

Unique work on Thyagaraja

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Sadguru Sri Thyagabrahma Pushpanjali: By Pushpa Srivatsan: Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Rs. 151. All rights reserved by the author.

The book is on Thyagabrahmam with whom the author relates with the attitude of a seeker after Brahman, the absolute Truth; and as such it is for all seekers after Truth irrespective of their choice of personal God. It is rich in Upanishadic content, lofty philosophy, delicate sentiments and tender devotion, thus proving that ultimately a Bhakta is a Jnani. Though for the sake of form, the book is divided into six parts comprising Ashtottarasatanamavali, Trisati, Panchasati, Sahasranamam, Saranagati Gadyam and Mangalashatakam, the undercurrent of Bhava is one continuum — namely the pangs and turmoils of a lonely seeker after Reality. The message of Thyagaraja's songs are dealt with elaborately.

As for the autobiographical note, which runs through the whole composition, though the author seems to have sought oblivion by not using any terms of personal reference, it is obvious that the entire composition is a gush of self experience, as she herself mentions in the preface.

The style in Sanskrit is smooth and easy flowing with built in melody and rhythmic pattern. It is charmingly simple; nevertheless posing the toughest challenge even to a scholar. It is really remarkable that there is not a single repetition in this mammoth creation of which the Namavalis alone are over two thousand. The entire work is refreshingly original and reveals the author's sublime thoughts and feelings.

It can be noted that every 108th nama is given in bold print. Thus Trisati is not just 300 but three 108! Similarly the Panchasati is five Ashtottarasatams, thus making 540 namas; and Sahasranama consists of 10 Ashtottarasatams totalling 1080 namas. Each of these is preceded by a Gayatri which, as the author says, summarises the content of what follows. While the Ashtottarasatanamavali seems to be a general introduction of the ideas that follow, the Trisati starts with the Guru-Sishya Bhava which continues in the Panchasati and culminates in the Sahasranamavali. It is notable that there are three 108's (the 2nd in Trisati and the 2nd and 3rd in Sahasranama) which can verily be called Rama-Ashottarams as "Rama" is embedded in each name. The alphabetical sequence in Panchasati and Sahasranamavali are strikingly different. The speciality in the former is the usage of compound alphabets; that of the latter is the large number of namas under the same alphabet with as many as 60 under 'a', the maximum being 118 in Sa varga.

The Saranagati Gadyam makes one wonder whether it is some unearthed ancient manuscript! As the author herself says at the end of the Gadyam referring to her Guru that no praise is an exaggeration for Him, the same can be said of her Gadyam too.

The Mangalashatakam for the Nadabrahmam fittingly sparkles with the Saptaswara Devatas —

each stanza beginning with a musical note of the octave.

The translations in English and Tamil are again of the highest order in literary style. It is noteworthy that the book is entirely designed by the author from cover to cover, including a beautiful picture of the Saint. Great care has been taken by her to ensure a mistake-free book.

On the whole, this book is a Herculean effort of a very intelligent, learned scholar and a great devotee of Saint Thyagaraja and Lord Rama. This book is a must for all seekers of Truth.

Dr. N. Devanathan