**Paramaikāntis’ Svastivācanam**

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I asked my friend,

“What does it mean to say yajñā is as per veda bhāṣyam?

1. yajñā has to be done following veda bhāṣyam?

Or

1. while doing yajñā, understand the meaning of the mantra-s as per veda bhāṣyam, keep them in mind, meditate on the deity indicated by veda bhāṣyam and then chant those mantra-s?

Out of these two, the first one will become a laughing matter because there are kalpa sūtrā-s to say how yajñā-s have to be performed. And, there are detailed commentaries for them also. If there are doubts, they can be cleared with the first part of mīmāmsā (pūrva mīmāmsā) śāstrā. Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar alias Vidyāraṇyar alias Mādhavar himself has given a short account of pūrva mīmāmsā in his wonderful book called Jaiminīya nyāyamālai.

In the introduction, he says. “mīmāmsā śāstrā i.e. karma mīmāmsā is a huge ocean. It is customary to build swimming pools that have water up to waist level in order to teach swimming to princes. Like that, Jaiminīya nyāyamālai transforms the ocean of mīmāmsā śāstrā into a swimming pool for students”. Accordingly, he has shortened mīmāmsā (karma kāṇḍam) by writing two small anuṣṭup ślokā -s for one adhikaraṇam and created a swimming pool out of karma mīmāmsā ocean. He himself has written the commentary for that in jaiminīya nyāya mālā vistaraḥ.

When he is writing the commentary on veda portions of taittirīya saṁhitā, at the end of each praśnā, he provides jaiminīya nyāya mālā ślokā-s and his commentaries from jaiminīya nyāya mālā vistaraḥ for mīmāmsā adhikaraṇam -s that research vedic verses.

This is similar to the copy and paste method used in the current day computers. But, there is no doubt that it is a great favor done to us by this method followed by him to provide what he wrote for the convenience of the student of veda bhāṣyam.

Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s veda bhāṣyam was written 800 years ago. Before that, yajñā-s had been conducted for several hundred years. We can even say that the number of yajñā-s done before these 800 years would have amounted to the size of Meru mountain and the yajñā-s conducted in these 800 years would amount to the size of a mustard.

To say that yajñā is conducted as per veda bhāṣyam will be a joke like saying jaggery is made from bḻi (a sweet delicacy item).

Let us now think about the second item we posed earlier - while doing yajñā, understand the meaning of the mantra-s as per veda bhāṣyam, keep them in mind, meditate on the deity indicated by veda bhāṣyam and then chant those mantra-s.

Paramaikānti -s do not worship Gods other than Nārāyaṇā even unknowingly. There is no doubt that once they have done absolute surrender for salvation, they still have to observe their allotted varṇāśrama dharmam-s. Thus, Paramaikānti-s who are gṛhastā-s when they have the qualification, health and wealth, should perform yajñā-s definitely. But, when they keep in mind the other deities talked about by veda bhāṣyam and meditate on them while chanting the mantra-s, don’t they attain a state where they worship deities other than Nārāyaṇā?”

My friend interrupted here – “Hey, persistent one! That is why it is said that one has to meditate on Emperumān who resides in the heart of the deities referred to by veda bhāṣyam”.

I said, “Yes, I am persistent. But, you have agreed to something without knowing. You said – ‘When Paramaikānti-s do yajñā, they should not take the meaning of the mantra-s at face value. Not stopping with meditating on the deities, one has to meditate on the mantra itself and Nārāyaṇā who resides inside those deities’. So, when it comes to yajñā, is it right to say it is to be done as per veda bhāṣyam?”

“Okay, it is not right. But, are you saying that one has to totally ignore those deities and as per your bhāṣyam, meditate on divya deshap perumāḻ-s? isn’t this too much even for you?” said the friend.

“Why are you saying so?”

“Veda is very ancient. It was meant for yajñā. It has been used for yajñā even in the days when divya deshams and vigraha worship were not in prevalence. When such is the case, how can you bring divyadesha Emperumān-s into those mantra-s? Emperumānār blessed about a mantra, ‘arāryi kāṇe’ that it is a maṅgaḻāśāsanam for Tirumalai. Even Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar has stated that ‘ado dāru’ mantra refers to the holy place of Puri. Why not stop with this? Keeping this pretext, why are you proclaiming that all the mantra-s are referring to divya desham-s and that too, pointing to sthalam-s like Vaḍuvūr, Villūr etc that have not been blessed by Azhvār pāsuram-s? Isn’t that too much? You started saying you will tell a secret but you insist on defeating me.” The friend started losing peace.

I said, “Peace! Peace! Svāmi! The British had enslaved us. They started analyzing the history of our ancestors.

This is what they wrote – “In ancient times, our ancestors lived in the forests grazing sheep and cattle. They lived in fear of natural forces like sun, rain and storm. In that fear, they started worshipping them as Gods. Then came several folk songs about them. With the growth of civilization, these natural forces were shown in a civilized manner as Agni, Sun, Varuna, Rudra etc. those folk songs became collected as ṛg veda. Slowly, yajñā-s were created where homa-s were done by sacrificing the flesh of animals; the part explaining these became yajurveda. In the yajñā-s, the practice of singing the worship songs started. Sāmaveda was formed thus. By this time, modern life with cities, bungalows etc. became prevalent. Along with natural forces like Agni and other deities, worship of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śivā et al started. Temples were constructed. Vigraha worship started. With that came the Agama-s. That is how the civilization grew”.

In the education system started by McCauley, this history was taught to us during our young ages in the schools. And, we were brain-washed. The effect of this is with us all in different scales.

A leader of a vaidika advaita organization said in an interview for a famous tamizh newspaper, “Temples came about only in kaliyugam. In the earlier yuga-s, only yajñā-s were prevalent worship forms”.

This kind of history flavor makes one forget that śrīmad rāmāyaṇam happened in tretāyuga and arañgan’s divine temple that was the family treasure of ikṣvāku kings of Ayoddhi existed at that time.

Similarly, some of us refuse to accept yāga veda mantra-s as being a tribute to divya desha temples, because of the influence from the history lessons initiated by the British.

There was an ancient time called veda kālam. There were no temples or vigraha worship or even in the homes and no śāḻagrāmam-s etc. These came about in the later times in history; the British thought that if people realize that veda has references to all these, it would be a shame for the ancient veda.

Even some of us rave that it will be an insult for the ancient vedas and also its greatness.

But, how did our disciplined ancestors perform yajñā-s?

Before the homā was done in the yajñā, the objects of sacrifice like havis, puroḍāśam, caru etc. (including the flesh of the animals) were readied; they were offered to Emperumān-s in arcā vigraha forms they worshipped or to the śāḻagrāmam-s, then chanted the mantra-s for the deities meditating on the antarātmā Emperumān and did homā in the Agni.

Nāvalpākkam ŚrīKumāratāta deśikan was a great mahān who had earned the title caturveda śatakratu. Accyuta Nāyaka who was born in Veppampattu village about ten miles west of Nāvalpākkam, had obtained that svāmi’s blessing even at his young age. He became the adapted son of Tanjāvur king Cinna Sevappa Nāyaka and he also became the king of Tanjāvur. He firmly believed that he got that greatness only because of the blessing from ŚrīKumāratāta deśikan. He requested ŚrīKumāratāta deśikan to come from Nāvalpākkam to Tanjāvur. He built a house for svāmi in the bank of Veṇṇāu, a distributory of Kāveri. Svāmi conducted hundreds of yajñā-s in the banks of Veṇṇāu.

When those yajñā-s were performed, Tanjai Māmaṇikkvoil divyadesha Emperumān – Nīlamegapperumāḻ would be brought to the yāgaśālai. All the objects needed for the sacrifice like havis, puroḍāśam, caru etc including animal flesh were readied and offered to Śrī Nīlamegapperumāḻ and then mantra-s were chanted for the deities who had Him as their inner soul and homa performed in the proper manner.

I have listened to this story being told by Śrīmadubhave Nāvalpākkam Agnihotri Ammaṇi Mahāvidvān ŚrīDevanātha tātācārya Svāmi in his own inimitable style.

That Svāmi’s centenary celebration was done on August 12, 2010 (vikṛti āḍit tiru uttiram) by his sons in a grand manner. I also participated in that. At that time, ŚrīŚatakratuvamśa vilāsamahākāvyam, blessed by Mahāvidvatkavi Ammaṇi Rāmānujatātācārya Svāmi, the disciple of Śrīmadaṇṇayārya Mahādeśikan, was released along with Śrī Ammaṇi Agnihotri Devanāthācārya Svāmi’s tamizh commentary. The first part of this kāvya’s five parts is kratuvilāsam. In that the 48th ślokam is –

sva-yāgaśālāgata-nīlamega

niveditānyeva havīmṣyahauṣīt |

tadātmagatvena gṛhīta-tattat-

devādi nāmnā paṭitaistu mantraiḥ ||

This story has been narrated in this ślokam.

This story reminds us of the 25th ślokam in ŚrīPādukāsahasram nāgapaddhati which is –

raṅgādhīśe saha kamalayā sādaraṁ yāyajūkaiḥ

sāraṁ divyaṁ savanahaviṣāṁ bhoktumāhūyamāne |

nedīyobhirnigamavacasāṁ nityamamhaḥ pratīpaiḥ

pratyālāpaṁ diśati bhavatī pāduke śiñjitaiḥ svaiḥ ||

“Those who conduct yajñā-s continuously (like caturveda śatakratu ŚrīKumāratāta deśikan Svāmi) pray to Śrīraṅganātha to come with Śrīraṅganācciyār to accept the essence of the havis offered in their yāga-s. Accepting that, Araṅgan wears His Pādukā-s and starts walking towards the yāga śālai. At that time, a sound emerges from the Pādukā-s. That sound is the foe of all sins. It is closely related to the veda sound. It seems - that sound is showing Araṅgan has accepted that invitation”.

Looking at this, can’t we say that the practice of doing homa only after offering the homa havis to Śrīraṅganātha, just like for Nīlamegapperumāḻ, existed during Svāmi Deśikan’s time?

So, what do we get from this?

The thought that yāga is in one direction, divyadesha worship is in one direction and if the yāga mantra-s are linked to divya desham-s, it will lessen the importance of the mantra-s, is totally in opposition to elders’ anuṣṭanam of our tradition. It is obvious that the thought arises from ignorance about the secrets of our tradition.

We have to analyze the reason for the ancestors offering yāga havis to the divyadesha or arcā Emeprumān first.

Several mantra-s are used in the yāga. Names like Agni, Indra etc. are mentioned. With a superficial understanding, if ritvik-s chant the mantra-s thinking they refer to Agni, Indra etc or not having enough vedānta knowledge, meditating on those only devata-s not meditating on Emperumān who is the antaryāmi for those devata-s, that homa sesha prasādam must not be taken by paramikānti-s. Instead of offering to Emperumān who has as His body the bhaddha jīva-s who have the acetana guṇa-s with three flavors, if the homa havis is offered to arcā tirumeni-s who are śubhāśrayā, śuddha satva forms, that homa prasādam can be taken by paramikānti-s; their discipline will not be affected.

Following this, and based on what smṛti-s have proclaimed, in the sthālī bhāga homa conducted by paramikānti-s, when the caru is prepared in the fire, it is offered to the arcā perumāḻ in the house. It is then offered to the Agni; the prasādam from that homa is accepted then.

Even in śrāddham-s the prasādam, ahaviṣyam (snacks, vegetables etc) are offered to gṛha arcā perumāḻ and then only used for the homa. Then svāmi-s partake the homa śeṣa prasādam-s. After that, when the śrāddham is completed, we get their permission and we take that prasādam.

In pitṛmedham, annam (cooked rice) is offered as pīṇḍam for ten days. That is offered to the dead and then placed in water; nobody takes that śeṣam. Like that, on the tenth day is prabhūtabali that śeṣam is also not taken. That is why, it is not offered to arcā. But, on the 11th day, a svāmi has to accept the food; for ekottiṣṭam, food is prepared for him separately in a separate place in the house and offered to him. But, that food is offered to śālagrāma mūrti by someone who does not have the death impurity and then only offered to that svāmi for bhojanam.

Why that much? The pañcagavyam taken by paramikānti-s is also offered to svārcai. (here, the pure pañcagavyam is prepared only at the end of the homa; so, it is offered only after the homa).

Thus, in general, wherever paramikānti-s take śeṣa prasādam, it must be offered to the arcā perumāḻ.

When the situation is like this, if the mantra-s are taken to point to divyadesha arcā-s and attributing the divine names Indra, Agni etc to Emperumān, enjoy wherever possible and conduct the homa, isn’t it like adding fragrance to golden lotus? That is why, our elders termed this – ‘ponnumāi nāināp plġ’.

In some mantra-s, it may not be possible to directly refer to perumāḻ. for example, in the vaishvadeva shvānabali mantra, the full form is –

dvau śvānau śyāma śabalu vaivasvata kulodbhavau |

tābhyāṁ baliṁ prdāsyāmi syātāṁ etau ahisukhau ||

“these belong to Yama’s clan. There are two dogs with black and other different colors. I offer this to them; let they not bother me” – that is the meaning.

The terms ‘śyāmam’ and ‘śabalam’ that appear here remind us of the chāndogya ūpaniṣad mantra –

śyāmāt śabalaṁ prapadye śabalāt śyāmaṁ prapadye

‘śyāmā’ here refers to divyamaṅgaḻa vigraha ṭirumāl. ūpaniṣad bhāṣyakārar has commented that śabalaṁ means ṭirumāl who is the ātmā of all sentient and non-sentient beings.

With this background, we cannot accept if this shvānabali mantra tries to imply that śyāmā, śabala sounds refer to perumāḻ. It is disgusting that this is a bali offered to dogs. So, we can accept that it is the antarātmā of these 2 dogs. It is right if we meditate like that.

Only in these kinds of mantra-s, we have to realize that BhagavAn is the inner soul of the deity referred. Tirukkuḍandai Deśikan has stated very clearly that our pūrvācāryas’ siddhāntam is that in other mantra-s, we have to realize they directly refer to Emperumān. I have pointed this out several times.

In support of that Pādukādevī is providing vyākhyānam through me.

yuktiyuktaṁ vaco grāhyaṁ bāladapi śukādapi

It is okay to accept words used by lowly people, such as ‘parrot’ and child, if they bestow good things. Paramikānti-s can accept this and do yāga. But, we have to warn them that the thought that yāga is to be done as per veda bhāṣyam will not fit into our tradition as such.

Since I have titled this as ‘Paramikānti’s’ Svastivācanam’, do not think that this comment refers only to Svastivācana japam. Even if I get to live full years of life, I cannot write commentary for the complete veda. This is an attempt to write commentary for at least Svastivācana part. It is in general practice. I started doing commentary for that part thinking that this will be like Tiruppallāṇḍu for continuing vyākhyānam-s for other veda portions also. That is why, this title was used.

There is a fond desire that other veda scholars, more knowledgeable than me, may start writing vyākhyānam-s for other parts of veda.

The friend made a pleasant comment – “I understand now. This flavor is needed. Continue your efforts. I pray to Pādukādevī that divya dampati-s must bless you to stay persistent”.

Starting from Nandana āḍi month, time has been spent in responding to friend’s questions in six Pādukā issues. May readers would agree like this friend.

What next?

We can start with commentary for pṛṣṭo divi mantra that comes after mṛgāra! It is said ‘tai’ month brings blessings.

Please wait till makara month Pādukā blossoms!