Puntanam Stotram

Poonthanam Nambudiri (1547–1640AD) was a famous poet and a devotee of Guruvayurappan, who lived in Keezhattoor in what is now Malappuram district, Kerala, India.

Latest update: November 14, 2021

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November 14, 2021

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On the birthday of the dear son that PoontAnam had been blessed with, as a result of a long period of prayer and askesis (tapasyaa), that child died due to some mysterious adRishTam (life events whose genealogy can be traced to previous births and actions thereof). On that occasion, all the relatives became distraught with sorrow, but the father, PoontAnam, considered the death of his son as a gift and blessing that BhagavAn had given him.

Although PoontAnam’s child begotten through actions of PrakRiti (such as marriage, childbirth, etc.) had passed away, inside and outside PoontAnam that unique Child of GOkulam – that eternal embodiment of supreme bliss – was always visibly playing and dancing around. Consequently, how could mental upheavals such as anxiety and resulting illnesses or fear or inner fatigue haunt that crest jewel of Bhakta-s – PoontAnam – whose one-pointed attention was on the Eternal Child of Vrajam?
"I love and adore the pure Bhakti of the unschooled PoontAnam more than the erudition of the extremely well-educated MEputtoor!" – this was, says the legend, the disembodied and loud utterance that once emerged from the sanctum sanctorum of the SRee GuruvAyorappan Temple to console the sorrowful poet PoontAnam (who was hurt from a belittling remark about himself). 3

Ma njuLa - a lady from the Vaariyar community who had the ritual duty of crafting flower garlands for Guruvaayoor Temple worship routines - once became extremely worried that she would be too late and miss the ritual and thus her daily worship would be obstructed. But PoontAnam advised her to offer her crafted garland with great devotion to the granite piece lying at the bottom of the Holy arayAl tree (the holy fig tree) (imagining that the rock also had the presence of the Divine in it), which advice Ma njuLa followed. And that garland was seen on the head of Guruvaayoorappan’s sacred MooRti later by devotees! 4

PoontAnam was once attacked by robbers while he was on his way to Guruvaayoor, and he cried out, “O Lord of Guruvaayoor, where is now the swiftness with which You appeared when PA nchAli was in distress (in the Kaurava court while being shamed by the evil Prince duSSAsana) and when the King of Elephants (King Indradyumna in his previous life) was caught in the jaws of a murderous crocodile?” In answer to this prayer, right then and there BhagavAn appeared in the guise of ManNgATT Acchan (the minister of the King sAmootirippAT) to save PoontAnam from the danger posed by the murderous robbers. 5
One day, Poontaanam was going through the market of KoNDOTTi while singing the divine names of BhagavAn, some fanatic and cruel opponents of the sanAtana dhaRmam attacked him with great aggressiveness. Yet, they were all enchanted by his narration of SReeKRishNakathA and later they let him go free after worshipping him with great devotion.

Once PoontAnam, while alive, went to VaikuNTTham in his dream. Then the servants there received him with great respect. They repeatedly requested him with humility to recite and explain SReemad BhAgavatam to their assembly which he did and through that narration bathed them in tears of blissfulness and gave them goose bumps and filing them with wonderment at the adventures of BhagavAn on earth.

That great personage, Poontaanam, sometimes cried out loudly thinking of Bhagavaan, and sometimes laughed at remembering BhagavAn's mischiefs as a child. Sometimes he sang out divine names and attained great absorption in the Divine. At other times, he enacted the stories and danced around as if he was drunk. insane. Occasionally, his body became as stiff as a pillar (in the experience of BhAvasamAdhi). He forgot this world and the other world and swam around in the waves of Bhakti in BhagavAn with abandon, experience-ing unlimited bliss.
Poontaanam led his blessed life, unavailable to others, in total freedom blessing the entire earth by the dust (pollen) from his holy feet lotuses, destroying the sorrows of suffering people with his compassion-filled glances, and helping all beings in crossing the ocean of samsaaram through the incessant chanting of the sacred names of SReeHari. 9

PoontAnam, that great soul, lived his entire life on this earth resonating all the four directions with his Sacred Name Chanting. His Name Chanting and Praising of BhagavAn and his inimitable descriptions of the playful adventures of Bhagavan added a shining beauty to the ears of all listeners as if they were wearing jeweled earrings and his narration made all the area around him radiant. It gave infinite bliss to all the beings around him and gave a physical and spiritual renewal to everything around him. 10

PoontAnam turned this hell-like samsAram into SRee VaikuNTTham through his mental, verbal and active service to the Lord of SReelakshmi and His devotees and the whole world made of the five elements that are His concrete manifestations. This service was done by PoontAnam with SRaddha and Bhakti in order to serve them all, worship them all, please them all. 11

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PoontAnam, the greatest among BhagavAn’s devotees, lived for a long period spending his time in reciting and explaining SReemad BhAgavaam in the assemblies of virtuous men and women, in praising BhagavAn’s names, and in sanctifying himself and all living beings again and again through these actions. 12

PoontAnam’s entire life stream of actions was similar to that of the holy river GaNgA. Like GaNgA it originated from the feet of Lord Hari. It sang about the sweet and playful activities of BhagavAn as a child and youth; it sang the names of the Lord wandering the four corners of the earth; through the sound of singing about BhagavAn and through the life-giving waters (life) his life (as did the GaNgA) gave purity and tranquillity to BhagavAn’s devotees and finally entered the ocean of Kaivalyam – absolute union with the Divine. 13

Because of the death of PoontAnam’s progeny, he became extremely uninterested in and disenchanted by the sensuous experiences of the world. For a long time, he served Guruvayoorappan – the manifestation of BhagavAn Hari in a pilgrimage center on earth – and was able to have the Deity’s actual daRSanam. As a result, all his inner anxieties and suffering ceased. He attained an ecstatic state (niRvRiti) through spiritual tranquillity. At the end of his life, he ascended into VaikuNTTham with his earthly body as a result of his life of devotion and service to the Divine. 14
The Vedas explain in detail three spiritual paths – Action, Knowledge, and Worship. PoontAnam’s poetic work JnAnappana describes well all three of these Vedic subjects with great clarity. In addition, this work proclaims loudly the all-surpassing superiority and efficacy of Bhaagavata dhaRma and divine name chanting.

The Mother Goddess of Thirumaandhaamkunnil Temple, who is the Mother of all stable (rooted) and moving beings in the cosmos, reads or hears PoontAnam’s poems many many times, yet is never satiated by that experience. Guruvaayoorappan, who is the Father of all the innumerable embodied beings and His devotees have the same experience with PoontAnam poems. I worship PoontAnam, that great BrAhmaNa poet of excellence!

The ignorant and those who are proud of their scholarship, those are given to sensuous enjoyment and those who take no pleasure in literature, those who have absolutely no
spiritual belief, those who are evil in nature – all these folks attain the status of MahAyOgis when they listen to the poems of PoontAnam and forgetting everything else and being enchanted by the poetic power and begin to experience goose bumps of bliss, and start shedding tears and begin to talk with a hoarse voice that is overcome with emotion. My reverential namaskAram to that PoontAnam! 18

PoontAnam is alive on the earth in the embodiment of his eternal fame constructed by his countless poems such as J nAnappAna, which are filled to the brim with Bhaktirasam, which give great inner joy to connoisseurs of poetry, and which sanctify the whole earth. PoontAnam is eternally alive in VaikuNTTham in his celestial body created by SReelakshmi born from the waves of supreme PREmabhakti. I worship that supreme devotee of BhagavAn – PoontAnam! 19

The Great Guruwayoorappan Devotee - Poonthaanam Nampoothirippd - who was a contemporary of NaaraayaNeeyam-fame Melpathur NaaraayaNa Bhattathirippaad. This Stotram was composed by the Great Devotee - Ottoo Unni Namboolthirippaad.

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pdf was typeset on November 14, 2021

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