* that those who die in *uttarāyaṇa* attain salvation, and those who die in *dakṣiṇāyaṇa* will be subjected to *Punarāvṛtti*. The *Ācāryas* have with effort propounded that *Brahmajñānis* have no hindrance to *mukti* even if they happen to die in *dakṣiṇāyaṇa*, and no matter whatever be the time they give up their body, they attain *moksha* only. *Brahmasūtras* also arrive at this very opinion that even if he happens to pass away in *dakṣiṇāyaṇa*, he attains *moksha* only. *Mahābhārata* cites the examples of great *yogis* *Droṇācārya*, *Bhūrīśravas* and others that even though they gave up their bodies during the time called *dakṣiṇāyaṇa* they attained *mukti* only. But *Gīta* and *Upaniśads* clearly state that *mukti* is attained if the mortal coil is cast off in *Uttarāyaṇa* and it will be *Punarāvṛtti* if death happens in *dakṣiṇāyaṇa*. Nothing has been stated distinctly for *jñānis* and *ajñānis* there, in this

regard. We have not come across any explanation in the previous commentaries about the relationship between *uttarāyaṇa* and *mukti*, and the relationship between *dakṣiṇāyana* and *Punarāvṛtti*.

Some scholars have tried to solve the problem by interpreting the word 'kāla' to mean 'mārga'. Some others have tried to resolve the problem trying to interpret that the above said *kālaniyama* applies only to the worshippers and not to *jnānis* who are directly eligible for *mukti*. We offer our gratitude to these *Bhāshyakāras* and commentators hereby, and shall quote below the solution we obtained from **the divine explanation provided by Śrī Raṅgagurudeva, when we were in search of a clear solution to this problem which conforms to scriptures, reason and experience.**

To our question, "does an *ajñāni* attain salvation if he dies in *uttarāyaṇa*," he answered that there is no *dehatyāga* in the case of an 'ajñāni' in *uttarāyaṇa*. To the question, "does a *jnāni* gets subjected to *Punarāvṛtti* if he dies in *dakṣiṇāyana*", he replied that there is no question of the happening of *dehatyāga* at all in the case of a *jnāni* in *dakṣiṇāyana*. Then we raised many more questions. "This explanation is in contradiction to reason and illustrations indeed! If a *jnāni* dies in *dakṣiṇāyana* where

does his divine knowledge go? How does the ignorance of an *ajñāni* vanish if he dies in *uttarāyaṇa*? How can the light of divine knowledge occur to him all of a sudden, and take him to *mukti*? The example of *Droṇacārya* attaining *mukti* by his power of *yoga* even though he died in *dakṣiṇāyana* topples the conclusions regarding the significance of the times of *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyana*! Then why did *Bhīṣmacārya*, in spite of being a *jnāni* desired for *uttarāyaṇa* to cast off the mortal coil?" To this, *Śrīraṅgamahāguru* serenely bestowed answers which provided us great satisfaction. He answered our subsequent questions as below:

"The distinct times of *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyana*, as seen outside, exist inside (the human body) also. *Uttarāyaṇa* will lead to salvation, whereas *dakṣiṇāyana* pushes down to *Punarāvṛtti*. Even though a *jnāni* casts off his mortal coil in *dakṣiṇāyana*, he creates *uttarāyaṇa* itself within, by the power of *yoga*. By that he will anyhow attain *mukti*. Even though an 'ajñāni' gives up his body in *uttarāyaṇa*, the time within him will be *dakṣiṇāyana* only. As he does not have the capability to convert the time into *uttarāyaṇa* within, he will return to the worldly life (again).

Sometimes, the external *uttarāyana* and *dakṣiṇāyana* may conjoin with the inner *uttarāyana* and *dakṣiṇāyana*, and may remain separate also. Even though it was *dakṣiṇāyana* outside, at the time of the giving up of his body by *Droṇacārya*, he created the condition of *uttarāyana* within, by the power of yoga. Therefore he attained *mukti*. Contrary to this, *ajnānis* who die when it is *uttarāyana* outside, are subject to *Punarāvṛtti* as it will be *dakṣiṇāyana* inside them. How at all can one have the capacity to create the condition of *uttarāyana* inside, if he is not endowed with yoga, *Samādhi* and *Brahmjana*, which are possible only with the grace of God!?"

To the question 'what proof is there to show that there are *tithi*, *vāra*, *paksha* and *ayana* inside also,' he gave a direct answer "The experience of a *yogi* is the proof. When the mind is pure, it can be clearly seen by the inner eye." We found the substantiation to this in the *Purāṇās* also. According to *yogaśāstra*, "*uttarāyana*" is the time when '*prāṇa*' enters the *Idā nāḍi* which is on the left side of the body from the *piṅgala nāḍi* which is on the right side of the body and travels there. Entering the *Idā nāḍi* like this, it joins the middle *nāḍi* called *sushumnā*. *Mukti* and immortality are certain for a person who gives

up his (*prāṇa*) through the *sushumnā nāḍi*. "तासां मूर्धानमभिनिस्सृतैका. तयोर्ध्वमायन् अमृतत्वमेति" declares the *kaṭha śruti*. *Dakṣiṇāyana* means the time when *prāṇa* enters from the *Idā nāḍi* which is on the left side into the *piṅgala nāḍi* which is on the right side and travels there. Thus, it is certain that it is *archirādi gati* for those, who in this way come to *uttarāyana* which is endowed with a special *snese*, and, for those who come in the *dakṣiṇāyana*, it is *dhūmādigati* and *punarāvṛtti*. When *Droṇacārya* gave up his body it was *dakṣiṇāyana* outside. But by the power of yoga, he entered the *piṅgala nāḍi* from the *Idā nāḍi* and entered the *sushumnā nāḍi* and so became a traveller in the *archirādi* path and thus attained *mukti*. When *ajnānis* give up the body, their *prana* will be travelling in the *piṅgala nāḍi* only, and so they attain *dhūmādigati* only, though it is *uttarāyana* outside.

पिङ्गलाया इडायां तु वायोः सङ्क्रमणं हि यत् ।

तदुत्तरायणं प्रोक्तं मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ।

इडायाः पिङ्गलायां तु प्राणसङ्क्रमणं मुने ।

दक्षिणायनमित्युक्तं पिङ्गलायामिति श्रुतम् ।

(सूतसंहिता, ज्ञानकाण्ड, अध्याय 11)

Thus, by discerning the true spiritual meaning of the words *uttarāyana* and *dakṣiṇāyana*, it becomes clear that it is *uttarāyana gati* for the

jnāni and the *dakṣhiṇāyanagati* for the *ajnāni*, irrespective of the *ayana* outside.

Then, we placed before ŚrīGurudeva a question "The Upanishads state - "his *prāṇās* never depart. There is no *gati* for him at all. "न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति". He has become one with Brahman and has become Brahman himself. With reference to whom is this description?" To this he said-

"It refers to the person who is in *samādhi* i.e. being in the state of *Brāhmi Sthiti*. When the casting off of the body happens in that state, there is no question of travelling at all. There is not even the path of *uttarāyana*. Because, he is already established in *Brahma* which is the goal of *uttarāyana gati*."

Question: If *Dehatyāga* occurs for a *jnāni* when he is in a state of other than that *Samādhi*, what will happen (to him)?

Answer: Then also he will be quickly travelling in the path of *uttarāyana*, and enters the *sushumnā nādi* and becomes one with *Brahma*. For example, the owner of the house who is familiar with it knows where the *pūja* room is by habit. Even if darkness envelops the house, he will reach the *pūja* room quickly by force of habit. Light will be there always. Similarly, a *yogi* who is familiar with *ātma*, travels quickly in

the path of *uttarāyana* and obtains the state of *Brahman*. Whereas, *ajnānis* who will be familiar only with the rooms of *karma*, will neither know the path to the *pūja* room nor can they enter it.

Question : There is no doubt that *Bhīshmacārya* was a supreme *jnāni*. When he fell into the bed of arrows it was *dakṣhiṇāyana* outside. Why did he not obtain *sadgati* by accomplishing *uttarāyana* inside immediately by the power of his *yoga*?

Answer: There is no doubt that he had that power of *yoga*. Even then, due to some special reasons he waited for the *uttarāyana*, to cast off his mortal coil.

Question : What are those special reasons?

Answer: *Bhīshma* had a mandate from God to remain alive for six more months and to complete the divine task of teaching some supreme dharmas to *Dharmarāja* and to grace the world. So, without giving up his body during (the external) *dakṣhiṇāyana* he retained the body for some time.

(2) His father had granted him the boon to cast off his mortal coil at will. The great man had preserved the power of that boon for a (noble) purpose.

(3) The period (of six months starting from

makara Saṅkrānti) called external *uttarāyaṇa* by the scriptures, is also very auspicious. *Uttarāyaṇa* also means excellent path. As per the *saṅkalpa* of God, during that period, nature will also be conducive to do meditation on God, and for *Japa*, *Tapas*, *Upanayana*, *Vrata* and such other auspicious *devatākāryas*. It is also called the day time of the *devatās*, as it is a convenient time to travel in the *devayāna* with the help of the *devatās*. The facility provided by nature should be made use of by the *Sādhakās*. As the proverb ‘*Gāḷi Bandāga Tūriko*’ (‘Winnow the husk when the wind blows’) states, one should utilize the favourable time provided by Mother nature for good things, without wasting it. This is the way of wisdom, good traditions and virtuous practices. Having followed all this, and in order to show the *Sadācāra* and *Satsampradāya*, *Bhīshma* the *Mahātma* did not give up his body in the the external *dakṣiṇāyana* but waited till the arrival of external *uttarāyaṇa*, and merging his inner *uttarāyaṇa* with the (external) *uttarāyaṇa*, he attained the holy feet of *paramātma*. One should not forget that *Bhīshma* was both a *Brahmishṭha* and *Dharmishṭha*. The ancient *ācāryas* also have made this observation of reason, in their commentaries and expositions.

Upanishads and *Bhagavad-Gīta* are (supreme) works of spiritual science. The *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyanas* mentioned there are (the spiritual *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyanas*. **We remember here our revered supreme Gurudeva with gratitude who explained the chapter of *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyana* conforming to the abovesaid (scriptures) and conforming to the experience of *Brahmajñānis* and making a *tattvasamanvaya* as purported in “*Sarveshāmavirodhena*”, and provided satisfaction to the thoughtful mind.**

Question: You have elucidated that even when it is *uttarāyaṇa* outside, it is *dakṣiṇāyana* only within for some, and even though it is *dakṣiṇāyana* outside, it is *uttarāyaṇa* within for some others. Is it possible that two dissimilar states can exist i.e. the state of one *ayana* within, and the state of an *ayana* exactly opposite to that outside?

Answer: That it is possible is a matter of inner experience. For example when *Droṇacārya* left his body, it was *dakṣiṇāyana* outside. But it has been already told that, by the power of *yoga* he created *uttarāyaṇa* within, and through the *Devayāna mārga* he reached *paramātma*.

Question: Ordinary people cannot comprehend

the experiences of such *yogis*. Can you kindly enlighten us as to how can a certain season in the outside world, and a season opposite of it in the inner world be possible, by citing examples in every day life?

Answer: It can be explained clearly. Let us say it is an evening time in spring season. So, surroundings will be cool and pleasant with cool air around. But if the fire of lust and anger is burning inside the mind of a person at that time it will be a flaming hot summer season only from the point of view of his inner nature. But even if it is a flaming hot summer season outside, it can be called a cool evening of the spring from the view point of inner nature, if a person happens to experience peace and happiness with a pleasant mind. As there are seasons in Nature outside, there are seasons for the mind also. These two seasons may merge together and may not also. The poetic expression below, also proclaims this truth.

" There are four seasons in the year.

There also four seasons in the mind

The two meet and also meet not."

We had seen an incident in the life of *Śrīrangamahaguru* which convincingly demonstrated that in the inside world there can be a *kāla* which could be different from the *kāla* outside.

Once a respectable person had come to the holy place *Heḍatale* to have a *darśan* of our venerable *guru*. It was a full moon day. *Śrīgurudeva* sent words that he should visit him at 10 AM the next day. That gentleman sent a request to *Śrīrangaguru* "I would like to see *Śrīgurudeva* this evening itself. Provide me an opportunity for that. This is an auspicious *Parvakāla*, as today is a full moon day". We made a request to *Śrīrangagurudeva*—"Today is a full moon day. So he avidly desires to have your *darśan* today itself". To this, *Śrīrangaguru* sent a reply "Today it is a full moon day; tomorrow also it will be a full moon day, for me it is always a full moon day". When the gentleman who had come for the *darśan* heard this, he was forthwith thrilled with horripilation. The gentleman, who had the *darśana* of *Śrīrangagurudeva* at ten the next morning, experienced the joy of the coolness of full moonlight, on seeing the face of *Śrīrangaguru* which was beaming like a full moon, full of natural bliss and peacefulness. Even the words of *Śrīrangaguru* were like an ambrosial bath itself. He told us that he had the experience of the coolness of full moon light, even though it was hot outside.

Not only this. We humbly remember here many situations in which people experienced the feeling of an ambrosial bath, on listening to the music of

Śrīraṅgamahāgurudeva which was full of the experience of the supreme bliss, and which brought to their mind the feel of the spring season, though it was hot outside.

Question: - We are satisfied by the narration of this example and the incidents. Now we wish to ask one more question about the significance of the sacred *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla*. You said that "*uttarāyaṇa* is the day— time of *devatās* and it is an excellent time for the worship of *devatās*. But why should the *Pitṛtarpaṇa* be done at the time of *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla* which is the beginning time of *uttarāyaṇa*? Why the worship of *devatās* is done afterwards? To whom this time is dear? To *Pitṛs* or to *devatās*? We have a doubt here.

Answer: The *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla* called '*makaraSaṅkrānti*' is the conjunction time of *dakṣiṇāyana* and *uttarāyaṇa*. Therefore it is a commendable time both for the worship of *pitṛs* to whom *dakṣiṇāyana* is dear, and for the worship of *devatās* also to whom *uttarāyaṇa* is dear. So it is dear to both of them. During *puṇyakālas* the worship of *pitṛs* should be done first and then the worship of *devatās* performed.

Question: When the whole of *uttarāyaṇa* itself is a *puṇyakāla*, why should the exceptional time

that arrives on the day of *makara Saṅkrānti* be called *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla*?

Answer: Though the entire period of *uttarāyaṇa* is meritorious, *makarasāṅkrānti* happens to be its beginning. It is the morning *sandhyākāla* of *uttarāyaṇa*, which is the day of the *devatās*. Is not the time of *prathahkāla sandhyā* an excellent time for meditation and *Sandhyāvandānam* for people? When it is so, there is no doubt that the *uttarāyaṇa* which is the time of *prāśasta sandhyā* for the *devatās*, is much more excellent for meditation and *japa*.

Question: Which is more important between *pitṛ kārya* and *devakārya*?

Answer: - Both are equally important. But as *pitṛs* are in the place of *pitṛs* even to *devatās*, *pitṛpūja* is more important than *devapūja*. *Yajnavalkya* proclaims—“देवकार्यत्परतरं पितृकार्यं प्रचक्षते” in the *śānti parva* of *Mahābhārata*. If both the *pitṛ śrāddha* and the festival of worship of *devatās* happen to fall on the same day, only the *śrāddha* is observed. This substantiates the special importance of *pitṛ kārya*.

Question: - As *uttarāyaṇa* is excellent for both i.e. worship of *pitṛ*— *devatās* and worship of *devatās*, can one perform marriage, *upanayana* and other *devatā kāryas* on that day?

Answer: No. Auspicious functions such as marriage, *Upanayana* and *cūḍākarma* etc. should not be performed on that day. It is the day of *saṅkramaṇa*. It is the sacred day when the pull of the *pitṛ devatās* is more. The path of *pitṛs* is opposite to the path of *devatās*. On that day only the *pitṛ mārḡa* will be open and the inner spiritual centers related only to the *pitṛs* would blossom. Accordingly rituals such as *tarpaṇa*, *dāna* etc. should be performed on that day. As the path and centres related to *devatās* get closed on that day, auspicious functions should not be performed on that day. Favourable results will not be obtained on that day. But as impulses and inspirations make one's disposition turn the mind inwards, excellent results are obtained by meditating upon God and doing *mantra* and *japa* specially. In this aspect it can be compared to the *puṇyakāla* during eclipses. After the day *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla* (*makara Saṅkrānti*) passes, auspicious functions like *upanayana* etc. can be performed from the day next to it, which are commendable in *uttarāyaṇa*.

Question: Why one should not have oil bath on that day.?

Answer: As it is a festival day, all are generally encouraged to have an oil bath. It is not correct. Because, oil bath is one which provides inspiration

for performing *śubhakarmas*. But *Saṅkrānti* provides inspiration for *puṇyakarmas*. It is best to take bath in pure cold water on that day, and avoid a hot water bath. It is because a favourable disposition liked by the *Pitṛdevatās* is obtained by taking bath in cold water only. People who are weak may take bath in hot water from the view point of their health. We have stated earlier that taking a bath in sacred rivers like *Gaṅgā* etc. is exceptionally best.

Question: Let those who perform *pitṛ kāryas* such as *tarpaṇa* or *śrāddha* follow the above rules. Can others take an oil bath as it is a festival day?

Answer: No. It is not a day of *śubha karma* for any one. Even those who do not have to perform *tarpaṇa* and *śrāddha*, should take a holy bath and should engage themselves in meditation, *Japa*, worship and *pārāyaṇa* etc.

Question: *Śāstras* state that the misfortunes of a person get warded off if he uses sesame in six ways. The six ways are—applying of sesame oil, taking a bath after the application of the oil, performing *homa* with sesame, gifting sesame, consuming sesame and scattering of sesame in the form of seeds.

तिलोद्धर्त्ति तिलस्नायी तिलहोमी तिलप्रदः ।

तिलभुक् तिलवापी च षट् तिली नावसीदति ॥

In what way should each of these be used on the days of *makaraSankrānti*, which happens to be a festival of sesame?

Answer: Applying sesame oil to the body, taking a bath after applying the sesame oil and scattering the sesame seeds are prohibited on that day. Sesame should be used in the remaining three ways on that day, for warding off misfortunes.

Question: - Scriptures state that on the day of *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla*, sesame seeds, an image of cow made of sesame seeds, and also a utensil filled with sesame seeds should be gifted. By these, afflictions and impediments get destroyed, sins are redeemed and desired progeny is obtained.

तिलप्रदः प्रजामिष्टां दीपदश्चक्षुरुत्तमम् ।

तिलपात्रं प्रयच्छन्वै सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥

Let us agree that the sesame seeds must necessarily be given as gift on that day. The gift should be offered to deserving persons. But scriptures proclaim "Accepting the gift of sesame seeds is a great sin. Even though a Brahmin may accept other gifts, he should not accept the gift of even a small quantity of sesame seeds, the gift of iron and the gift of an elephant.

ब्राह्मणः प्रतिगृहणीयात् वृत्त्यर्थं साधुतस्तथा ।

अत्यल्पमपि मातङ्गतिललौहांश्च वर्जयेत् ॥

If deserving persons honouring this proclamation do not accept *tiladāna*, then it has to be gifted inevitably to un-deserving persons. The fruits of *dāna* are not obtained if it is given to undeserving persons. When such is the case, how can one observe the precept of *dāna* for obtaining good benefits? If no one is available to accept the gift of sesame, to whom should it be gifted? Why do scriptures prescribe a rule which is difficult to follow?

Answer: Śrī Raṅgagurudeva had elucidated the solution for this problem:-

"The gifting of sesame seeds has to be done. It should be offered as a *dāna* to the most deserving person. i.e., a person who is accepting the gift must be a *jnāni*. A *jnāni* is not stuck by any sin. "तद्यथा पुष्करपलाशे आपः न श्लिष्यन्ति" say the *upanishats* and "लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा" says the *Gīta. Sneha*, i.e. a kind of oily matter covers the lotus leaf. So water does not stick to it. Similarly an enlightened person has *sneha* (friendship) with *paramātmā*; and so (the results of his) actions do not stick to him. Whatever is offered to him (as *dāna*) loses its identity and assumes the form of *Brahma*. Thus, the thing (of *dāna*) which had become *Brahmarūpa*, gets merged with the *jnāni* (who is also a) *Brahmarūpa*. So there is no question of the occurrence of sin at all. Thus

the *pāpakarma* of the person who made the gift with a pure mind, gets destroyed by the fire of divine knowledge (*jñānāgni*) of the *jñāni*.

Question: Salutations to your *Gurudeva* for suggesting the appropriate solution for the complex problem. But it is extremely difficult to find a *Brahmajñāni* of the caliber mentioned above. When it is so, to whom should the gift be made?

Answer: Yes. It is extremely difficult to find a *jñāni* of that high caliber. Therefore the best among the available *śrotriya*s should be given the *dāna*. The person who accepts the *dāna* should get redeemed of the sin (of accepting the gift) by performing *praṇayāma* and *Mantrajapa* etc. If this procedure is followed, observing *dānavidhi* can meet with no hurdles.

Question: It is said in the *śāstras* that the *dāna* of sesame should be done on *makaraSaṅkrānti*. It is also said that consuming sesame is also very good. Let us agree that it is right. But, nowadays, bare sesame is not given as *dāna*. It is roasted and condiments such as roasted groundnuts, parched Bengal gram, pieces of copra and jaggery are added, and this (mixture) is given the name "*Elḷu*" and given as gift. Why should sesame be mixed with these condiments

which are not prescribed by the scriptures and which add to expenses?

Answer: When we placed this question before *Gurudeva*, he gave an easy answer that was acceptable. We present it here: "**The *dāna* of sesame is made with the intention that the recipient should consume it. So, the offered sesame should be in such a form that no adverse effect is caused by its consumption.** Eating mere sesame seeds causes loosening of bowels, phlegm, and increases bile; and so health gets affected. Thus, the custom of offering of sesame mixed with roasted groundnuts, parched Bengal gram, pieces of copra and pieces of jaggery, is a wise practice indeed. When sesame mixed with the above said condiments is consumed, it causes nourishment, satisfaction and enhances taste and health. This mixture removes the blemishes of bare sesame and enhances its properties. Even though it is not stated in the *śāstravākyas*, since it is proved to be good by way of *prayoga vijnāna*, the gifting of sesame mixed with such condiments will be *śāstrīya* only."

Question: What is the significance of performing *ārati* for children and pouring sesame over their body?

Answer: The very touch of sesame seeds wards off torments related to infancy. And the centers that are necessary for the development of infants blossom. Therefore sesame is poured on children as per precepts, and blessings of elders are made to rain on them. As qualities similar to the above said ones are also present in jujube fruits also, they are mixed with sesame and showered on children. It should be remembered that the season for the availability of ripe jujube fruits is also around that *uttarāyaṇa puṇyakāla*.

Question: When sesame is distributed to houses (of relatives and friends), pieces of sugarcane are also offered along with sesame. Why this custom is in vogue?

Answer: In this regard, Śrīgurudeva had told us the *tāttvik* reasons for this practice. They are as follows: "In the mixture of sesame and groundnuts and jaggery etc, the pieces of sugar cane sticks are added as a sweet condiment. Consuming of that provides health, satisfaction, and nourishment of the body. And the knots on the sugar cane represent the stages (*parva*) of life, and the *parvas* in the path of *yoga*. The *Āgama śāstras* state that the sugar cane staff in the form of a bow which adorns the hand of *Jaganmāta Rājaraṇī*, is the form of the *Manas tattva*.

मनोरूपेक्षुकोदण्डायै नमो नमः

Thus the sugarcane that is used on that day has the status of both kinds i.e. *ādhibhautika* and *ādhyātmika*"

Question: *Makara saṅkrānti* is called 'pongal'. You have stated earlier that this custom of boiling the milk in a vessel, on a purified fire place till it overflows, is in vogue in Tamilnadu. Does this custom have any significance?

Answer: There is no doubt that it has a special meaning. Sentimentally viewing, it indicates that it is a festival of extreme joy that over flows. It is also a divine custom indicative of the experience of a *yogi* who has attained divine bliss by the practice of *yoga*. The *yogi* relishes the stream of *amṛta* that flows out from the *candramandala* (*varuṇamandala*), when the flood of *prana- apāna* rises up, caused by the heat of *yogābhyāsa*.

सन्तापितश्चन्द्रमसः पतन्तीं पीयूषधारां पिबतीह धन्यः (योगातारावलि)

The milk that overflows by the heat of fire, beautifully reflects the above said experience of *yoga*. This ritual of making milk to overflow by boiling is also done during *grhapraveśa*. The custom of observing it in a special way on the day of *Saṅkrānti* which is a *navodaya parva* on which Lord *Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa* treads the *Devayānamārga*, is still good.

Question: Why cows are worshipped on *makara saṅkrānti*?

Answer: *Gomātā* deserves to be worshipped every day. Even her *darśana* is auspicious. ‘लोकेऽस्मिन्मङ्गलान्यष्टौ ब्राह्मणो गौर्हुताशनः । हिरण्यं सर्पिरादित्यः आपो राजा तथाष्टमः’ Accordingly the cow is considered one among the eight auspicious things. Misfortunes vanish and desires get fulfilled by the *darśana*, salutation, worship and *pradakṣiṇa* of the cow.

एतानि सततं पश्येन्ममस्येदं च ये च यः ।
प्रदक्षिणं च कुर्वीत तथास्यायुर्न हीयते ।
अभिप्रेतार्थसंसिद्धिर्मङ्गलं परमं भवेत् ॥

Śāstras declare that all the fourteen worlds are hidden in the limbs of *gomātā*, and all the *devatās* reside in the different parts of its body as follows:—

‘गवामङ्गेषु तिष्ठन्ति भुवनानि चतुर्दश’
दन्तेषु मरुतो देवा जिह्वायां तु सरस्वती ।
खुरमध्ये तु गन्धर्वाः खुराग्रेषु च पन्नगाः ॥
सर्वसन्धिषु साध्याश्च चन्द्रादित्यौ तु लोचने ।
ककुदि सर्वनक्षत्रं लाङ्गुले धर्म आश्रितः ॥
अपाने सर्वतीर्थानि प्रस्त्रावे जाह्नवी नदी ।
नानाद्वीपसमाकीर्णाश्चत्वारः सागरास्तथा ॥
ऋषयो रोमकूपेषु गोमये पद्मधारिणी ।
सन्ति रोमसु विद्याश्च शृङ्गयोरयनद्वयम् ॥
धैर्यं धृतिश्च क्षान्तिश्च पुष्टिर्वृद्धिस्तथैव च ।
स्मृतिर्मैधा तथा लज्जा वपुः कीर्तिस्तथैव च ॥

विद्या शान्तिर्मतिश्चैव सन्ततिः परमा तथा ।
गच्छन्तीमनुगच्छन्ति एता गां वै न संशयः ॥
यत्र गावो जगत्तत्र देवदेवीपुरोगमाः ।
यत्र गावस्तत्र लक्ष्मीः साङ्ख्यधर्मश्च शाश्वतः ॥
गावः पवित्रा माङ्गल्या देवानामपि देवताः ।
यस्ताः शुश्रूषते भक्त्या स पापेभ्यः प्रमुच्यते ॥

(*Maruddevatās* dwell in the teeth of *gomātā*. *Sarasvatī Devī* resides in her tongue. *Gandharvas* reside in the middle of her *hooves*, *Nāgadevatās* at the tip or ridge of the *hooves*, *sādhyas* at the joints, the sun and the moon in the eyes, all the stars in the hump, *Dharmadevatā* in the tail, *sarvatīrthas* in the *apāna* (anal region), River *Gaṅgā* in the urine, and, all the oceans with the islands and sages in the pits of her hair and *Lakshmī Devī* in *gomaya*. All the *vidyas* (reside) in the hairs and *dakṣiṇāyana* and *uttarāyana* in the horns. When the *gomātā* walks, the following viz boldness, peace, prosperity, nourishment growth, memory, *medhā*, shyness, beauty of the body, fame, knowledge, intelligence and excellent progeny follow her. There is no doubt at all in this. The entire world exists at the dwelling place of a cow. All the gods and goddesses will be present. *Lakshmi-devī* and the eternal *Saṅkhya dharma* also will be there. The cows are holy and auspicious, and are venerable as the deity of

deities. *Varāha purāṇa* states that one who serves them with devotion will be redeemed of all the sins. Such a sacred and auspicious *Gomātā* should be worshipped every day. *Gopūjā* is best in both auspicious *karmas*, *apara karmas* and *śrāddha karmas*. It is indeed proper to worship the revered *Gomātā* at least on the day of *Sāṅkrānti* which is a special *parva*.)

Question: A contemporary protagonist of nonviolence says: "The description of the cow given above is nothing but flattery. In reality the cow is a tame animal, and a very useful animal. Its milk, curds, ghee, urine and dung are highly nourishing or purifying medicines. All the parts of its body are useful. Therefore the *Purāṇās* shower praise on the cow. Our compassionate elders say "The cow is the most mild animal, and so, as an act of kindness shown to all dumb animals representatively, the cow should be served". Is it correct?

Answer: It is true that the cow is a mild and a dumb animal and a useful animal. It is also correct that one should show kindness to cows and all other dumb animals. But the comment that the statements of the scriptures about the cows is only flattery is not right. Why should only the cow be chosen as a representative among dumb animals? Why not the goat? There is no answer to such

questions there. Even the goat is also a very mild animal. Its milk, ghee and meat, are all useful substances, isn't it?

Question: How is it possible to believe that *devatās* dwell in the body of cow? Recently, in one of the films, we see sequences where an atheist cuts the limbs of the cow one by one, and throws a challenge.—"Come on. Show me. Are the *maruddevatās* in this limb? Why am I not seeing *Sarasvatī Devī* in this part?"—and so on. Therefore, is not the statement that the *devatās* dwell in the body of the cow just a matter of superstition?

Answer: Certainly not. It is a *śāstrīya* truth. i.e. a thing which conforms to *Niyamas*. The atheist who threw a challenge by severing the cow without doubt is a great fool. He does not even know the basic fact that the "*devatās* are not physical entities that are visible to the external eyes, but they are true things visible only to the divine eyes. (For example), there are minute organisms which the scientists call 'bacteria'. The (above said) (atheist) may be compared to a fool, who, unable to see them with bare eyes, declares "There is nothing like 'bacteria' at all. If they are present let them become visible". There are things that are visible to the (bare) eyes. There are also very minute things that can be known only by seeing through a microscope. Likewise, there are divine things that are visible

only to *jnāna dr̥shṭi*. They become visible only when seen through the respective *Dr̥shṭis*. If one makes a ridicule of the existence of the *devatās* without having a vision of them, it is no threat to their entity.

Question: In that case, is it possible to see those *devatās* on the body of the cow?

Answer: The right answer to these questions cannot be given by ordinary people or people with a mere bookish knowledge of the *śāstras*. **We wish to present a *yogarahasya* that was bestowed upon us by ŚrīRaṅgagurudeva pertaining to the present topic, which happens to be an interpretation that delights the (seekers) of truth and persons established in truth. He said -. "A divine cow will be seen (by a *sādhaka*) while doing *Dhyānamanthana* in the path of *yoga*. The *darśana* of many *devatās* occurs in the limbs of that divine body which will be effulgent yet very cool. It is a sight which causes extreme bliss to the inner eye. If a *jnāni* happens to see a cow around, he experiences a remembrance of that inner vision, which produces in him an unending happiness and a sense of great reverence towards the cow. On the other hand, if a cow the external in tormented, it causes great pain world is in his inner world as the cow in the external world is also endowed with elements of the cow within. If the external cow is worshipped it will be**

indeed a (reverence) shown to the inner divine cow and causes supreme happiness"

If someone speaks contemptuously regarding cow worship without any knowledge of this *yogarahasya*, or for some other reasons praises *Gopūjā* and comments that he has shown full respect to the culture of *gopūjā*, he should be distanced by telling him to go (*go*) go (*go*) go away. Or, he should be pitied for his ignorance.

Question: Is there any distinct reason for performing the *gopūjā* specially on the day of *uttarāyaṇa punyakāla*?

Answer: Yes. Here we humbly remember the exposition bestowed by Śrīraṅgamahāguru as follows. "The two horns of *Gomāta* are adorned by the presiding deities of *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyaṇa*. As *makara Saṅkrānti* is the time of conjunction of those two, it is very proper to specially worship 'Kāmadhenu', which is the abode of those presiding deities, and the cow here, which is its representative in the external world".

Question: The answers and the explanations are very satisfying. It is indeed just to bathe the cow and decorate and make it happy on that day. But why are the cows made to leap or jump over fire??

Answer: - It is done to cause lightness in them.

Also for relief from afflictions in the form of *ādhis* and *vyādhis*. Not only this, lamps of ghee and sesame oil are lighted, and curds and sweet *pumpkin* are gifted, wishing relief to all from torments.

Question: Why the day previous to *makara Saṅkrānti* is called 'bhogi' festival?

Answer: It is a day of the festival which has conducive environs both within and without, that facilitate the enjoyments of *Bhoga* which is not opposed to *Dharma*. The day next to it is useful for both *yogis* and *Bhogis*, but specially for *yogis*, being an auspicious and a meritorious day. One may remember that proper guidance and traditions are there in *Bhāratiya* culture to facilitate the enjoyment of both, in an appropriate way.

Question: In the tradition of the Tamil country, 'kanū' festival is celebrated on the day next to *Makara Saṅkrānti* in which colored food materials are placed on leaves outside the house, and sentences such as 'Marriage and *sīmanta* to the crows and sparrows' are uttered. Is there any significance in this custom (*śāstra*) women?

Answer: Do not forget the fact that all our bodies have dispositions both female and male, and consist of *Prakṛti* and *Purusha*. The customs of

women are as important as that of men. These are the rituals that bring about the welfare and prosperity of the whole family and the society. The great sage *Āpastamba* has taught in his '*Dharma śāstra*', that even though these find no mention in the *śrūti*s and *smṛti*s, one should respect the traditions brought by women.

स्त्रीभ्यस्सर्ववर्णेभ्यश्च धर्मशेषान्प्रतीयादित्येक इत्येके (प्रश्न 2, पटल 11, सूत्र 16)

Question: Let us respect the traditional practices of women. But what is the meaning of the tradition (*śāstra*) by women of 'Kanū festival'?

Answer: It is a form of *Bhūtabali*. Every *gṛhastha* has to offer *bhūtabali* as a part of *baliharaṇakarma* after *vaiśvādeva* everyday. Like the obligations such as *Devaṛṇa*, *Rṣiṛṇa* *Pitrṛṇa* and *Manushyaṛṇa* they have the obligation to several *bhūtās* (also.) To fulfill that obligation, the householders have to perform *Balipūja* with food and side dishes prepared (with materials bought) by the money earned by them. As *makara Saṅkrānti* is a special festival day, *Bali* to *devatās* and *pitṛs* are offered. Women offer special *Bali* to the *Bhūtas* with the left over food of the festival of the previous day. As there are various *bhūtas* that desire food with different colors and tastes, the *balis* with different colours and tastes are offered.

Question: Which are these *bhūtas*? What benefit is obtained by their worship?

Answer: These *bhūtas* are the attendants of the Lord of destruction. (*Śiva*) They wander about day and night and desire *bali* from *gr̥hasthas*. If the *bali* is not offered they create trouble to the householders and their progeny, with torments like untimely death etc. But, they ward off evils and also provide strength to the *gr̥hasthas* who worship them. *Gr̥hasthas* get their misfortunes averted and also get their desires fulfilled by offering *Bali* to them both in the morning and night, chanting the following *mantra*.

“ये भूतेषु प्रचरन्तो दिवानक्तं बलिमिच्छन्तो वितुदस्य प्रेष्याः ।
तेषामहं पुष्टिकामो हरामि मयि पुष्टिं पुष्टिपतिर्दधातु स्वाहा ॥”

Special *bali* is offered to those very *bhūtas* in the *kanū* festival, on the following day of *Saṅkrānti*.

Question: Why the words wishing the marriage and *sīmanta* to crows and sparrows are uttered, during the time of offering the oblation?

Answer: As a result of the sins committed during *dakṣiṇāyana*, there is every possibility of misfortunes occurring during auspicious functions such as *sīmanta* etc, and also that children born as a result of them may get affected. The custom of passing on such

torments to beasts and birds and getting onself freed from such misfortunes, is seen hinted here. We see this custom in *vaidika yajnas* which involve the sacrifice of animals and birds. The same *samskāra* is seen in these wishes of the above ‘*kanū*’ festival. (Women folk wish marriage to the crows, *sīmanta* to the sparrows, wellness to their house of the parents, prosperity to the house of in-laws and success to the brothers and sisters.)

Question: On the day of *Saṅkrānti*, there is a custom of honoring the astrologers after the *pūja* in the night and listening from them the details about the form of *Saṅkrānti mūrti* and the outcome of *Saṅkrānti*. Does *Saṅkrānti* have three heads, five mouths etc as described by the astrologers?

Answer: The description here does not refer to the time of *Saṅkrānti*. Time has no form. But scriptures describe that form as the form of the presiding deity of that time. It is actually the form and shape of the sins committed by people during the *dakṣiṇāyana*. Is it just a poetical description or does the deity really possess such a form, one may ask. The *Āgamas* state that just as the *puṇyapurusha* possesses a form, the *Pāpapurusha* also possesses a form. They are not forms that are imagined. Deities do have form. It may be remembered here that the

Brahmasūtras, in the chapter ‘*devatā Vighrahavatvādhikaraṇa*’ state that it becomes impossible to meditate upon them, if they don’t possess any form.

We would like to quote here the sacred message given by Śrīgurudeva on the Saṅkrānti day of Śrīplavanga samvatsara, pushya māsa, Pūrṇimā, which occurred on a Monday, and conclude the discussion pertaining to makaraSaṅkrānti.

"All the *karmas* that were adapted by the *sanātana Ārya Bhāratīyās* culminated in *jnāna* only, and there is naturalness in understanding them and observing them. The festival of *Saṅkrānti* is also one of such festivals and *parvas* observed by the *sanātanis*. The festival is congenial to both happiness and *parāgati*. It is festival of joy to both *Bhogis* and *Yogis*. (This day happens to be) the limb of the right part of *Paramātmā*, the *uttarāyaṇa* which is in accordance with the path of Lord *Nārāyaṇa*, and is the north sided door to the house called the year. It is the day of opening of that door. From this day itself the *Rathotsavas* which are the wishes of God drawn by devotees, commence. It is a festival when the participation in the *utsava* of God is set to begin in all pilgrimages and temples, with the cooperation of all. It is a

festival of devotees both in their hearts and in the outside world, of drawing the chariot of life towards God. This is a *pūṇyakāla*. And also a *Parvakāla*. The time of distributing sugarcane with knots which represents the *Parvas* (stages) of life, and the time when sesame and jaggery which represent peace, are distributed. So much for *Bhoga*. And from the view point of *yoga*, it is a time when the trinity come together.

“अस्माकमेकीभूतानां निष्कलं परमं पदम्”

