**ParamaikAnthi’s svastivAcanam**

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Many people praise this *Azagar* as *pāñcajanyar* only. *Vedattāzhwan* also describes this as:

*yaṁ pāñcajanyaṁ bahavassamindhate* (यं पाञ्चजन्यं बहवस्समिन्धते)

There are five kinds of people viz., Brahmins, Kings, Businessmen, farmers and those who are not covered under these four categories. The person who is beneficent to all these five types of people is called as *pāñcajanyan.* This holy name will not be appropriate for any Lord other than *Azagar.* For the people who worship the *Azagar* touring on the northern bank of the river Vaigai on the northern part of Madurai amidst the fountain of water sprayed by all kinds of devotees, it will be clear that this *Azagar* is the *pāñcajanyan.*

Why can’t we interpret the word *pāñcajanyam* in the above Vedic verse to mean ‘the person who carries the conch *pāñcajanyam*’ in lines with the commentary blessed by our ancestors for the phrase ‘*atir kural sangattu azhagar*’, as ‘one who is with *Sri* *pāñcajanyam* in His holy hand and because of the beauty of such an union represented by the same name’? A thought occurred to me that the person in possession of *pāñcajanyam* can be referred to as *pāñcajanyaḥ* according to Panini’s aphorism (*sutra*) “arśādibhyo-ac”. However, in the *pada pāṭam* (word split-up in the Veda), the word *pāñcajanyam* occurring at this place is not chanted as a whole word, but, is chanted in the form of *veṣṭanai* (a convention for indicating that the particular word is a composite word) as ‘*pāñcajanyam iti pāñca-janyam’.* If we split the word *pāñcajanyam* in accordance with the convention of *pada pāṭam* then the only meaning we get is ‘the person who is beneficent to all these five types of people’.  When I was restless on the inability of deriving the meaning I had thought of, I consulted with Srimadubhayave Maha Vidwan Dr. Sogattur CDAC Ramanujachariar Swami. You would have seen in Paduka that last year Sri Mushnam SrimadAndavan honored this Swami, who is a scholar in *ubhaya* Vedas and an incomparable expert in Grammar (*Vyākharana*), Vedic commentaries and computers. This Swami told me, “It is correct to say that we should not derive a meaning outside *pada pāṭam.* However, whenever we recite the above word our mind thinks about the Lord who is carrying the conch and the wheel. While relishing the Veda how can we prevent the interpretation got out of the sound? That interpretation is not contradictory to the original Vedic verse, isn’t it? Veda would have used this word so that we get the sound based meaning also, as otherwise, this could have been mentioned as *pañca janānāṁ hitam,* isn’t it?”

In few places we see that Sri Bhatta Bhaskara gives the meaning that doesn’t augur well with *pada pāṭam.* He mentions the fact that this is not accepted by *pada* people by saying ‘tattu padakārāḥ na sahante’. I hear few people murmuring that ‘isn’t it overboard that you giving this meaning based on the sound and Sogattur Swami agreeing to it owing to the affection he has on you?’ I need to give few more details for such people. I pray that the readers be patient and read them as well.

I had previously written that I had consulted various scholars for getting clarifications on various doubts such as the reason for the name *mṛgārā*.One such scholar is Brahmasri Sundararama Vajapeyee. He has been tirelessly researching on the *mṛgārā* mantras and passing the information to me over phone. One such fact he shared with me is, “*vriddha* *hārīta* *smṛti* says that while performing *samāśrayaṇam (pañcasamskāram* or five fold purification ceremony), *ācāryan* should chant the *mantrā* starting with ‘*agner manve’* which is the first *mantrā* of *mṛgārā* while heating the *pāñcajanyam* (conch) in the fire consecrated for *samāśrayaṇam* and then use it to emboss on the shoulder of the disciple”. With the help of the place shown by him I referred to the *vriddha* *hārīta* *smṛti*.

*vriddha* *hārīta* *smṛti* is the compilation of instructions blessed by the sage *Hārītā* to the emperor *Ambarīsha*. It has eight chapters. In the eighth chapter Sri *Hārītā* Maharishi blesses the details on the fivefold purification (*pañcasamskāram*). Here, while describing the *tāpa* *samskāram* (purification ceremony through heat), i.e., embossing the impressions on the shoulders, he describes the method of performing the fire rituals (*homā*) for *samāśrayaṇam*. In the 228th and 229th ślokās, he blesses that embossing the wheel (*cakrā*) should be done by heating the wheel with the mantra ‘caraṇam pavitram’ and the conch (*pāñcajanyam*) should be heated with the *mantrā* ‘*agner manve*’. The ślokās are given below:

ājyaṁ hutvā tataścakraṁ tadagnau pratapet guruḥ |

caraṇaṁ pavitramiti yajuṣā taccakreṇāṅgayet bhujam ||

vāmaṁ saṁpratapet paścāt pāñcajanyena deśikaḥ |

agner manveti taddhomāgnau pratapya vai ||

From the above, isn’t it clear that the *Hārītā* Maharishi thinks that the *mantrā* ‘*agner manve*’ belongs to the conch *pāñcajanyam*? The basis of that is the word *pāñcajanyam* in the verse brings in that interpretation. Hence, I and Sri Sogatthur Swami follow the way shown by the sage Sri. *Hārītā*.

Hence, what is wrong in interpreting that through the phrase *pāñcajanyam*, *Vedattāzhwan* praises the Lord who has the conch *pāñcajanyam* in his hand?

Thus it can be said that through the phrase ‘*pāñcajanyam*’ *Vedattāzhwan* sets the precedent for the azhwar’s praise ‘*atir kural sangatthu azagar*’.

I meditate upon (*manve*) …. of this *azagar*. In the place of …. of *Azagar*, we can fill it with the ‘beautiful radiant holy body’ and enjoy it. *Vedattāzhwan* has created a poem in which we can fill words such as ‘holy body’, ‘attributes’ and ‘wealth’ in the blanks and enjoy. Something about Brahmasri Sundararama Vajapeyee should necessarily be mentioned here. He has great interest in performing *yajñams*.

In the tradition of non-dualism (*Advaitam*) knowledge is the essentials means of attaining salvation. The deeds like performing *yajñams* contradict this knowledge. One will attain salvation only if he renounces all deeds and become a *sanyasi*.

In our tradition also, knowledge is the one which leads to salvation. Devotion is one form of developed knowledge. Absolute surrender (prapatti) is another form of knowledge.

However, for one to develop the knowledge that culminates into devotion, one has to perform the rites he is supposed to perform, as the offering to the Lord (*bhagavadārādhanam)* in order to please Him. i.e. karma becomes part of devotion. Since karma is part of bhakti yoga, it is without vidya, i.e. avidya. In this way Emperumanar has explained the following verse from Isavasyopanishad:

avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā vidyayā-mṛtamaśnute

avidyayā – (*jīvātmā*) With the rites performed as prescribed and as *bhagavadārādhanam* (karmayogam)

mṛtyum – hindrances to the *vidya*, i.e. Bhakti yogam

tīrtvā – cross

vidyayā – with the *Bhakti yogam*

amṛtamaśnute – attains salvation

(With the rites performed as offerings to God the obstacles for the Bhakti yogam are crossed and through the Bhakti yogam the jivatma attains salvation).

Sri Sundararama Vajpayee enjoys the above explanation and shares the same with me whenever he meets me.

Though the absolute surrender (*prapatti*) does not rely on the rites (*karma yogam*) for fulfillment, it is the philosophy of our ancestors that the surrendered (*prapannas*) should perform the rites as a service the Lord as prescribed in the scriptures.

Hence the Sri vaishnava house holders should perform agni hotram, *yajñams* etc..., to the extent possible.

Sri Vajapeyee compliments the above philosophy and diet discipline of Sri Vaishnavas. He praises our discipline.

It is his wish that at least few young Sri Vaishnavas should become the performers of Soma yaga and they should be able to help each other as ritviks.

Let this wish be fulfilled due to the mercy of Paduka devi.

Let us get into the commentary of our mantra.

This Emperuman, who is ‘*atir kural sangattu azagan*’, wishes that the devotees who come to offer their obeisance should come with His disguise and hence we could see lot of villagers with His disguise during the procession. It would look as though he has entered all of them and become like them. This has been described as ‘viśvasyāṁ viśi praviviśivāgmsam’ by *Vedattāzhwan*.

We should surrender to such an azagar, is denoted by the word ‘īmahe’. *Vedattāzhwan* prays that He has to relieve us from our sins by saying sano muñcatvagmhasaḥ.

Thus through the second interpretation of the first verse of *mṛgārā*, we get the following meaning: “I meditate upon …. of Azagar, who has beautiful parts in the body, who has been praised by Vedas, who is the benefactor for all types of people or who holds the conch in His hand. We surrender to the azagar who has entered all the people or one who resides in all the people who are in His disguise. Let Him relieve us from all our sins”.

Arthur Berriedale Keith has translated the entire taitreeya samhita into English. His translation will reflect the Veda bhashya. We, who consider Veda as *Vedattāzhwan*, can enjoy the same with the following modification:

Of Arangan (Azagar) first I reckon the wise ones

Him of the five folk whom many kindle

Him who hath entered into every concourse we implore

May he relieve us from tribulation!