**Paramaikāntis’ Svastivācanam**

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I had mentioned that this mantra starting with brāhmaṇa ekahotā and proceeds on for dvihotā, trihotā etc… up to prajāpatir daśahotā are important and essential for our daily life. Before explaining how this is important, let me share some more information with you.

There is a sacrifice (yajñā) named cāturmāsyam. There are four parts in that:

1. vaiśvadevam 2. varuṇaprakāśam 3. sākamedham 4. sunāsīram

At the end of every part the doer (yajamānan) has to undergo shaving. During that time, the mantra-s that have to be chanted are given in the fifth anuvākā of fifth praśnā of first aṣṭakā of Taittirīya Brāhmaṇam.

In the mantras of this anuvākā starting with ऋतमेवपरमेष्ठि (ṛtamevaparameṣṭhi), the appropriate mantras for the corresponding part should be recited by the ṛtvik named adhvaryu. Then the doer (yajamānan) has to recite the following 3 lines during the shaving performed for that part:

तदृतन्तथ्सत्यम्। तद्व्रतन्तच्छकेयम्। तेनशकेयन्तेनराद्ध्यासम्।

tadṛtantathsatyam | tadvratantacchakeyam | tenaśakeyantenarāddhyāsam |

After that he has to recite the above 10 mantras starting with brāhmaṇa ekahotā. This is indicated by śrīmadāpastamba bhagavān through the aphorism ‘brāhmaṇa ekahoteti cānuvākam’.

There is a tradition to perform the last rites of a gṛhastā, who was a vedic scholar and brahmavid and lived according to the tradition by performing bhagavadārādhanam etc…, by making small modification in the last rites that are performed for ordinary gṛhastā-s and adding more veda mantras along with the usual mantras. This way of performing it is known as brahmamedham.

śri Sāyaṇā has mentioned that the above 10 mantras have to be chanted during one of the phases of brahmamedham according to śrī bhāradvāja mahaṛṣi (though these mantras are not used during brahmamedham in śrīmadāpastamba tradition).

If the panchagavya-s (five products of cow) are mixed appropriately and then if that panchagavyam is offered to agni through brahmakūrcam (a stick formed with holy grass in a specific way) and the remaining panchagavyam is shown to Sun while reciting appropriate mantra, then that panchagavyam is known as brahmakūrca panchagavyam. If that brahmakūrca panchagavyam is taken after reciting the appropriate mantras, it will purify the body and mind. In the homam performed while preparing this brahmakūrca panchagavyam, it is customary to recite the above 10 mantras.

During the śrāddham performed for departed parents, the custom of partaking brahmakūrca panchagavyam by the doer and the people who assist him on the previous day was prevalent among scholars. Why? Till recently, people with good qualities have been taking this with interest before taking part in bhagavat and bhāgavata kainkaryams, to get themselves purified. However, nowadays, I am seeing people who come to cook during the ceremonies refuse taking this by considering this as a lowly thing. If people understand that while preparing this brahmakūrca panchagavyams the mantras are chanted which pray for the following four and then they will recognize how good it is to partake this:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

I am writing this to remove the misconception that is becoming prevalent due to kali’s miseries that taking this is a lowly affair.

Now a question arises as to why these mantras are used in common across three different acts viz., shaving, brahmamedham and brahmakūrca panchagavyam.

For this the elders answer as, “vacanāt pravṛtir vacanān nivṛtiḥ’. i.e., the scriptures say like this and hence, we need to do. There is no place for questions here. Yes. For believers, there is no doubt.

Still, due to the grace of ācāryās, I have a reasoning which seems to be appropriate here.

Act of shaving gives purity. It is the first act for decorating a male.

In brahmamedham also, isn’t it essential that the body of the bramhavid needs to be purified? As per śāstrās, if the dead person is an Agnihotri, all his body hairs should be shaved and given bath before his body is cremated.

In the same way, the thing that remains after performing the homa while preparing brahmakūrca panchagavyam gives purity and beauty to the person who takes it. These mantra-s have such prayers.

Hence, we can see a commonality of using these mantra-s in the above places.

I read an article written by śrīmadubhayave nāvalpākkam dinasasa yajña varāha tātācārya svāmi, where he expressed his anguish that the practice of taking brahmakūrca pancagavyam has dropped.

I wrote the above explanation with the hope that showing at least a part of glory of these mantras that are used in brahmakūrca panchagavyam will make such scholars feel happy and will lead to at least one act that will uplift the daily life of people.

Now let us see the mantras from tri hotā to daśa hotā.

पृथिवीत्रि होता। सप्रतिष्ठा। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। प्रतिष्ठाच मे भूयात्॥

pṛthivītri hotā | sapratiṣṭhā | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | pratiṣṭhāca me bhūyāt ||

All the things required for food come from the earth. The fuel used for ‘Agni’ to burn like firewood comes from the earth. We are able to perform yajñā because of that. Since, the earth helps us in these three ways it is called trihotā. The earth is a stable place for us. May the earth grant the following four wealth to me:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let me get a stable place like house and bungalows.

yakṣā-s and gandharvā-s travel in the place between the earth and the sky, known as antarikṣam. Since this is the place where higher energy people roam, this is known as viṣṭhā. Sound travels through this. Rain comes through this. Thus this acts as the abode as well as the path for the two and helping us in four ways. Hence it is known as caturhotā. Let this caturhotā grant the following four wealth to me:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let it grant me the place viṣṭhā, where the forces helping me wander. This is explained in the following mantra:

अन्तरिक्षञ्चतुर्होता। सविष्ठाः। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। विष्ठाश्च मे भूयात्॥

antarikṣañcaturhotā | saviṣṭhāḥ | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | viṣṭhāśca me bhūyāt ||

Next is the mantra for pañcahotā. Since vāyu circulates in our body as five forces prāṇan, apānan, vyānan, udānan and samānan, it is known as pañcahotā. May the pañcahotā grant the following wealth to me:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let me get a consistent breath. The mantra is:

वायुः पञ्चहोता। स प्राणः। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। प्राणश्च मे भूयात्॥

vāyuḥ pañcahotā | sa prāṇaḥ | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | prāṇaśca me bhūyāt ||

Next is ṣaḍḍhotā. If we get the same climatic condition throughout, we will be bored. Hence, we should get different seasons such as vasanta ṛtu, grīṣma ṛtu etc… This change only makes the life attractive.

Sun gives heat in the same way. Hence, he causes a type of fear. However, the moon appears in the sky as waxing and waning moon. Through the two crescents, a month is formed. Hence, Tamil people call moon as ‘tiṅgaḻ’ which means ‘month’. In the same way, the names of the months are named after the stars in which he appears as full moon like chittirai, vaikāsi etc… The two months together are called ṛtu. Hence, the moon is the cause for the formation of ṛtu-s. Let the moon grant me the following wealth:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

I should be granted ṛtu-s, that bring in changes in life and make it interesting. The mantra for ṣaḍḍhotā is:

चन्द्रमाष्षड्ढोता। स ऋतून्कल्पयाति। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। ऋतवश्च मे कल्पन्ताम्॥

candramāṣṣaḍḍhotā | sa ṛtūnkalpayāti | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | ṛtavaśca me kalpantām ||

Next is saptahotā. The head in our body has entrances, i.e. holes. There are seven entrances viz two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and one mouth. The vāyu which operates these are fed by the food we eat. Since, the food helps in maintaining these seven entrances and thus in seven ways, it is called saptahotā. What is the use of having the breath when eye, ear etc… are not fed properly? Hence, the food we eat is the breath for the breath. Let it grant me the following wealth:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let me get good breath for the breath (i.e. food). The mantra for this is:

अन्न सप्त होता। सप्राणस्य प्राणः। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। प्राणस्य च मे प्राणो भूयात्॥

anna sapta hotā | saprāṇasya prāṇaḥ | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | prāṇasya ca me prāṇo bhūyāt ||

Next is aṣṭa hotā. The sun has eight forms viz., 1. ārogan, 2. bhrājan, 3. paṭaran, 4. pataṅgan, 5. svarṇaran, 6. jyotiṣīmān, 7. vibhāsan and 8. kaśyapan. This is a way of representing sun as eight suns as per the first praśnā of taittirīya āraṇyakam. This praśnā is popularly known as suryanamaskāra praśnā. If we start explaining all these, this article will keep on growing. Hence, it is enough if we know the above fact. Our life is proper because of these eight suns. Sky is the one which acts as the path for these eight suns to travel. Thus sky helps us in eight ways. Hence, sky is the aṣṭa hotā. This sky cannot be ignored by anyone. Let that sky grant me the following wealth:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let me become non-ignorable by others. The mantra for this is:

द्यौरष्ट होता। सोऽनाधृष्यः। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। अनाधृष्यश्च मे भूयासम्॥

dyauraṣṭa hotā | so'nādhṛṣyaḥ | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | anādhṛṣyaśca me bhūyāsam ||

Along with the above eight forms, sun appears with his own form and hence he helps us in nine ways. Hence, he is nava hotā. He is very radiant. Let him grant the following wealth to me:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let me become radiant. The full form of the mantra is:

आदित्यो नव होता। स तेजस्वी। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। तेजस्वीच भूयासम्॥

ādityo nava hotā | sa tejasvī | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | tejasvīca bhūyāsam ||

Next is the tenth mantra.

“Prajāpati is the one who created our body. He created nine entrances in the body viz., two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth for taking in food, one for excreting the feces and one for bodily pleasures in accordance with the person. On top of it, he has created the tenth entrance which is naval region. Thus he has created ten places for our life forces to travel around. (This fact is given in veda as – nava vai puruṣe prāṇā nābhir daśamī in multiple places). Thus Prajāpati helps in ten ways. So, he is called daśa hotā. He is everything’. Let him grant me the following wealth:

1. People (wealth in the form of progeny)
2. Animal wealth such as cow (wealth in the form of shape)
3. Healthy body (wealth in that form)
4. Glory (wealth in that form)

Let me get all the benefits desired by me’. The mantra for this is:

प्रजापतिर्दश होता। स इद सर्वम्। समेददातु प्रजां पशून्पुष्टिंयशः। सर्वञ्च मे भूयात्॥

prajāpatirdaśa hotā | sa ida sarvam | samedadātu prajāṁ paśūnpuṣṭiṁyaśaḥ | sarvañca me bhūyāt ||

The ten deities represented in the above mantras are:

1. Brahmin, 2. Fire, 3. Earth, 4. antarikṣa, 5. Air, 6. Moon, 7. Food, 8. Sky, 9. Sun and 10. Prajāpati

Though Prajāpati generally indicates Brahma who is responsible for creation, the Paramaikāntis should contemplate on the Emperumān who resides in all the above deities as the target, while reciting the mantras.

We, the readers of śrī Raṅganātha Pādukā, who relish veda as vedattāzhvān may consider Tirunāgai Azhagiyār and Tirukkuḍantai ārāvamudāzhvān respectively for the terms Brahmin and Agni or contemplate on Tirukkaṇṇamaṅgai Bhaktavatsalam Perumāḻ while reciting the first two mantras as seen previously.

Nammāzhvār in his poems enjoyed Tiruvġṅkaṭamuḍaiyān in the poem ‘ozhivil kālam’ and in the next poem he experienced Nedumāḻ as one who is omnipresent in the body, life etc… and in accordance with the same we can meditate upon Tiruvġṅkaṭamuḍaiyān while reciting the ten mantras.

Another way to look at is the Tirumozhi of Tirumaṅgai āzhvār who is the disciple of Nammāzhvār in the poem starting with perum puakkaḍal, where he has praised Bhaktavatsalap Perumāḻ who appears as earth, sky, air, moon, fire and the sun. Thus we can contemplate on Bhaktavatsalap Perumāḻ while reciting these mantras.

We can also understand ekahotā as the Perumāḻ who was sung by only one āzhvār and dvihotā as the Perumāḻ who was sung by two āzhvār-s etc…

We need to exclude āṇḍāḻ from the list and thus Araṅgan is the one who has been sung by ten āzhvār-s. Amudan is the one who has been sung by six āzhvār-s. Paramapadam is the place which has been sung by seven āzhvār-s. In accordance with the special arrangement done by ācārya sārvabhauman śrīmannāthamunigaḻ, Amudan, in a unique way, listens and graces during the adhyayanotsavam which commences from first day of the month mārgazhi and ends with deśika prabandham on the twenty-second day. During ‘nou suvargam’ He grants paramapadam to Tirumaṅgai āzhvār who prostrates before His holy feet. During the fifteenth day, ‘elle iḻangiḻiyġ’, He will grant His exhibition along with Komaḻavallittāyār as paramapadanāthan, while Nammāzhvār prostrates before His holy feet. During the ‘muppattu mūvar’ day, again when Nammāzhvār prostrates before Him, He appears as paramapadanāthan along with both His consorts. Thus, since He appears as paramapadanāthan and is the target of Tirvezhukkūirukkai, we can call ārāvamudāzhvān as sapta hotā.

Svāmi Deśikan who has composed poems on various divyadeśa Emperumān-s, reincarnated as Tirukkuḍantai Deśikan just to praise Amudan and hence, there is no bar in relishing Him as aṣṭa hotā.

Since Tiruvġṅkaṭamuḍaiyān and Tiruppākkaḍal Emperumān are sung by nine āzhvār-s excluding āṇḍāḻ, we can call Them as nava hotā and we can call Araṅgan as daśa hotā.

All these are fine. Do not doubt about the grammatical splitting of the compound words ekahotā as one who has been sung by one person, dvihotā as one who has been sung by two people etc…

We need to split the words as follows: ekena hūtaḥ leads to ekahotā, i.e. one who has been called by one person.

Again, do not think that the compound form of ekena hūtaḥ as ekahūtan instead of ekahotā.

Veda itself, while explaining how words such as daśa hotā came into existence, has explained that daśa hūtan has become daśa hotā. This comes in the last part of third praśnā of second aṣṭakā in Taittirīya Brāhmaṇam:

दशहूतोहवै नामैषः। तंवा एतन्दशहूतसन्तम्। दशहोतेत्याचक्षते परोक्षेण।

daśahūtohavai nāmaiṣaḥ | taṁvā etandaśahūtasantam | daśahotetyācakṣate parokṣeṇa |

I pray you to look with intent, on the phrase I had mentioned above, “even if we consider Prajāpati as One who dwells in the four faced brahma…”.

Here, the word Prajāpati denoted as dasha hotā by Veda cannot be four faced brahma.

Then, who is this Prajāpati? Please wait till the issue for the month of āḍi.