**Paramaikāntis’ Svastivācanam**

(Sri U.Ve. Villur Nadadur Karunakarachariar Swamy, Chennai)

The full form of this mantra appearing in the fourth praśnā as per drāviḍa pāṭham accepted by our sampradāyam in taittirīya āraṇyakam (and sixth praśnā as per āndra pāṭham followed by smārtās) starting with pareyuvāsam is:

न हि ते अग्ने तनुवैक्रूरं चकार मर्त्यः।

कपिर्बभस्ति तेजनं पुनर्जरायुगौरिव॥

na hi te agne tanuvaikrūraṁ cakāra martyaḥ |

kapirbabhasti tejanaṁ punarjarāyugauriva ||

This mantra is used in pitṛmedham (ritual performed for the departed soul). On the tenth day, śānti homam should be performed before ānanda homam. At that time the kartā (doer) of the ritual along with brothers and paternal cousins should adorn themselves with the garland made of ‘āttu nocci’ (Vitex negundo). They should sit on the skin of the bull in a row, with the youngest being in the start of the row and in the ascending order of the age. It is a tradition to use holy grass in the place of bull’s skin, wherever it is not available.

The doer should add ghee through the stalk of the ancillary ‘māviliṅga (*Crataeva nurvala*)’ leaf to the main ‘māviliṅga’ leaf four times. Then he should add that ghee to Agni through the stalk of the main ‘māviliṅga’ leaf and perform two āhuti-s (offering to Agni). In that the above mantra is used for the first āhuti.

The aphorism which dictates this is:

atha pratilomakṛtayā vāraṇyā srucā caturgṛhīte dve āhutī juhoti na hīti

The meaning shown by Śrī Bhaṭṭa Bhāskarar for the mantra is:

agne - Oh! Agni!

te tanuvai - with your body (though the original text uses this word as the fourth case i.e. dative case, the third case i.e. instrumental case is used to interpret the mantra)

martyaḥ - (this) man

na cakāra - should never perform. (This is a finite verb under the definition of ‘leṭ’ lakāram. What is ‘leṭ’? In the original text, it appears as though, the past finite verb is used, i.e. ‘liṭ’ is used to give the meaning as ‘he did not perform’. However, we interpret this as imperative sentence to mean ‘should not perform’, which is ‘loṭ’. Thus when a verb coming in ‘liṭ’ is changed into ‘loṭ’ to interpret, it is known as ‘leṭ’ and is prevalent in vedic literature (leṭ vede). )

(Translator’s note – ‘lakāram’ in Sanskrit gives tenses and moods of the verbs. There are six tenses and four moods represented by different ‘lakāram-s’. For example, ‘laṭ’ refers to Present tense and ‘loṭ’ refers to imperative mood)

krūraṁ karma - this dreadful ‘pitṛmedham’ ritual

That is, the doer is praying Agni that he should not face the suffering of doing this ritual again with Agni.

We should not doubt whether Agni can grant this, isn’t it?

Hence, the later part of mantra praises the glory of Agni. In accordance with that, we should consider the second part of the mantra as the answer for the question ‘Do you know Agni’s capability?’.

kapiḥ - Sun (Śrī Bhaṭṭa Bhāskarar explains that on the basis of kam – water, bhūyiṣṭham – in large quantity, pibati – drinks with rays, sun is known as kapi)

punaḥ - again and again (the original has only one punaḥ – again. However, we need to understand this as being used twice to give the appropriate meaning)

babhasti – eats (swallows)

tejanaṁ - his (Agni’s) radiance

That is, Sun eats the radiance of the Agni which was glowing in the previous night and hence is bright when he rises in the morning.

To show an analogy of how Sun swallows Agni, the following is shown:

gauḥ - Cow (which has given birth to calf, if nobody stops it from doing)

jarāyu – (trying to swallow) membrane protecting the womb

Veda itself, says in another place:

अग्निंवावादित्यस् सायं प्रविशति

उद्यन्तं वावादित्यं अग्निरनु समारोहति

agniṁvāvādityas sāyaṁ praviśati

udyantaṁ vāvādityaṁ agniranu samārohati

This means that as the evening comes, Sun enters Agni and during the morning Agni enters Sun.

This Agni gives glory to the Sun during the day time and attains glory during night because of Sun.

Thus Agni is capable of blessing the doer, so that he does not need to perform this pitṛmedham karma again in his life.

In this mantra, Śrī Bhaṭṭa Bhāskarar has interpreted the word kapi as Sun, right?

This has been shown by Śrī Naḍādūr Ammāḻ in the śrītatvasāram that Veda itself has indicated Sun with the name of kapi (kapirbabhastītyāmnātaḥ)

In Śrī śrutaprakāśikā also, Śrī Vedavyāsa Bhaṭṭar has documented the words of Ammāḻ as, “kapiḥ - ādityaḥ; kapi calane iti dhātorniṣpannaḥ kapi śabdaḥ; kaṁ pibatīca “kapirbabhasti tejanam” iti ca vaidikaḥ prayogaḥ”

Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar, who belonged to the tradition of Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar, came after these people. He had to interpret this mantra, while writing the commentary for the vedas. If he interprets this kapi as Sun, then it will strengthen the interpretation given by Emperumānār for this word and weaken the path shown by Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar. Hence, he decided to interpret kapi as monkey. So, he interpreted the mantra in accordance with that. Please look at the meaning given by him:

agne - Oh! Agni!

te - your

tanuvai - body (for)

martyaḥ - man

krūraṁ - dreadful act

na cakāra - never did

kapiḥ – this man who makes gestures like a monkey

punaḥ – again

tejanaṁ – so that you will shine more

babhasti – will do

like what?

gauḥ – like a cow

jarāyu iva – just like (to protect the womb), (create) skin cover over the womb!

Friend! Hasn’t Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar given a meaning that does not agree with the shanti homam ritual or that even sounds absurd, overlooking Śrī Bhaṭṭa Bhāskarar’s explanation?

Because of his decision to not giving the meaning ‘sun’ for the word ‘kapiḥ’, he himself says ‘like monkey’; with his restrictive principle, he leaves the important meaning of monkey and instead uses it as āgu peyar – lakṣaṇai (metonymy). This is a defect, right?

Is it necessary to create that defect ignoring that Śrī Bhaṭṭa Bhāskarar has shown a different meaning?

There is an amusing fact here also. When writing commentary for ‘kapiravyayaḥ’ in Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāmam, even Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar, splits it as kapiḥ - avyayaḥ and took ‘kapiḥ’ as the 899th name. He gave ‘sun’ and ‘varāhan’ as two meanings.

For the first meaning, he describes kam - jalam raśmibhiḥ piba - piban kapiḥ - sūryaḥ. So, he does not deny that kapi denotes Sun.

But, when it comes to kapyāsam, he, who is the other form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, somehow interpreted it as meaning ‘monkey’. To add strength to it, the learned Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar who came in his lineage provides cautious commentary for veda. This behooves his svadharma. It may also behoove the followers of Nirviśeṣādvaita to fully accept and praise that comment.

But, when this is the truth, it is not right to say, ‘Svāmi Deśika declared that his friend Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar wrote the meaning for veda with ample proof in order to make it clear for everyone; with that noble thought, he accepted the latter’s commentary that was useful for his yajñā karmānuṣṭhānam and extolled him’.

There is no doubt that the great Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar has written commentary for veda and grouped mīmāmsā logic that were scattered and provided a great help for vaidika-s. But, at the same time, since there are several places where the content is exactly opposite to Emperumānār’s thoughts, Emperumānār’s followers have to be extremely careful when they have to use Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s commentary.

That is why, Śrīmadabhinavadeśika Uttamūr Svāmi blessed us with the following statement – “Do not pay attention to the meaning shown by Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar for the phrase ‘tadātmanneva hṛdaye'gnau vaiśvānare prāsyat’ in second praśnā of kāṭhakam as it is contradicting Emperumānār’s meaning shown in vaiśvānādhikaraṇam.

Uttamūr Svāmi himself published ubhaya vedānta granta mālā in the year 1973 where he wrote about Chāndogya upaniṣad bhāṣya pariṣkāram; his divya sūkti on page 678 is – sāyaṇam(ṇīyam) tu upekṣyam.

Therefore, can we accept the thought that it is vaidikas’ rule that one must not expound the meaning for veda overlooking Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s bhāṣyam?

When the portion on apratiratham in aḍiyġn’s svasti vācana essay was published as a separate book, vidvān-s śāstraratnākaram Brahmaśrī Dr. R Krishnamurti śāstri and sūrādyāyi vedabhāṣyaratna Brahmaśrī V.G. subhrahmanya ghanapāṭhigal, who belonged to Nirviśeṣādvaita sampradāyam and who had a great devotion to Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar, provided a preface; even they did not mention that there is this vaidikas’ rule. If it was true, wouldn’t they have pointed to that?

Gītācāryan magazine editor requested me to write veda anubhava article similar to the one I am writing in śrīraṅganātha pādukā magazine. I am writing meanings for udakashānti mantra-s there. The section covering up to ‘kṛṇuṣva pājaḥ’ was published as a book; enjoying the commentaries related to arcā mūrti-s, Brahmaśrī Raghunathasrautigal who provided the preface, says

pañcamādiṣu mantreṣu bhaṭṭabhāskarasāyanān |

atikramyāpi vaiśatyāt sārāmśas samudāhṛtaḥ ||

The meaning for the above statement is - “In the mantra-s like the 5th, the meanings given here are different from what Śrī Bhaṭṭa Bhāskarar and Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar. But, these meanings depict the essence of the topics with greater clarity and understanding”.

In his preface, catus śāstra vidvān Brahmaśrī Dr. Manidravid shastrigal says, “ācāryā-s who were involved in protecting sampradāyam-s have shown different meanings for the same veda mantra-s. So, there is no place for objecting that the mantra-s describe bhagavadguṇa varṇanam”.

If there is a rule that commentary for veda mantra-s must not be done ignoring Śrī Sāyaṇa bhāṣyam, would they have not indicated that?

Therefore, it is not right to give importance to Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s commentary over and above Emperumānār’s commentary for all the mantra-s.

My friend said, “You have given clear cut response for the following questions:

“1) why did Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar write the commentary without mentioning Tirumalai? But, why did he mention just Puri?

2) is there a restriction that commentary must not be done ignoring Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s bhāṣyam or not?

3) Did Emperumānār support vyākhyānam pointing to divyadesham or not?

4) can we accept Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s bhāṣyam in totality or not?”

When it comes to yajñā, is there any opinion that it must be done as per veda bhāṣyam? You have shown that we should not accept Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar’s veda bhāṣyam in full even in the case of karma kāṇḍam – pitṛmedha praśnam, kāṭhakam etc.

How should we understand the mantra-s when we do yāgam? Please clear that also”.

I said, “For that, we have to understand a very important secret”.

“What is that?” Friend was all ears.

I started talking.

Wait for enjoying that till the next issue arrives!