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# Artiharastotram

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## आर्तिहरस्तोत्रम् सार्थ

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### आर्तिहरस्तोत्रम् सार्थं

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Artiharastotram by Shri Shridhara Venkatesa.

This is a short poem consisting of nine verses. Herein the poet prays to Lord Shiva to remove the afflictions of the devotee. He asks if it is alright for the Lord not to respond to his prayers when He is reputed to protect those who even think of Him. Then he says that he is just the opposite of the Lord who is omnipotent and omniscient in that he is a weakling and ignoramus. How is it, he asks, that Lord has not taken pity on him. These verses are very moving in their appeal. The poem is a precious gem and the reader would like to add it to the collection of hymns they recite during their prayer.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

॥ अथ आर्तिहरस्तोत्रम् ॥

श्री शंभो मयि करुणाशिशिरां दृष्टिं दिशन् सुधावृष्टिम् ।  
सन्तापमपाकुुरुमे मन्तापरमेश तव दयायाः स्याम् ॥ १ ॥

अवसीदामि यदार्तिभिरनुगुणमिदमोऽसौलसां षलु मे ।  
तव सन्नवसीदामि यदन्तकशासन नतत्त्वानुगुणम् ॥ २ ॥

द्वेव स्मरति तव येतेषां स्मरतोऽपि नार्तिरिति कीर्तिम् ।  
कलयसि शिव पाडीति कन्दन् सीदाम्यहं डिमुञ्चितमिदम् ॥ ३ ॥

आदृश्याद्यदृत्तौ मामन्तर्यामिन्नसावधात्मेति ।  
आर्तिषु मज्जयसे मां किंभूयां तव कृपैकपात्रमहम् ॥ ४ ॥

मन्दाग्रशीरहं तव मयि करुणां घटयितुं विबोनालम् ।  
आकृष्टं तान्तु बलादलमिह मद्दैन्यमिति समाश्रयसिति ॥ ५ ॥

त्वं सर्वज्ञोऽहं पुनरज्ञोऽनीशोऽहमीश्वरत्वमसि ।

त्वं मयि द्रोषान् गणयसि किं कथये तुष्टति किं दया नत्वाम् ॥ ६ ॥

आश्रितमार्ततरं माम्भुपेक्षसे किमिति शिव न किं दयसे ।

श्रितगोमा दीनार्तिदृष्टिति भवु शंसंति जगति सन्तस्त्वाम् ॥ ७ ॥

प्रहराहरेतिवादी दृष्टितमदाप्य षति पावितो भवता ।

शिव पाडीति वदोऽहं शृत्तो न किं क्वां कथं न पाव्यस्ते ॥ ८ ॥

शरणं प्रज शिवमार्तीस्सतव हरेदिति सतां गिराऽहम् त्वाम् ।

शरणं गतोऽस्मि पालय भलमपि तेष्वीश पक्षपाताभ्याम् ॥ ९ ॥

एति श्री श्रीधरवैकटेशार्यकृतिषु आर्तिहरस्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

अेन्दshlokab

The author of this poem, Shridhara Venkatesa was a great devotee. He took immense delight

in chanting and singing the names of the Lord. One of the traits of a true devotee is his concern for the welfare of other beings. Krishna mentions (दया भूतेषु) compassion to others who are suffering, as one of the noble (दैवी संपत्) qualities that one should acquire to make spiritual progress. Great devotees like Shridhara have their minds firmly fixed in the Lord and so were not unduly worried about themselves. They knew that Lord will take care of their welfare. Thus, having been freed from worries about their own welfare, they show concern about the welfare of other beings.

They are moved by the sufferings and sorrows of others. Shri Shankaracharya points out this

quality of the great people in Vivekachudamani (37). They have themselves obtained God's grace and liberation. They are willing to help others also without any motive whatsoever.

It is in their nature to do good to others. In this they are like the spring season.

भृगेनmedshloka

शान्ता मडान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो वसन्तवल्बोऽहितं यरन्तः ।

तीर्णा स्वयं भीमभवाण्णवं जनान्छेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥

अेन्दshlokab

The poet Shridhara who was a saintly person had done exactly this in this poem.

Another popular verse from the Subhashita in praise of the hearts of good people says this with a nice example. Normally their hearts are compared

to butter since, like the butter they easily melt. But the verse points out that the comparison is not correct. The reason is that the butter melts only when it is exposed to heat. But the hearts of good people melt when they are exposed to other peoples' sufferings. The sanskrit word for heat is tApa तपः and it also means distress.

Thus there is a pun on the word tApa.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

सज्जनस्य हृदयं नवनीतं षति यद्द्रवन्ति क्वयः तद्वलीकम् ।

अन्यदेवविवसद्वृत्तापात् सज्जनो द्रवति नो नवनीतम् ॥

अेन्दश्लोक

Keeping the helplessness of the vast number of people who have chosen to forget the Lord in their concern for their own well being, great saints and acharyas like Shridhara have composed short and long pieces of poems that show us the way to pray and seek His grace. The present piece is one such poem. This is a short poem consisting of nine verses. Herein the poet identifies himself with one such person - a weakling and an ignoramus - and consequently is afflicted with a variety of sorrows and prays to Lord Shiva to remove the afflictions.

आर्तिः means distress , affliction. Four types of people worship Me, says Krishna in Gita (BG-7-16). The first among them and the most common one is the distressed.

यत्तुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन । आर्तो जिज्ञासुरथार्था ज्ञानी च भक्तर्षभ ॥

The Lord welcomes all of them, calls them virtuous, and says He will respond to their prayers.

In this poem Shridhara appeals to the Lord for redressal of his sufferings. These verses are very moving in their appeal. The poem is a precious gem and the readers would like to add it to the collection of hymns they recite during their prayer. The translations given are not exact, but will convey the meaning of the verses. Brief notes have also been provided. Some verses from other great acharyas are also given to show the similarity in their thinking. Happily, some of the names used to address the Lord refer to both Shiva and Vishnu and so one can take the verses as appealing to either or both.

The following abbreviations are used in the notes.

1 - VS - Shri Vishnu Sahasranama with Shri Shankaracharya's commentary.

2 - SS - Shri Shiva Sahasranama (from Padma Purana) known as Vedasara Sahasram with the commentary of HH Shri Paramashivendra Saraswati.

3 - LS - Shri Lalita Sahasranamam with the commentary of Shri Bhaskararaya.

4 - BG - Shrimad Bhagavadgita with Shri Shankaracharya's commentary.

5 - BH - Shrimad Bhagavatam.

6 - AS - Atmarpanastuti by Shri Appayya Dikshitar.

7 - SA - Shiva Ashtottarashata nama stotram with commentary "Shivstattva Rahasyam" by Shri Nilakanta Dikshita.

७५ginmedshloka

॥ अथ आर्तिहरस्तोत्रम् ॥

श्री शंभो मयि करुणाशिशिरां दृष्टिं दिशन् सुधावृष्टिम् ।

सन्तापमपाकुर्तु मे मन्ता परमेश तव दयायाः स्याम् ॥ १ ॥

अेदshlokab

Meaning:- O Lord Shambhu! please cast Your vision that is full of nectar like kindness on me and dispel my suffering.

Then only will I understand the truth about Your kind nature.

Note:- The Lord is addressed as शंभुः - शं सुभं भावयति उत्पाद्यतीति शंभुः ।

शिवंकर-धर्तः । "शिव ऐको ध्येयः शिवंकरः" इति श्रुतेः । SA(3) and VS(38).

"Shambhu" - the name means one who will remove distress and give happiness.

Since the poet says he is distressed and wants relief he addresses the

Lord appropriately as Shambhu. How does one get distress? It is the

consequence of sins committed by one in this or earlier births.

This will be experienced in the form of a variety of sufferings like getting an inferior birth, bad tendencies, sickness, death, being tossed into hell etc.

Devotion to the Lord can make one escape these terrible sufferings. He is known as

७५ginmedshloka

भूरिभारार्तिहर्ता । अधिक असह्यदुःखनिवारकः भूरिभारार्तिहर्ता ।

अविद्यास्मित-रागद्वेषाभिनिवेश-पुण्यापुण्य-मिश्रकर्म

गर्भजन्म-जरा-मरणस्थावर-नारकदुःख-रागद्वेषादिरूप

संसार-मोचकः । इत्कात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपापैः - इति । SS(563).

अेदshlokab

Another of His names says He removes the sorrows of His devotees even when He is just thought of.

शोकनाशनः - स्मृतिमात्रेण भक्तानां शोकं नाशयतीति शोकनाशनः । (VS-632)

Next, the poet describes the eye sight of the Lord. The eyes are cooling, implying they are comforting. Just as the moon light is soothing and brings relief to people who have been scorched by the sun's heat during the day time, the sight of the Lord's eyes brings immense relief to the people who are suffering from a variety of causes. As said earlier the word तपः means both heat and affliction. So, the poet prays to the Lord to dispel his sufferings by casting His eyes on him. Shiva is the repository of mercy, compassion. Shiva's sight is comforting because they are overflowing with compassion. He has many names that allude to His kindness.

Some of them are:- दयाणुः - दयाशीलो दयाणुः । SS (155).

कृपानिधिः - कृपा परदुःखप्रदाणोच्छा, तस्या निधिरित्यनेन सदा वर्तमानत्वमुक्तं भवति ।

तच्छिवस्य श्रुतिप्रसिद्धम् "अर्द्धनिद्रं दयसे विश्वमभ्युवम् ।

न वा ओजुयो रुद्र त्वदस्ति" इति । sa (30).

The Navavarataratnamala mentions that Shiva's eyes are brimming with compassion and as a result are moist. क्विन्नेक्षणमतिकृपया ।

The Lord's vision is also like nectar. The word अमृतं or "Nectar" is used to refer to anything that is extraordinarily lovely or beneficial. Nectar is reputed to be the drink of the gods and it confers on them freedom from sickness and old age. So, it is considered to be great. But it cannot confer immortality. The Gita says that the gods like Indra and Brahma will be reborn and come down to the earth when their quota of merit is expended.

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन । BG(8-16)

But the sight from the Lord is incomparably superior to the nectar.

The Lord is reputed to have most auspicious eyes as they can not only remove sorrows of His devotees, but also confer all that is good including immortality. So He has the name शुभेक्षणः - ईक्षणं दर्शनं यस्य

शुभं शुभकरं, मुमुक्षुणां मोक्षदं, भोगार्थीनां भोगदं,

सर्वसन्देह-विच्छेदकारणं, पापिनां पावनं, लृट्यग्र-व्येर्विच्छेदकरं,

सर्वकर्मणां क्षपणं, अविद्यायाश्च निवर्तकं स शुभेक्षणः । VS(393).

Those eyes can give liberation to those who seek liberation, worldly pleasures to those who seek them, destroy the sins of the sinners, clarify all doubts, remove the knot of ignorance in the mind and dissolve the pile of accumulated karmas. Shri Lalita also has a name that implies this meaning. She is known as भवदावसुधावृष्टिः । भवः

संसार एव दावो वनवह्निः तस्य शामकत्वात्सुधावृष्टिः, पीयूषवर्षमिव । LS(741). She is like a shower of nectar that puts out the forest fire of cyclic existence (i.e) endless cycle of rebirth.

The question that arises now is what should one do to make the Lord look at him? Should one have to try hard and do anything extraordinarily difficult to get His favour? NO. It is very easy to please Him. Krishna has said that He accepts with delight a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water offered by a devotee. BG(9-26).

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

Accordingly Shiva is pleased when He is offered some water or even some grass (like the panic grass considered sacred and fit for offering to deities).

This is implied in His name.

कारुण्यनिधिः - कारुण्यं कृपा अस्मिन्निधीयते इति कारुण्यनिधिः ।

अतिसुलभ-युलुकं जल, दूर्वादि, तृणस्वीकारेण भोग-भोक्षप्रदत्वात् ।

“दलं किञ्चित्समादाय युलुकं जलमेव वा ।

यो दत्ते नियमेनासौ तस्मै दत्ते जगत्त्रयं” - इति ॥

शिवगीतायाम् ॥ “घृणिन् उपर्दिन्” इति श्रुतिः । SS(872).

The devotee Shri Appayya Dikshitar regrets that even after knowing the fact that it is very easy to please the Lord with such simple offerings and get even salvation in return, he failed to worship Him as he was a slave to senses and consequently is hastening towards his downfall.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

अर्क-द्रोण-प्रभृति कुसुमैः अर्थनं ते विधेयं

प्राप्यं तेन स्मरन्तुं हलं भोक्षसाभ्राजयलक्ष्मीः ।

अेतज्जानन्नपि शिव शिव व्यर्थयन्कालमात्मन्

आत्मद्रोडी करणविवशो भूयसाऽधः पतामि ॥ AS(8)

अेन्दshlokab

The poet Shridhara accepts the fact that he had committed many sins in the following verse and totally surrenders to Him saying "I am Yours now."

अेगिनmedshloka

अवसीदामि यदार्तिभिः अनुगुणमिदं ओकसोऽसं भलु मे ।

तव सन्नवसीदामि यदन्तकशासन नैतत्तवानुगुणम् ॥ २ ॥

अेन्दshlokab

Meaning:- O Lord, I am suffering as the consequence of numerous sins committed by me. But, I am yours now. So, if I am suffering in this manner it does not behoove Your greatness.

Note:- It is clear that one should not commit acts of sin. But it is in human nature, an inborn weakness to commit sins.

But we have heard of expiatory rites (known as प्रायश्चित्त कर्माणि).

Can not we resort to them and get rid of our sins? No, say the shastras.

These rites like performing some sacrifices, giving alms and gifts to deserving people, going on pilgrimages etc., are no doubt efficacious and will wipe off the sins. But, they are not comparable to devotion to the Lord in efficiency.

This fact is repeatedly stressed in Shri Bhagavatam.

अेगिनmedshloka

यमादिभिर्योगपथैः कामलोभहतो मुहुः ।

मुकुन्दसेवया यद्वत्तथाऽत्माऽद्धा न शाम्यति ॥ BH(1-6-36)

विधातपः प्राणनिरोधमैत्री तीर्थाभिषेक-व्रतदानजपैः ।

नात्यन्तशुद्धिं लभतेऽन्तरात्मा यथा हृदिस्थे भगवत्यनन्ते ॥ BH(12-3-48).

अेन्दshlokab

These verses say that learning (studying texts), regulation of breath, kindness, pilgrimages, gifts, repetition of mantras - none of these practices can purify the mind (that is smitten by likes, dislikes, anger etc.) so efficiently as the constant remembrance of the Lord. The reason is simple.

These expiatory rites, while they are capable of removing some sins, do not make the mind give up its inherent tendencies (called vAsanA-s).

The senses will continue to exert their pull, and consequently we will,



before long, fall a victim to their wiles. Even wise persons are helpless as the senses are very powerful. Krishna points out this in Gita.(2-60).

यततो ऽपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

धन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

The mind is powerfully influenced by evil tendencies inherited from previous births. So, attempts to restrain or mend its ways will not yield success easily.

सदृशं येष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ BG(3-33).

This is discussed at length in Book six in the story of Ajamila.

The King Parikshit brings up the point giving the example of an elephant.

The elephant goes to a river for a bath. After enjoying a long bath,

it gets out. On going to the bank of the river it will toss

mud all over its body and get dirty again. Similarly, if the the mind is left to itself, it will go in its old ways.

क्वचिन्निवर्ततेऽभद्रात् क्वचिच्चरति तत्पुनः ।

प्रायश्चित्तमतोऽपार्थं मन्ये कुञ्जरसौयवत् । BG(6-1-10)

Then, is there no way to get rid of our sins? The only way is to tie the mind to God by developing devotion to Him. The sage Shuka answers this by narrating the story of Ajamila. A part of the story is a dialogue between the

messengers of the Lord and messengers of Yama. The following verses are from the explanation given by the former about expiatory rites. The

translation given is not exact but gives the meaning of the verses.

नैकान्तिकं तद्धृतेऽपि निष्कृते मनः पुनर्धावति येऽसत्ये ।

तद्धर्मनिर्हारमभीप्सतां हरेर्गुणानुवाहः भ्रु सत्त्वभावनः ॥ BH(6-2-12)

The process of expiation cannot be considered complete if one's mind runs back to its evil ways after it is completed. Because of this reason,

for those who want the eradication of the stock of their sins the uttering of the glory of the Lord is the only remedy since it undoubtedly purifies the mind.

गुडुणं च लघूनां च गुडुणि च लघूनि च ।

प्रायश्चित्तानि पापानां ज्ञात्वोक्तानि मदर्षिभिः ॥ BH(6-2-16)

The great sages have prescribed arduous and easy processes of expiation for the case of serious and small sins.

तैस्ता-न्यधानि पूयन्ते तपोदानजपादिभिः । नाधर्मजं तद्धृद्यं तदपीशाङ्घ्रिसेवया ॥ BH(6-2-17)

The processes of expiation, such as penance, charity and chanting of prayers, do no doubt get rid of the sins. But the vestige in the form of impressions which is traceable to the unrighteous acts remains. These impressions (vAsanA-s वासना) too are eradicated by devotion to the Lord's feet.

The Narayaneeyam states this succinctly as follows. (22-7).

श्रुतिस्मृत्यां विडिता प्रताप्यः पुनन्ति पापं न लुनन्ति वासनाम् ।

अनन्तसेवा तु निवृत्तति द्वयीमिति प्रबो त्वत्पुरुषा बलाधिरे ॥

The austerities like fasting etc., prescribed in the scriptures will destroy sins but not the impressions. But service to the Lord destroys both the sins and impressions.

Because of this fact, saints and acharyas have sought God's mercy to overcome their problems with their minds. The great acharya Shri Vedanta Desika in his Nyasa Dasakam (8) pleads to the Lord and says "You have to forgive my sins and make them inoperative. And also please make sure I do not again indulge in such sinful activities in future. It is possible for You to do this as You are all powerful and known to be the reservoir of mercy."

Thus he shows the way to pray.

त्वद्वेदकक्षस्थ मम त्वमेव करुणाकर । न प्रवर्तय पापानि प्रवृत्तानि निवर्तय ॥

It is because of this fact that Lord is known as Hari - one who removes sins of those who surrender to Him.

हरिः । हरति पापानिति । SA(96) and VS(359) -

स्मृतिमात्रेण पुंसां पापं संसारं वा हरतीति ।

also as पापनाशकरः । लौकिकवैदिक-नामभिः कीर्तितः, तथा लौकिकवैदिकैः स्तोत्रैस्तुतः

तथा पञ्चाक्षरादिभिः जमः पूजितश्च उमासहायत्वादिरूपेण स्मृतो ध्यानेन वा

पापनाशकरः । SS(355). Whether His names are uttered or praised by hymns

or remembered by chanting mantras like the panchAkShara or worshipped or

meditated upon He removes the sins. तवास्मि "I am yours now" These words should at once bring to our mind the famous assurance of the Lord, in His incarnation as Rama, given when Vibhishana surrendered to Him. Rama proclaimed (Yuddha Kanda- 18-33):

सङ्कटेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति य याचते । अत्रयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥

"I assure security from all beings to him who comes to me once and asks for

protection saying “I am yours. This is my vow.”

Shri Appayya Dikshita also says “I am no doubt a sinner, easily yielding to sense pleasures, always transgressing the scriptural injunctions, petty minded, not having even a trace of merit and so on. But now I have surrendered at Your feet. It is not proper on Your part to ignore me now.”

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

पापिष्ठोऽलं विषयचपलः सन्ततद्रोहशाली

कार्पाण्यैकस्थिरनिवसतिः पुण्यगन्धानभिज्ञः ।

यद्यद्यैवं तदपि शरणं त्वत्पदाब्जं प्रपन्नं

नैनं दीनं स्मरन् तवोपेक्षितुं नाथ युक्तम् ॥ AS(28).

अेन्दश्लोक

Why does the poet say that his suffering does not behoove Shiva’s greatness?

Shiva is addressed here by Shridhara as अन्तकशासनः । one who controls

Yama - the god of death. This implies that by getting His grace and protection one can escape even death as the sage Markandeya did. The fear of death is the worst suffering any living being can experience. But Yama himself is afraid of Lord Shiva. So Shiva has the names kAlakAla and Mrityunjaya.

कालकालः । कालयति नाशयतीति व्युत्पत्त्या कालो यमः, तस्यापि कालः,

कालयिता उपसंहरकः इति । SA (29).

and मृत्युंजयः । मृत्युः मरणं स्वभक्तानां मृत्युं जयति

स्वोपासनया परिहरतीति मृत्युंजयः ।

“अंबकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।

उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्” । इति

“यस्मिन् युक्ता ऋषयो देवताश्च, तमेव ज्ञात्वा

मृत्युपाशाञ्छिनत्ति” इति श्रुतेश्च । SA (71) and SS(123).

Yama being the destroyer of everything is known as kAla. Even Yama is destroyed by Him and so Shiva is known as kAlakAla.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

देव स्मरति तव ये तेषां स्मरतोऽपि नार्तिरिति कीर्तिम् ।

कलयसि शिव पाडीति कन्दन् सीदाम्यलं किमुचितमिदम् ॥ 3 ॥

अेन्दश्लोक

Meaning:- O Lord, I have heard that those who think of You do not get exposed

to suffering. I am crying “Shiva! save me, and still continue to suffer.

Is this proper?

Note:- As said earlier, Shiva has the name Hari. The name means that he removes the sins of even those whose hearts are loaded with evil tendencies.

उरिः । “उरिर्हरति पापानि दृष्टयितैरपि स्मृतः” इति ।

SS(542). Thus the author should not have been exposed to suffering.

How to express the fact that “I have surrendered to You and am yours now?”

This is answered by saying that I am crying and saying “Shiva, save me.

Keeping this idea in the mind, we have the habit of saying the following verse at the end of our daily puja or prayer

अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति त्वमेव शरणं मम ।

तस्मात् कारुण्यभावेन रक्ष रक्ष महेश्वर ॥

‘O Lord, Maheshvara! I have no recourse other than You.

So, out of mercy, please protect me.’

ॐginmedshloka

आदिश्याधकृतौ मामन्तर्यामिन्नसावधान्मेति ।

आर्तिषुमज्जयसे मां किंब्रूयां तवकृपैकपात्रमहम् ॥ ४ ॥

अेन्दshlokab

Meaning:- You are my inner Self. This being so, it is clear that it is by Your inducement only I committed various sins and as the result am now suffering.

What can I say in this matter? I deserve to be the recipient of Your grace.

Note:- An important qualification of one who claims to be the Lord’s devotee is to desist from acts prohibited in the scriptures as wrong and sinful.

The scriptures were given out by the Lord Himself. So, violating the scriptural injunctions amounts to disobeying His orders and as a result become a serious offence. This being so, how can one say ‘I am a sinner’ and claim to be a devotee and have surrendered to Him? The author puts forth a specious explanation to justify his sins of omission and commission. We too would have heard the same statements from some people. They say that God is behind every act and thought of ours. The upanishads and Gita too have some statements that seem to support this view. For example, Krishna said that different kinds of dispositions of beings, such as intelligence, wisdom,

non-illusion, patience, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, security, innocence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, beneficence, fame, shame all arise from Him, the Lord alone. (BG 10-4,5).

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।

सुप्तं दृढं भवोऽभावात् भयं चाभयमेव च ॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।

भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ।

ऐन्दश्लोक

This being so, should not He be held responsible for whatever good or evil one does? The answer is that no doubt He is the cause behind all our mental dispositions. But He is the general cause, or the सामान्य कारणम् । but our own deeds are responsible for our individual dispositions. An analogy will make it easier to understand. People plant different kinds of seeds on the earth. The earth supports all of them and they grow. But only a coconut tree comes out of a coconut seed, a mango tree out of a mango seed and so on. Thus, the earth is the general cause and the respective seeds are the special cause, or the विशेष कारणम् । In the same way, The Lord is the general cause, supporting all dispositions and our own deeds or karmas are the special cause. So, it is said that बुद्धिः कर्मानुसारिणी । or one's thinking is shaped by his deeds. God is behind the power to think, but responsibility to use the power properly and take the right decisions rests with the individual eventually. We may think of another example - a car. The car in the hands of a careful driver can take the passengers safely to places they want to reach. But the same car in the hands of a rash and negligent driver will become a vehicle of accident or even death. We cannot hold the car responsible for the accident. It just provides the motive power.

The result, a safe journey or an accident is in the hands of the driver. God has given us intelligence. We have to use it to travel in the right path shown by the scriptures. Because of this reason, the intellect is often compared to a driver. बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि says the Kathopanishad. (1-3-3)

The author of the popular hymn Sharada Bhujangam presents this situation from another angle, that is interesting to read. He is addressing Sharada Devi.

He says that, if She does not come to his rescue and relieve the distress in his heart, then She too will suffer since She is present in his heart, as in the hearts of all beings!

यदि त्वं मदीयं शुच्यं नापनुद्याः तदा दुःखवह्निप्रतप्तेऽन्तरङ्गे ।

मदीये स्थितायास्तवाप्यंभ जेदौ भवश्रेदित्युदं चिन्तयाऽऽर्तोऽस्मि भूयः ॥

भृङ्गिनmedshloka

मन्दाग्रणीरुदं तव मयि करुणां घटयितुं विभो नालम् ।

आकृष्टं तां तु बलात् अलमिदं मद्दैन्यमिति समाश्रसिमि ॥ ५ ॥

श्रेण्डshlokab

Meaning:- I am a dullard, and the foremost one at that. I have not known how to be worthy of Your grace and hence took the wrong path. I am just a wretched person. You should thrust Your grace on me and save me.

Note:- After putting forth the plausible argument, the author immediately feels remorseful and prays to the Lord to save him.

Why should the poet call himself a dull witted person?

The word “dullard” or मन्ः has a special meaning in the

vedantic parlance. It is used to refer to one who lacks discrimination and does not have the wisdom to make the right choice when several options are open to him. For example, when a child is asked to choose between a big colorful baloon and a hundred rupees note, it will go for the baloon only. This is because the baloon appears colorful and it can derive joy by playing with the baloon. The child, being immature cannot understand the value of the currency note. Similarly, our scriptures present two options to us. One is the path that provides for material benefits that can provide worldly enjoyment. The other is the path that shows the way to benediction or blessedness that can give lasting happiness. But the latter being not visible and immediately available, most opt for the first path that seems to give happiness here while living.

The scriptures say that such people are immature and lack deep wisdom. This is because the happiness one can get in this world is short lived. They will come to an end some day. And they are not unmixed with sorrow. So, they cannot be

termed as real joy. Whereas the path that leads to God assures lasting peace and happiness though the results may not be evident here and now. Because of these reasons people who have not studied the scriptures deeply and lack full faith in what they say, stay away from the superior path shown by them. Yama, the god of death, says this to his student Nachiketas in Kathopanishad. (1-2-2).

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेतस्तौ संपरीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।

श्रेयो छि धीरोऽभि प्रेयसो वृणीते प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमात् वृणीते ॥

How do such “dull witted” people spend their time? Shri Bhagavata says that they slog in pursuit of wealth, security etc. But these things so earned cannot assure happiness or security. So, the text terms the effort spent in search of money and such material gains as “frivolous pursuits” and calls these people as “unfortunate ones.” They work hard during the day and by the end of the day they are totally exhausted. So, they drop off to sleep. Thus their lives are frittered away in sleep by night and in frivolous pursuits by day. They miss the very goal of life. BH(1-16-9)

मन्दस्य मन्दप्रज्ञस्य वयो मन्दायुषस्य च ।

निद्रया ढ्रियते नक्तं दिवा च व्यर्थकर्मभिः ।

God is the power behind the mind as said earlier. But He had also given us scriptures to guide our conduct. They clearly state what constitutes the right deed and what acts are prohibited and so to be given up. One who wants to grow spiritually and seek the Lord’s grace should use his discretion and take the right path. Krishna says this to Arjuna and points out that if one still takes to neglect the scriptural injunctions under the impulse of desire or greed he will not attain happiness in this world nor the higher worlds. BG-(16-23,24).

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः । न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणां ते कार्याकार्य-व्यवस्थितौ । ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिच्छसि ॥

The sages have also said this in their Smriti texts. Sage Yagnavalkya had said in his work thus -

विहितस्थाननुष्ठानात् निन्दितस्य च सेवनात् । अनिग्रहाद्येन्द्रियाणां नरः पतनमृच्छति ॥

By failing to do the prescribed duties,

by doing deeds that are prohibited by the scriptures and by not having control

over the senses one seeks his fall. Keeping this in mind, Shri Vedanta Desika admits his failings and prays to the Lord. (Nyasa Dasakam. 9). He says -  
 अकृत्यानां च करणं कृत्यानां वर्जनं च मे । क्षमस्व निष्किलं देव प्रशुतार्तिहर प्रभो ॥  
 You, the Lord known to be the one who removes the sufferings of the devotees who surrender to You, have to pardon me for committing the acts prohibited by the scriptures and failure to perform those acts that are prescribed by the scriptures. Shri Appayya Dikshitar also appeals to the Lord to excuse his transgressions that he had made knowingly. He is going about without shame or fear of the consequences of such transgressions. And he says he had done so in his previous births also. He wonders how he can get away from his innumerable problems without Lord's grace.(AS-11).

ॐगिनमेश्लोका

उल्लङ्घ्याङ्गामुपतिकलायूढ ते विश्ववन्ध  
 त्यक्ताथारः पशुवद्धुना मुक्तलज्जश्चरामि ।  
 अवेवं नानाविधभवततिप्राप्तदीर्घापरिधः  
 क्लेशांभोधि कथमडमृते त्वत्प्रसादात्तरेयम् ॥

अेन्दश्लोक

Mind is known as one of the organs like the eyes and ears. The word mind is used to refer to the intellect, memory and the capacity to recollect also according to the context. Only, it being invisible is called an inner organ and it leads the external organs to act according to its dictates. Because our mind is scattered in many directions due to our attachments and vicissitudes in our lives it is restless. It is difficult to control and focus it on a specific object like God. Even the great warrior Arjuna had accepted this fact and said that the mind is indeed restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate. Therefore it is virtually impossible to restrain it. It is as difficult as restraining the wind.

ॐगिनमेश्लोका

यञ्चलं छि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।  
 तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोश्चि सुदुष्करम् ॥ BG (6-34).

अेन्दश्लोक

A question may arise at this point that if the mind is so difficult to control,



but is fickle and insubordinate why have we been provided with such an instrument?

The reason is that, though the mind may be turbulent and difficult to control, it is a powerful instrument given to us. The minds of the animals have vastly reduced capacity compared to our minds. They are controlled by instincts and have no free will. The animal birth is meant solely to expiate for the sins committed in the previous births. In such a birth one cannot do acts, like going to the temples and offering prayers to the Lord, that will improve its quality of life in the ensuing births. On the other hand, we can do all of them. Using the free will we may discard courses that are not beneficial to us and choose the path that appears right to us. Thus, God has blessed us with a powerful organ with which we can achieve great goals. The greatest goal, said in our scriptures is mokSha or liberation from cyclic existence.

This can be attained by humans only. To help us to achieve this objective, the kindly God has also given us scriptures which talk in detail about the way to attain the goal. Since all of us cannot be expected to read and understand the texts, He has also sent us great saints who are willing to guide us.

We are only required to heed their advice, get hold of the mind and channelise it towards God. It is admittedly a difficult task. The task is comparable to capturing a wild elephant and taming it. The elephant is a very strong animal. But, once it is tamed, it can be trained to do very difficult jobs.

Our mind is like the wild elephant - difficult to train. If we try hard and tame it and train it to do our bidding it can lead us to liberation itself.

So the upanishad says:

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।  
बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्तं निर्विषयं स्मृतम् ॥

Mind is the cause for both bondage and liberation. Attached to the objects it becomes the cause for bondage. Freed of attachments it becomes source of freedom. It is in our power to realise the wrong deeds we commit. We have to stay away from such acts in future.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

त्वं सर्वज्ञोऽहं पुनरज्ञोऽनीशोऽहमीश्वरत्वमसि ।

त्वं मयि द्रोघान् गाणयसि किं कथये तुष्टति किं दया नत्वाम् ॥ ६ ॥

ऐन्दश्लोक

Meaning:- I confess I am an ignoramus and a weakling. In contrast, You are omniscient and omnipotent. Because of Your omniscience You are aware of my faults.

What shall I say? Does not Your compassion prod You to overlook my faults?

Note:- By saying that he is ignoramus, the author implies that the teachings of the holy texts have not fully sunk in his mind. As a result his mind still lacks total faith in the teachings of the sacred books and saints. It is wavering and has many doubts. Such people will encounter difficulty in the path of spiritual progress. Krishna says this. BG(4-40).

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥

By saying he is a weakling the poet is referring not to physical weakness but to that of the mind. A weak mind is not settled in a particular pursuit but goes after many objects. It had been doing so not only in this birth but in the innumerable births we had prior to this present birth also. It is not used to being controlled. When the mind is not under control, it is easily swayed by emotions like desire or anger. One whose mind is thus out of control cannot be expected to have discrimination and judgement. Krishna said:

छन्द्रीयाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायु-र्नावमिवांसि ॥ BG (2-67)

The upanishads state this clearly. They say that the supreme Being cannot be obtained by one without strength of mind. He should have his goal clearly in mind and work for it with determination.

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः । MU (3-2-4) and again in Kathopanishad (1-3-24).

Yama says that the Supreme Being is not obtained by one who has not abandoned evil conduct, whose is not calm, who has not subdued his senses and mind, though the person be endowed with sharp intellect.

नाविरतो दृश्वरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः । नाशान्तमनसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैवमाप्नुयात् ॥

So, it is very necessary to get control over it and turn it to the other direction, namely the spiritual path.

The poet said that his mind is still not fully established in the Lord's feet.

So he still has a long way to travel before he can call himself a devotee. We should remember here that the author Shridhara is saying this as our representative.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

आश्रितमार्ततरं मामुपेक्षसे किमिति शिव न किं दयसे ।

श्रितगोमा दीनार्तिहृदिति भलु शंसति जगति सन्तस्त्वाम् ॥ ७ ॥

ऐन्दश्लोक

Meaning:- I depend on You. Still why do You ignore me? Cannot You show some mercy towards me? The saintly people say that You take care of those who depend upon You and remove the distress of those who are destitute and helpless.

Note:- God had assured this in Gita. (9-22).

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

Shri Shankaracharya puts this idea in a very nice way in his Shivanandalahari (14).

He says that he is the foremost among the weak and destitute. And Shiva is renowned to be the protector of the weak and destitute. Thus there exists a unique relationship between them. Because of this reason, his protection is the responsibility of Shiva. HE has to overlook all his weaknesses and faults and save him.

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

प्रभु-स्त्वं दीनानां भलु परमबन्धुः पशुपते

प्रभुभ्योऽहं तेषामपि किमुत बन्धुत्वमनयोः ।

त्वयैव क्षन्तव्या शिव मद्यपराधाश्च सकलाः

प्रयत्नात्कर्तव्यं मद्यवनमियं बन्धुशरणिः ॥

ऐन्दश्लोक

भृङ्गिनमदश्लोका

प्रहराहरेति वादी कृषित-मद्याप्य षति पावितो भवता ।

शिव पाडीति वदोऽहं शर्तुतो न किं त्वां कथं न पात्यस्ते ॥ ८ ॥

ऐन्दश्लोक

Meaning:- I have heard a story that You blessed a dacoit leader because he was unwittingly repeating Your name “Hara” whenever he said prahara प्रहर to mean “beat him up, and Ahara आहार

to mean “kill him. I am wittingly uttering Your name “Shiva” and saying “save me. Am I not dependant on You? Do I not deserve to be protected by You?

Note:- Even when uttered casually or unwittingly, the Lord’s names purify.

They are so powerful. This is said in Shivagita. This says that even if one utters His name as an exclamation in surprise, or in fear or distress like hunger, he is purified and gets the highest goal.

आश्चर्ये वा भये शोके क्षुते वा मम नाम यः ।

व्याजेन वा स्मरेद्यस्तु स याति परमां गतिम् ॥

A similar statement is seen in Shri Bhagavatam also.

सङ्कित्यं पारिडास्यं वा स्तोत्रं लेलनमेव वा ।

वैकुण्ठ-नाम-त्रयं अशेषाद्यदरं विदुः ॥

Lord's names uttered as a gesture or in joke or in the midst of a song or even out of disrespect washes away all sins.

यथागदं वीर्यतममुच्युक्तं यदृच्छया ।

अज्ञानतोऽप्यात्मगुणं कुर्यान्मन्त्रोऽप्युद्वृतः ॥ BH(6-2-14,19)

Just as a potent medicine will certainly produce its salutary effect even when taken by one who is unaware of its efficiency, though by chance, so does the Lord's name reveal its efficacy even when it is uttered by someone without being aware of its power. DakShayani put this forcefully to her father DakSha when he insulted Shiva in a sacrifice conducted by him. He did not invite Shiva and His wife DakShayani. Her father added insult to the injury by not making any offering to Shiva, her husband. She was greatly outraged by all this and in her reply said the two letters (शिव) SIVA uttered by one even casually in the course of a conversation will remove the sins quickly.

यद् द्रयक्षरं नाम गिरेरितं नृणां सङ्कृत्-प्रसङ्गाद्यमासु उन्ति तत् ।

पवित्रकीर्तिं तमलङ्घ्यशासनं भवानहो द्वेष्टि शिवं शिवेततः ॥ BH(4-4-14).

बृहिनmedshloka

शरणं प्रज शिवं आर्तिं स तव हरेदिति सतां गिराऽहम् त्वाम् ।

शरणं गतोऽस्मि पालय भलमपि तेष्वीश पक्षपातान्माम् ॥ ८ ॥

अेन्दshlokab

Meaning:- I have heard noble people say "surrender to Shiva. He will remove your distress. Having faith in those words I surrender to You. I admit I am a mean person. Will not You save me atleast to make their statement true?"

Note:- Surrender to the Lord is the only way for one who wants to walk the

new way of life that will free one from sorrows. In particular this is suited to one who does not have great deal of scholarship and had not lead a disciplined life. The poet says this in Sharada bhujanga stotram thus.

न मन्त्रं न यन्त्रं न वा स्तोत्ररीतिं विज्ञानेऽम्ब वक्तुं य मद्गुणरीतिम् ।  
त्वदङ्घ्रिप्रणमो न पात्रं शुभ्यः स्यादिति त्वां प्रपद्ये तवैव प्रसादात् ॥

He says “I do not know mantram, tantram, the manner of praising You and not even how to express my distress. One who prostrates at Your feet will not suffer any more. Knowing this I surrender to You by Your grace only.

Krishna says that even if a person had lived an evil life, but had decided to turn a new leaf and worships Him, the Lord considers such a person to be a righteous one and saves him. BG(9-30,31).

५५eginmedshloka

अपि येत्सुदुराचारी भजते मामनन्यभाङ् ।  
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।  
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

५६endshloka

Krishna assures that one who turns to Him and becomes devoted to Him will not perish. In a similar situation, Shri Vedanta Desika surrenders to the Lord accepting his weaknesses.

५५eginmedshloka

अज्ञानवारिधि-मपायधुर-धरं मां  
आज्ञाविभञ्जन-मङ्कित्यनसार्वभौमम् ।

विन्दन् भवान् विबुधनाथ समस्तवेदी

हिं नाम पात्रमपरं मनुते कृपायाः ॥ Devanayaka Panchashat.(49).

५६endshloka

The poet says “O Lord! You are omniscient. I am an ocean of ignorance. I am the first among sinners. I have broken all Your mandates regarding the Do’s and Dont’s. I have no virtue to claim or take to the path of devotion or surrender. Thus I am the most indigent person. Thus I am the one who needs Your mercy most. Why then are You looking for another person to

show Your mercy? It is seen that in these verses the poet repeatedly says he is a weakling, sinner etc. Obviously such statements do not sound nice. They sound like cringing and whining. Should one keep on making such statements before God who is said to be kind and merciful? All of us do make mistakes. Sometimes such mistakes are made knowingly and often unknowingly also. But no one likes to think of them, not to speak of admitting them before someone else. It is not in one's nature to confess one's serious sins to another person. Our ego stands in the way of doing so. In the normal case any person has no means of knowing other person's mistakes unless he witnesses the act. A criminal has to confess his crimes to a judge when confronted with strong evidences. If he denies the charges or tries to evade them by telling lies etc., he will get into more trouble. On the other hand if he confesses and pleads for mercy explaining he was forced to commit the crime under force of circumstances, the judge may consider his case with sympathy. He may let the offender off with the minimum penalty. But in our case, many of our sins might have been committed in privacy with no one seeing them. Sins are committed not only by way of bodily actions but by words and thoughts also. The question, then, is why not keep quiet without talking about them? The answer is that we may be able to hide our mistakes from other people, but not from God who sees all and knows all, including our innermost thoughts. Aptly He is known as the Great Witness or sAkShI.

साक्षी - साक्षादव्यवधानेन स्वरूपबोधेन ऽक्षते पश्यति सर्वमिति साक्षी । VS(15).

So, there is no question of hiding anything from Him. But, if we are devoted to Him and sincerely repent our past mistakes He may take a lenient view and rid us of the sins that pollute our minds. Krishna tells that just as the blazing fire burns the faggots put into it to ashes quickly, devotion to Him destroys the sins of a devotee. BH(11-14-19).

यथाग्निः सुसमृद्धारिः करोत्यैधांसि भस्मसात् ।

तथा मद्भिषया भक्तिः उद्धवैनांसि कृत्स्नशः ॥

Because of this reason God gets the name

पापनाशनः - कीर्तितः पूजितो ध्यातः स्मृतः पापराशिं

नाशयन् पापनाशनः । VS(992). Whether by chanting of His names, or worshipped or meditated upon He destroys the heaps of sins of His devotee.

And also

पवित्रः - पावनः परमस्तु पुमान् ध्यातो दृष्टः कीर्तितः

श्रुतः पूजितः स्मृतः प्रशतः स सर्वान् पापान् उन्मूलयतीति ॥

पुष्करमंडं पवित्रमड मिति श्रुतिः ॥ SS(90).

Fully knowing this, great devotees have repeatedly prayed to Lord to forgive their sins. They say that they have been unable to resist the pull of senses and fallen a prey to petty desires, anger, lust, greed etc., and have committed many mistakes. They have now realised that they cannot win over these powerful enemies with their volition and have come to the Lord as the final recourse. So, it is now incumbent on Him to rescue them who are now full of repentance.

एति श्री श्रीधरवैकटेशार्यकृतिषु आर्तिहरस्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

### Artiharastotra

O Lord Shambhu! please cast Your vision that is full of nectar like kindness on me and dispel my suffering. Then only will I understand the truth about Your kind nature. 1

O Lord, I am suffering as the consequence of numerous sins committed by me. But, I am yours now. So, if I am suffering in this manner it does not behoove Your greatness. 2

O Lord, I have heard that those who think of You do not get exposed to suffering. I am crying “Shiva! save me, and still continue to suffer. Is this proper? 3

You are my inner Self. This being so, it is clear that it is by Your inducement only I committed various sins and as the result am now suffering. What can I say in this matter? I deserve to be the recipient of Your grace. 4

I am a dullard, and the foremost one at that. I have not known how to be worthy of Your grace and hence took the wrong path. I am just

a wretched person. You should thrust Your grace on me and save me. 5

I confess I am an ignoramus and a weakling. In contrast, You are omniscient and omnipotent. Because of Your omniscience You are aware of my faults. What shall I say? Does not Your compassion prod You to overlook my faults? 6

I depend on You. Still why do You ignore me? Cannot You show some mercy towards me? The saintly people say that You take care of those who depend upon You and remove the distress of those who are destitute and helpless. 7

I have heard a story that You blessed a dacoit leader because he was unwittingly repeating Your name “Hara” whenever he said prahara to mean “beat him up, and Ahara to mean “kill him. I am unwittingly uttering Your name “Shiva” and saying “save me. Am I not dependant on You? Do I not deserve to be protected by You? 8

I have heard noble people say “surrender to Shiva. He will remove your distress. Having faith in those words I surrender to You.

I admit I am a mean person. Will not You save me atleast to make their statement true? 9

Thus ends the Artiharastotram composed by Shridhara Venkatesha.

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## LIFE OF SRIDHARA VENKATESA

श्रीकण्ठमिव भास्वन्तं शिवनामपरायणम् ।

श्रीधरं वेङ्कटेशार्यं श्रेयसे गुरुमाश्रये ॥

Shridhara Venkatesa lived about 300 years ago in

Tiruvisanallur, a village in Tanjavur district in Tamilnadu. He was called

Tiruvisanallur Ayyaval (deeply respected person) out of great respect

people held for him. Even today he is known by that name only. He was

the son of Lingayaryar who was a minister to the Maharaja of Mysore. Even

as a young boy Ayyaval was deeply religious and in particular had great




devotion to Shiva but he made no distinction between Shiva and Vishnu. He studied Vedas, shastras and puranas and had a great desire to travel and spread the message of the puranas and in particular the glory of Lord's name among the people. After his father's death the Maharaja wanted him to take his father's job but he politely declined and left Mysore state with his wife and mother. He came to Tiruchirapalli in Tamilnadu and stayed for some time giving talks. He was supposed to have brought back to life a woman who had died by praying to the Lord. This attracted people who wanted him to solve their problems. Ayyaval did not like this and left the place. He proceeded to Tanjavur. It seems that King Shahaji (1684-1710.AD) who was ruling at that time in Tanjavur wanted him to stay in Tanjavur but Ayyaval wanted to lead a quiet life. King Shahaji was inviting scholarly brahmins to stay in his kingdom. He renamed the village Tiruvisanallur as Shahajirajapuram. One street was allotted for their stay. Ayyaval also stayed in a house there. Ayyaval was a proponent of the view that in this dark kali age chanting the lord's name will ward off its evil effects. He was the senior contemporary of Bodhendra Swami who was the 59th pontiff of the Shankara Math at Kanchipuram and who was an ardent advocate of the glory of the lord's name. Ayyaval wrote a book भगवन्नामभूषणम् (Bhagavannamabhusanam) on the subject which is sadly not available now. Bodhendra Swami had also written a book नामामृतसायनम् (Namamritarasayanam) on the subject wherein he had made references to the work of Ayyaval. Once Ayyaval had to perform a shrAddha ceremony in his house. Therein food is prepared and offered to the departed forefathers who are invoked in three brahmins invited for the occasion. When every thing was getting ready Ayyaval saw an outcaste with his family in a famished condition begging for food. His heart melted with compassion at their condition. Without any hesitation he offered them the food that was being prepared for the ceremony. He then had the house washed and prepared to conduct the ceremony again. But the brahmins in the village considered this act reprehensible and refused to conduct the ceremony again. Ayyaval pleaded

with them quoting texts from the scriptures to support his action but the Brahmins were not convinced. He asked them what he should do to remedy the situation. They said that the only atonement was having a bath in the Ganges. But there was no time to go to Varanasi and return. So he prayed to Lord Shiva ( in Gangashtakam) to release the waters of Ganga from His matted hair as he did on an earlier occasion for Bhagiratha. Water started flowing out of the well in his house and flooded the streets of the village. The villagers got scared and prayed to Ayyaval to forgive them and stop the flood that was threatening the village. He accordingly prayed again to stop the flooding and requested her to appear in the well every year on that day. Even now people flock to that place every year on that day and take bath in the waters of the well in the belief that Ganga is present in the well on that day. Ayyaval had composed a number of works some of which are not yet been printed and some not available. Some of his works are listed below. (1) Bhagavannama Bhushanam. (2) Akhyashashti. (3) Daya satakam. (4) Matrubhutasatakam. (5) Stuti paddhati. (6) Shivabhakthikalpalata. (7) Shivabhakta lakshanam. (8) Taravali stotram. (9) Artihara stotram. (10) Kuliresvarashtakam. (11) Jambhunathashtakam. (12) Doshapariharashtakam. (13) Krishnadwadasha manjari. (14) Achyutashtakam. (15) Dola navarathnamala. (16) Padamanimanjari - a sanskrit dictionary. (17) Shahajiraja charitam.


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