**Paramaikāntis’ Svastivācanam**

(śrīmadāṇḍavan āśrama āsthāna Vidvān

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Now, let us see the twenty second mantrā of the mṛgāram, which is the concluding mantrā. This mantrā is used as yājyai while performing homam for the sviṣṭakṛt Agni during mṛgāreṣṭi. The full form of the mantra is:

यथा ह तद्वसवोगौर्यञ्चित्पदिषिताममुञ्चता यजत्राः।

एवात्वमस्मत् प्रमुञ्चाव्यहः प्रातार्यग्ने प्रतरान्न आयुः॥

yathā ha tadvasavogauryañcitpadiṣitāmamuñcatā yajatrāḥ |

evātvamasmat pramuñcāvyahaḥ prātāryagne pratarānna āyuḥ ||

This mantra follows the meter ‘trishtub’. In this there are twenty three pada-s as per pada pāṭhā:

(1) यथा, (2) ह, (3) तत्, (4) वसवः, (5) गौर्यम्, (6) चित्, (7) पदि, (8) सिताम्, (9) अमुञ्चत, (10) यजत्राः, (11) एवा, (12) त्वम्, (13) अस्मत्, (14) प्र, (15) मुञ्च, (16) वि, (17) अहः, (18) प्र, (19) अतारि, (20) अग्नेः, (21) प्रतराम्, (22) नः, (23) आयुः

(1) yathā, (2) ha, (3) tat, (4) vasavaḥ, (5) gauryam, (6) cit, (7) padi, (8) sitām, (9) amuñcata, (10) yajatrāḥ, (11) evā, (12) tvam, (13) asmat, (14) pra, (15) muñca, (16) vi, (17) ahaḥ, (18) pra, (19) atāri, (20) agneḥ, (21) pratarām, (22) naḥ, (23) āyuḥ

In the above, the ninth word ‘amuñcata’ and the fifteenth word ‘muñca’ are elongated in the samhita form as ‘amuñcatā’ and ‘muñcā’ respectively for fulfilling the meter.

The meaning for this as per śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s commentary is as follows:

yajatrāḥ – People (devas) who are the object of worship in yajñās

vasavaḥ – people (devas) who are the cause for this world to be established well

gauryam cit – the cow named gauri, since it glows with white color

sitām – tied (in the barn with the help of the strength of the rope)

padi – in the leg

amuñcata – released it from that bond

agneḥ – oh! Agni!

tat yathā ha – in whatever manner that freedom was made possible

evā – in the same way

tvam – you

pra muñca – relieve well

asmat – from us

ahaḥ – various types of sins

naḥ - our

āyuḥ – longevity (lifetime)

pratarām – make it more and more long

pra atāri – perform well

Here, the word ‘gaurīm’ has come as ‘gauryam’ as per vedic literary tradition.

In the original text, only ‘yajatrāḥ vasavaḥ’ is there. However, śrī Sāyaṇācāryar has brought in ‘agninā sahitaḥ’ meaning ‘along with Agni’ to give the meaning.

Why does he do that?

In this mantra which is about Agni, in the first part the deities of yajñās are invoked and they were told that they released the white cow from its leash; in the second part there is a prayer to Agni to relieve us from sins in the same manner.

In the first part there was no mention of Agni. Only a general note on deities is present explicitly.

Isn’t it appropriate that this mantra which belongs to sviṣṭakṛt Agni, mentions Agni in both the parts rather than in the second part alone?

Now, let us see how we, the Paramaikāntis, should interpret and enjoy this mantra.

Aruḻāḻapperumāḻ is the ‘means’, since he helped Brahma in completing the aśvamedha yajñā. Hence, Vedattāzhvān enjoyed Aruḻāḻapperumāḻ as sviṣṭakṛt. Since, he appeared at the end of the yajñā, Aruḻāḻapperumāḻ became the ‘object’ (fruit) as well. Also, since he appeared at the end, He was enjoyed as ‘Yaviṣṭhan’ by Vedattāzhvān.

Immediately His utsavās came in front of the eyes of Vedattāzhvān.

The scene of fortunate leaders of Devas applying the dust formed from His vāhanās, on their heads came in front of Vedattāzhvān’s eyes.

After Hanuman comes back with the news about Sitā, Rāmapirān chooses a swan as a second messenger to send consolation to Sitā.

Svāmi Deśikan has blessed the great epic poem, Haṁsa sandeśam; here, śrīrāmapirān instructs the swan about the speciality of the message and how to proceed; the swan has to first pay respects to kāñcīpuram Aruḻāḻapperumāḻ by fanning Him with the feathers and then start the travel towards Laṅkā.

There, first āśvāsam - twenty seventh shloka talks about the greatness of the street dust caused by the vāhanā-s of Aruḻāḻan in His daily rounds -

तामासीदन् प्रणम नगरीं भक्तिनम्रेण मूर्ध्ना

जातामादौ कृतयुगमुखे धातुरिच्छावशेन।

यद्विथीनां करिगिरिपतेर्वाहवेगावधूतान्

धन्या रेणून् स्त्रिदशपतयो धारयन्त्युत्तमाङ्गैः॥

tāmāsīdan praṇama nagarīṁ bhaktinamreṇa mūrdhnā

jātāmādau kṛtayugamukhe dhāturicchāvaśena |

yadvithīnāṁ karigiripatervāhavegāvadhūtān

dhanyā reṇūn stridaśapatayo dhārayantyuttamāṅgaiḥ ||

Some read the fourth line as

धन्यान् रेणून् स्त्रिदशपतयो धारयन्त्युत्तमाङ्गैः

dhanyān reṇūn stridaśapatayo dhārayantyuttamāṅgaiḥ

As per this version, it will mean that Svāmi Deśikan is saying – the dust itself is blessed.

It is possible that remembering this specialty of the dust formed by the vāhanās, Vedattāzhvān had a sight about how when Devapperumāḻ appeared as Rāma and removed the curse on Ahalyā by the dust arising from His foot and blessed her into becoming the leader of all chaste women.

Immediate thought must have been about the Agni – sviṣṭakṛt, Agni brought forth before Aruḻāḻan by His blessing– agraṁ nītaḥ iti agniḥ, and the agni that is śrīśaṭhakopan – śrī śaṭhāri namely pādukā-s.

Male gender words like ‘śrī śaṭhāri’, ‘śrīśaṭhakopan’ denote pādukādevi based on the story about how she incarnated to destroy the demon, śaṭhan.

śrī Terezhundūr āṇḍavan has shown in śrī Pādukāsahasra Vyākhyānam that this story is narrated in Agama-s.

Details about this have been written by our śrīraṅganātha Pādukā magazine editor, śrī U.Ve. Natteri Kidambi Rajagopalacharya Svāmi in one of the earlier issues; those who are interested can read that article.

Or, we can even postulate that male gender words are used for Pādukādevī based on the incarnation as Nammāzhvār.

Similarly, the male gender word ‘agni’ might have appeared based on the state of śrī śaṭhāri or the state of Nammāzhvār and point to śrī Pādukādevī.

During the curse liberation for Ahalyā, Emperumān’s only support was Agni namely śrīpādukā-s.

Svāmi Deśikan has talked about this also in śrī Pādukāsahasram – eleventh, sañcāra paddhati, twenty second shloka –

सञ्चारयन्ती पदमन्वतिष्ठः सहाय-कृत्यं मणिपादरक्षे।

मातस्त्वमेका मनु-वंश-गोप्तुः गोपायतो ग़ौतम-धर्म-दारान्॥

sañcārayantī padamanvatiṣṭhaḥ

sahāya-kṛtyaṁ maṇipādarakṣe |

mātastvamekā manu-vaṁśa-goptuḥ

gopāyato ġautama-dharma-dārān ||

Thus, staying close to His divine feet, Pādukā leads Him in order to conduct significant events through the dust arising from His walking. Hence, Vedattāzhvān sees Aruḻāḻan as śrīrāmapirān along with His Pādukā-s.

When the Lord with Pādukā-s liberated Ahalyā from her curse, Viśvāmitra and Iḻaiya perumāḻ- Lakṣmaṇa were with Him.

These are all characters in śrīmadrāmāyaṇam, right?

śrīmadrāmāyaṇam is an epic that will remain in this earth as long as mountains, rivers and oceans exist. Brahmā has blessed Vālmīki Bhagavān thus –

yāvat sthāsyanti girayo |

tāvat rāmāyaṇa kathā lokeṣu pracariṣyati ||

As long as śrīmadrāmāyaṇam exists, Perumāḻ (Rāmapirān), Iḻaiya perumāḻ (Lakṣmaṇa) and Viśvāmitra Bhagavān – all three will reside in the hearts of those who enjoy the epic, right? So, it is appropriate to call them Vasu-s.

They are venerable enough to be worshipped; so, they become yajatrā-s [worthy of sacrifice] also.

Vedattāzhvān invokes Rāma with Pādukā-s, Lakṣmaṇa and Viśvāmitra with the phrases (agninā sahitaḥ) vasavo! yajatrā!

According to śrī Sāyaṇā, ‘padi sitāṁ’ means bound to the feet.

Ahalyā was constantly thinking about the time Emperumān’s divine feet would touch her.

A woman who is thinking single-mindedly is termed ‘Gaurī’.

Pārvatī devī performed penance single-mindedly and got Paramashiva as her husband and hence called ‘Gaurī’ as per Saṁskṛt grammar books.

Oh Lord! You relieved Ahalyā, who was like a Gaurī, from her curse!

* padiṣitāṁ gauryaṁ cit amuñcata

Then Vedattāzhvān invoked sviṣṭakṛt – agni – namely Varadan and agni – śrīśaṭhakopan namely, śrīpādukā as ‘agne!’

tat yathā ha – in whatever manner that relief of curse happened

evā – like that

tvam – You

asmat – from us

vi ahaḥ – the sins that we have committed

pra muñca – emancipate us

We have to enjoy how Vedattāzhvān requests the Lord instead of saying – relieve us from the sins, he says – relieve the sins from us.

Even if the sins are ready to leave us, we are not ready to leave them; we hang on to them with the grip of a monkey. So, the request is to remove the sins from us.

May be this is why, Svāmi Deśikan enjoyed this and said

anyonya vaira-jananī vijahātvasūyā!

We will not let jealousy go; it has to leave us on its own.

May be, this is being echoed by Vedattāzhvān – “We will not let sins go; You should relieve them from us”!

Doing thus, naḥ - our; āyuḥ - life time; pratarām – make it very long; pra atāri -

vaiyam manni vīirundu viṇṇumāḻvar maṇṇūḍġ

nalla padattāl manai vāzhvar koṇḍa peṇḍir makkaḻġ

vāyum nan makkaḻaip peu magizhvarġ

as per these sūkti sayings, make it good, says Vedattāzhvān.

The word ‘agni’ denotes pādukā; this reminds us of the shloka in śrī Svāmi Deśikan’s Pādukāsahasram padmarāga paddhati - with the radiant rays from the padmarāga stones studded in her, Pādukādevī forms a fiery fort around Tiruvaraṅgam protecting it from the effects of kali yuga.

That shloka is the twentieth one in padmarāga paddhati –

pādavani prasṛmarasya kaleryugasya

prāyeṇa samprati nivārayituṁ praveśam |

śrīraṅgasīmni tava śoṇamaṇiprasūtaḥ

prākāramagnimayamārabhate prakāśaḥ ||

Just as agni like pādukā protects from kali, veda goṣa which is like the sound of pādukā also forms a protection.

Damayantī chose Naḻa cakravarti ignoring the four deva-s - Indra, Yama, Agni and Varuna. Being enraged by this, the devata of kali yuga – Kali wanted to hurt Naḻa and tried to enter his kingdom.

In one place, veda was being recited; Kali could not even place his foot there.

śrīharṣan says in Naiṣada Mahākāvyam seventeenth sarga – 163rd shloka –

vedānudharatāṁ tatra mukhādākarṇayan padam |

na prasārayituṁ kālaḥ kaliḥ padamapārayat ||

In one other place, krama pārayaṇa sound is heard. Kali is not able to get anywhere close.

Mahākavi talks about this in the next shloka –

śrutipāṭhakavaktrebhyaḥ tatrākarṇayataḥ kramam |

kramaḥ saṁkucitastasya pure dūramavartata ||

saṁhitā pārāyaṇam is being done in another place. Only till he reached that place, Kali was able to walk. Once the sound of the chanting fell into his ears, he was not able to walk. Next shloka talks about this

tāvadgatir dhṛtāṭopā pādayos tena saṁhitā |

na vedapāṭhikaṇṭhebhyo yāvadaśrāvi saṁhitā ||

Thus, padam, kramam, saṁhitā veda sounds prevented Kali from entering. With fifty six more shloka-s, the śrīharṣan explains the various other blockades Kali faced.

There is an interesting information hidden here.

What is that?

Please wait till Jaya year vaikāsi month Pādukā magazine!