
Kumara Upanishad

ಕುಮಾರೋಪನಿಷದ್

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Translation and commentary by P.R.Kannan

In Skanda Puranam, in Sambhava Kandam, Sri Parameswara explains to Sri Parvati the significance of various names of their child Subrahmanya. While describing him as Kumara, he says:

ಏಷೋಪಹತಪಾಪಾಹಿ ವಿರಜಾಮೃತ್ಯುವರ್ಜಿತಃ .

ವಿಶೋಕೋ ವಿಚಿಕಿತ್ಸಶ್ಚ ವಿಪಿಪಾಸುಃ ಕುಮಾರಕಃ . (35.16)

ಸತ್ಯಕಾಮಸ್ತಥಾಸತ್ಯಸಂಕಲ್ಪೋಽಯಂ ಮಹೇಶ್ವರೀ .

ಋತಂ ಚ ಸತ್ಯಂ ಪುರುಷೋ ವಿಶ್ವೋ ವಿಶ್ವಾಧಿಕಶ್ಚ ಸಃ .. (35.17)

“O Maheswari, this Kumara is sinless, free from Rajoguna, indestructible, free from grief, is the medicine for the malady of Samsara, is free from thirst, desirous of truth, who wills truth, embodiment of truth in thought, truth in word, who is the created world incarnate, and who is beyond the created world.”

Kumara Upanishad mantras, brimming with the Ultimate Gnana bestowed by Kumara, are used as Namaskara mantras in the Subrahmanya temple in Tiruchendur in Tamil Nadu. Devotees prostrate near the flagstaff every morning with chant of each mantra.

ಅಥ ಕುಮಾರೋಪನಿಷದ್ .

.. ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀಗಣೇಶಾಯ ನಮಃ ..

ಅಂಭೋಧಿಮಧ್ಯೇ ರವಿಕೋಟ್ಯನೇಕಪ್ರಭಾಂ ದದಾತ್ಯಾಶ್ರಿತಜೀವಮಧ್ಯೇ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 1..

In these verses, the second line is repeated. It means, “Om, Hamsa, prostrations to that Kumara”. Hamsa or swan refers here to Paramatma. Just as Hamsa has the rare capacity to separate milk from water with which it remained mixed, Paramatma or Gnani is all of Satva with no trace of Rajas or Tamas; Rajas or Tamas does not stick to him.

Kumara grants to Jivas, who completely surrender to him, and who are in the midst of the ocean (of Samsara), the splendour of many crores of Suryas.

He drives away the darkness of ignorance and attachment by his resplendent glow of Gnana.

“Ambhodhimadhye” can also be taken to mean Kumara in his abode in Tiruchendur in Tamil Nadu on seashore.

ವಿರಾಜಯೋಗಸ್ಯ ಫಲೇನ ಸಾಕ್ಷ್ಯಂ ದದಾತಿ ನಮಃ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ತಸ್ಮೈ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 2..

Kumara grants the fruit of the most brilliant Yoga and thus vindicates his presence. Here by Virajayoga is meant the union of Jivatma with Paramatma.

The sight of his devotees attaining Moksha is proof of his presence and blessing.

ಯೋಽತೀತಕಾಲೇ ಸ್ವಮತಾತ್ ಗೃಹೀತ್ವಾ ಶ್ರುತಿಂ ಕರೋತ್ಯನ್ಯಜೀವಾನ್ ಸ್ವಕಾಲೇ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 3..

Kumara on his own in the past pulled Jivas away from their instinctive ignorant state, and in due time, he initiates them into Gnana (after preparing them gradually on the path of Bhakti and Gnana).

Kumara's blessing commences with his pulling the Jivas from lower births like birds and animals, and granting them human birth, which alone can give them access to Gnana and Moksha.

ಯಸ್ಯಾಂಶ್ಚ ಜೀವೇನ ಸಂಪ್ರಾಪ್ನುವಂತಿ ದ್ವಿಭಾಗಜೀವಾಶ್ಚ ಸಮೈಕಕಾಲೇ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 4..

Jivas, who reside with Brahma in Satyaloka during the lifespan period of two Parardhas of Brahma, attain to Kumara at the same time at the time of the Great Dissolution (Maha Pralaya).

Jivas, who have attained Atmagnana, spend their time in austerity in Satyaloka during the period of two Parardhas (which is the lifespan of Brahma), and attain to Moksha along with Brahma at the time of Pralaya. Such Jivas are also 'Dvibhagajivas' in another sense; they live in two worlds, as Jiva attached to the world and as speck of Paramatma in the glory of Atman, till they attain Self-realisation.

ಪ್ರಚೋದಯಾನ್ನಾದ ಹೃದಿಸ್ಥಿತೇನ ಮಂತ್ರಾಣ್ಯಜೀವಂ ಪ್ರಕಟೀಕರೋತಿ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 5..

Kumara, through the act of enabling the expression of Nada (subtle sound) present in the heart of the Jiva, brings forth mantras to the knowledge of the Jiva.

ಬಾಂಧವ್ಯಕಲ್ಲೋಲ ಹೃದ್ವಾರಿ ದೂರೇ ವಿಮಾನಮಾರ್ಗಸ್ಯ ಚ ಯಃ ಕರೋತಿ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 6..

The Jiva's heart is constantly battered by the manifold relationships in the world; with development of due maturity, Kumara shows the Jiva the path of the Vimana (aircraft) at a distance.

Till Gnana is attained, the path of the Vimana taking the Jiva to Kumara appears distant. With his grace, it comes nearer. Vimana means the vehicle to higher realm, i.e. Moksha.

ಸದ್ವೀಕ್ಷಯಾ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಶಬ್ದಸ್ಮೃತಿಹೃದ್ವಾತಾಂಶ್ಚ ಛಿನ್ನಾದನುಭೂತಿರೂಪಂ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 7..

Kumara initiates the Jiva with the sounds given in the scriptures and other memorized texts (mantra), He cuts asunder the winds of Samsara that constantly assail the Jiva's heart through the revelation of His knowledge endowed form.

ದೀಕ್ಷಾವಿಧಿಜ್ಞಾನಚತುರ್ವಿಧಾನ್ಯ ಪ್ರಚೋದಯಾನ್ಮಂತ್ರದೈವಾದ್ವರಸ್ಯ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 8..

Kumara, through the grace of the great Mantradevata, bestows Gnana on the Jiva by means of the process of Diksha of four types.

Four types of Diksha by Guru on his disciple are: Vagdiksha, rousing the spiritual consciousness by uttering the mantra into the ear of the disciple; Chakshudiksha, same by looking intently at the disciple; Sparsadiksha, same by touching the disciple; Smaranadiksha, same by the power of thought of the Guru.

Gnana is also said to be attained by four paths: Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana and Gnana.

Gnana is further attributed to four means: Pratyaksha, direct perception; Anumana, inference; Agama, scriptural testimony; Aptavakya, verbal testimony of Sishtas, the virtuous.

ಕೋಟ್ಯದ್ಭುತೇ ಸಪ್ತಭಿರೇವ ಮಂತ್ರೈಃ ದತ್ತಾ ಸುಖಂ ಕಶ್ಚಿದಯಸ್ಯ ಪಾದಂ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 9..

There are seven crores of Mahamantras. Kumara graces the Jiva by initiating him into a suitable mantra, which becomes for him 'iron support' and bestows bliss.

Sastras declare that the mantra taught by Guru is the only strong support for the aspirant on his difficult path of Self-realisation.

ಸ್ವಸ್ವಾಧಿಕಾರಾಂಶ್ಚ ವಿಮುಕ್ತದೇವಾಃ ಶೀರ್ಷೇಣ ಸಂಯೋಗಯೇದ್ಯಸ್ಯ ಪಾದಂ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 10..

Devas, who lost their positions of power to Asuras, adore Kumara's feet by placing their heads at his feet.

Kumara is Devasenapati, the commander of the army of Devas; he fights the Asuras and destroys them and restores power to Devas.

Kumara helps the devotees, whose minds are enfeebled by the persistent attacks of Samsara.

ಹುಂಕಾರಶಬ್ದೇನ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿ(ಪ್ರ)ಭಾವಂ ಜೀವಸ್ಯ ದತ್ತಂ ಸ್ವವರೇಣ ಯೇನ .

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 11..

Kumara blesses Jiva by giving him the boon; the boon is given by uttering the sound 'Hum' through which Jiva attains the created form.

Jiva goes into latent state after Mahapralaya; Kumara gives Jiva a chance for redemption by bestowing the form on him during creation.

ವೀರಾಜಪತ್ರಸ್ಥ ಕುಮಾರಭೂತಿಂ ಯೋ ಭಕ್ತಹಸ್ತೇನ ಸಂಸ್ಪೀಕರೋತಿ .

ಸಸರ್ವಸಂಪತ್ ಸಮವಾಪ್ತಿಪೂರ್ಣಃ ಭವೇದ್ಧಿ ಸಂಯಾತಿ ತಂ ದೀರ್ಘಮಾಯುಃ ..

One, who respectfully receives and wears the Vibhuti (sacred ash) of Kumara placed on the fragrant leaf (called Panneer in Tamil) (at the Tiruchendur Temple) from the hands of the devotee of Kumara (the Pujari in the temple), attains all wealth and fullness of blessings; long life comes to him.

ಏತಾದೃಶಾನುಗ್ರಹಭಾಸಿತಾಯ ಸಾಕಲ್ಯಕೋಲಾಯ ವೈ ಷಣ್ಮುಖಾಯ

ಓಂ ಹಂಸಃ ತಸ್ಮೈ ಕುಮಾರಾಯ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು .. 12..

Om, Hamsa, prostrations to that Kumara, the six-faced, who glows with the desire to bless Jivas in this manner and embraces the Jivas in totality.

Embracing the Jiva in totality means granting him Moksha, Liberation.

.. ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಾಯ ನಮಃ ..