
Artiharastotram

ஆர்திஹரஸ்தோத்ரம் ஸார்த்²

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ஆர்திஹரஸ்தோத்ரம் ஸார்த்²



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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

॥ அத² ஆர்திஹரஸ்தோத்ரம் ॥

ஸ்ரீ ஸம்போ⁴ மயி கருணாஸிஸிராம் த்³ரு'ஷ்டிம் தி³ஸந் ஸுதா⁴வ்ரு'ஷ்டிம் ।
ஸந்தாபமபாகுருமே மந்தாபரமேஸ தவ த்யாயா: ஸ்யாம் ॥ 1 ॥

அவஸீதா³மி யதா³ர்திபி⁴ரநு³ணமித³மோகஸோம்ஹஸாம் க²லு மே ।
தவ ஸந்நவஸீதா³மி யத³ந்தகஸாஸந நதத்தவாநுகு³ணம் ॥ 2 ॥

தே³வ ஸ்மரந்தி தவ யேதேஷாம் ஸ்மரதோ⁵பி நார்திரிதிகீர்திம் ।
கலயஸி ஸிவ பாஹீதிக்ரந்த³ந் ஸீதா³ம்யஹம் கிமுசிதமித³ம் ॥ 3 ॥

ஆதி³ஸ்யாக⁴க்ரு'தௌ மாமந்தர்யாமிந்நஸாவகா⁴த்மேதி ।
ஆர்திஷுமஜ்ஜயஸே மாம் கிம்ப்³ரூயாம் தவக்ரு'பைகபாத்ரமஹம் ॥ 4 ॥

மந்தா³க்³ர்ணரஹம் தவ மயி கருணாம் க⁴டயிதும் விபோ³நாலம் ।
ஆக்ரு'ஷ்டும் தாந்து ப³லாத³லமிஹ மத்³தை³ந்யமிதி ஸமாஸ்வஸிதி ॥ 5 ॥

த்வம் ஸர்வஜ்ஞோ⁵ஹம் புநரஜ்ஞோ⁵நீ⁵ஸோஹமீஸ்வரத்வமஸி ।
த்வம் மயி தோ³ஷாந் க³ணயஸி கிம் கத²யே துத³தி கிம் த்யா நத்வாம் ॥ 6 ॥

ஆஸ்ரிதமார்த்தரம் மாமுபேக்ஷஸே கிமிதி ஸிவ ந கிம் த³யஸே ।
 ஸ்ரிதகோ³ப்தா தீ³நார்திஹ்ரு³தி³தி க²லு ஸம்ஸந்தி ஜக³தி ஸந்தஸ்த்வாம் ॥ 7 ॥
 ப்ரஹராஹரேதிவாதீ³ ப²ணிதமதா³க்²ய இதி பாலிதோ ப⁴வதா ।
 ஸிவ பாஹீதி வதோ³ஹம் ஸ்ரு³தோ ந கிம் க்வாம் கத²ம் ந பால்யஸ்தே ॥ 8 ॥
 ஸரணம் வ்ரஜ ஸிவமார்தீஸ்தவ ஹரேதி³தி ஸதாம் கி³ராஹம் த்வாம் ।
 ஸரணம் க³தோஹம் பாலய க²லமபி தேஷ்வீஸ பக்ஷபாதாந்மாம் ॥ 9 ॥
 இதி ஸ்ரீ ஸ்ரீத⁴ரவேங்கடேஸாரயக்ரு³திஷு ஆர்திஹரஸ்தோத்ரம் ஸம்பூர்ணம் ॥

ṅndshloka

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 (த³யா பூ⁴தேஷு) compassion to

others who are suffering, as one of the noble (தை³வீ ஸம்பத்) 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.

ப³eginmedshloka

ஸாந்தா மஹாந்தோ நிவஸந்தி ஸந்தோ வஸந்தவல்லோகஹிதம் சரந்த: ।
 தீர்ண ஸ்வயம் பீ⁴மப⁴வார்ணவம் ஜநாநஹேதுநாந்யாநபி தாரயந்த: ॥
 ṅndshloka

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 தாப: and it also means distress.

Thus there is a pun on the word tApa.

பு³eginmedshloka

ஸஜ்ஜநஸ்ய ஹ்ரு³த³யம் நவநீதம் இதி யத்³வத்³நதி கவய: தத்³லீகம் |
அந்யதே³ஹவிலஸத்³பரிதாபாத் ஸஜ்ஜநோ த்³ரவதி நோ நவநீதம் ||

ஏndshlokab

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.

ஆர்தி: 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.

சதுர்விதா⁴ ப⁴ஜந்தே மாம் ஜநா: ஸுக்ரு⁴திநோ⁵ஈர்ஜந | ஆர்தோ ஜிஜ்ஞாஸுரர்தா²ர்த²
ஜ்ஞாநீ ச ப⁴ரதர்ஷப⁴ ||

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.

பு³eginmedshloka

॥ அத² ஆர்திஹரஸ்தோத்ரம் ॥

ஸ்ரீ ஸம்போ⁴ மயி கருணாஸரிஸிராம் த்³ரு³ஷ்டிம் தி³ஸந் ஸுதா⁴வ்ரு³ஷ்டிம் |
ஸந்தாபமபாகுரு மே மந்தா பரமேஸ தவ த³யாயா: ஸ்யாம் ॥ 1 ॥
ஏndshlokab

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 ஸம்பு:4 - ஸம் ஸுக²ம் பா⁴வயதி உத்பாத³யதீதி ஸம்பு:4 |

ஸிவங்கர இத்யந்த: | "ஸிவ ஏகோ த்⁴யேய: ஸிவங்கர:" இதி ஸ்ருதே: | 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 பு³eginmedshloka

பு⁴ரிபா⁴ரார்திஹர்தா | அதி⁴க அஸஹ்யது:3²நிவாரக: பு⁴ரிபா⁴ரார்திஹர்தா |
அவித்³யாஸ்மித-ராக³த்³வேஷாபி⁴நிவேஸ-புண்யாபுண்ய-மிஸ்ரகர்ம

க³ர்ப⁴ஜ்நம்-ஜரா-மரணஸ்தா²வர-நாரகது:³க²-ராக³த்³வேஷாதி³ரூப
ஸம்ஸார-மோசக: | ஸ்க்:³ஜ்ஞாத்வா தே³வம் முச்யதே ஸர்வபாயை:’ - இதி | SS(563).
ṛndshlokab

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

ஸோகநாஸந: - ஸம்ரு³திமாத்ரணை ப⁴க்தாநாம் ஸோகம் நாஸயதீதி ஸோகநாஸந: | (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 தாப: 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:- த³யாளு: - த³யாஸீலோ த³யாளு: | SS (155).

க்ரு³பாநிதி:⁴ - க்ரு³பா பரது:³க²ப்ரஹாணைச்சா², தஸ்யா நிதி⁴ரித்யநேந ஸதா³
வர்தமாநத்வமுக்தம் ப⁴வதி |

தச்சி³வஸ்ய ஸ்ருதிப்ரஸித்³த⁴ம் “ அர்ஹந்நித்³ம் த³யஸே விஸ்வமப்³புவம் |
ந வா ஓஜீயோ ருத்³ர த்வத்³ஸ்தி” இதி | sa (30).

The Navavarnaratnamala mentions that Shiva’s eyes are brimming with compassion and as a result are moist. க்விந்நேக்ஷணமதிக்கு³பயா |

The Lord’s vision is also like nectar. The word அம்ரு³தம் 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.

ஆப்³ரஹ்மப⁴வநாலலோகா: புநராவர்தினோ³ர்ஜூந | 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 ஸாபே⁴க்ஷண: - ஈக்ஷணம் த³ர்ஸநம் யஸ்ய ஸாப⁴ம் ஸாப⁴கரம், முமுக்ஷு⁴ஹம் மோக்ஷத³ம், போ⁴கா³ர்தீ²நாம் போ⁴க³த³ம், ஸர்வஸந்தே³ஹ-விச்சே²த³காரணம், பாயிநாம் பாவநம், ஹ்ரு³த³யக்³ரந்தே²ர்விச்சே²த³கரம், ஸர்வகர்மஹம் க்ஷபணம், அவித³யாயாஸ்ச நிவர்தகம் ஸ ஸாபே⁴க்ஷண: | 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 ப⁴வதா³வஸுதா⁴வ்ரு³ஷ்டி: | ப⁴வ:

ஸம்ஸார ஏவ தா³வோ வநவஹ்நி: தஸ்ய ஸாமகத்வாத்ஸுதா⁴வ்ரு³ஷ்டி:, பீயூஷவர்க்ஷமிவ | 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).

பத்ரம் புஷ்பம் ப²லம் தோயம் யோ மே ப⁴க்த்யா ப்ரயச்ச²தி |
தத³ஹம் ப⁴க்த்யுபஹ்ரு³தமஸ்நாமி ப்ரயதாத்மந: ||

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.

காருண்யநிதி:⁴ - காருண்யம் க்ரு³பா அஸ்மிந்நிதி⁴யதே இதி காருண்யநிதி:⁴ |
அதிஸூலப⁴-சலுக ஜல, தூ³ர்வாதி³, த்ரு³ணஸ்வீகாரேண போ⁴க³-மோக்ஷப்ரத³த்வாத்

“த³லம் கிஞ்சித்ஸமாதா³ய சலுகம் ஜலமேவ வா |

யோ த³த்தே நியமேநாஸௌ தஸ்மை த³த்தே ஜக³த்த்ரயம்” - இதி ||

ஸிவகீ³தாயாம் || “க்⁴ரு³ணிந கபர்தி³ந” இதி ஸ்ருதி: | 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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

அர்க-த்³ரோண-ப்ரப்⁴ரு³திசுஸுமை: அர்சநம் தே விதே⁴யம்

ப்ராப்யம் தேந ஸ்மரஹர ப²லம் மோக்ஷஸாம்ராஜ்யலக்ஷம்: |

ஏதஜ்ஜாநந்நபி சிவ சிவ வ்யர்த²யந்காலமாத்மந்

ஆத்மத்³ரோஹீ கரணவிவஸோ பூ⁴யஸா⁵த:⁴ பதாமி || AS(8)

ஏndshlokab

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.”

ப்³eginmedshloka

அவஸீதா³மி யதா³ர்திபி:⁴ அநுகு³ணமித³ம் ஓகஸோம்ஹஸாம் க²லு மே |

தவ ஸந்நவஸீதா³மி யத³ந்தகஸாஸந நைதத்தவாநுகு³ணம் || 2 ||

ஏndshlokab

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 ப்ராயஸ்சித்த கர்மாணி).

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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

யமாதி³பி⁴ர்யோக³பதை:² காமலோப⁴ஹதோ முஹு: |

முருந்த³ஸேவயா யத்³வத்ததா²த³மா⁵த³தா⁴ ந ஸாம்யதி || BH(1-6-36)

வித்³யாதப: ப்ராணநிரோத⁴மைத்ரீ தீர்தா²பி⁴ஷேக-வ்ரததா³நஜ்பயை: |

நாத்யந்தஸூத்³தி⁴ம் லப⁴தே⁵ந்தராத்மா யதா² ஹ்ரு³தி³ஸ்தே² ப⁴க³வத்யநந்தே ||

BH(12-3-48).

ஏndshlokab

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).

யததோ ஹ்யபி கௌந்தேய புருஷஸ்ய விபஸ்சித: |

இந்த³ரியாணி ப்ரமாதீ²நி ஹரந்தி ப்ரஸப⁴ம் மந: ||

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.

ஸத்³ரு³ஸம் சேஷ்டதே ஸ்வஸ்யா: ப்ரக்ரு³தேர்ஜ்ஞாநவாநபி |

ப்ரக்ரு³திம் யாந்தி பூ⁴தாநி நிக்³ரஹ: கிம் கரிஷ்யதி || 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.

க்வசிந்நிவர்ததே⁵ப⁴த்³ராத் க்வசிச்சரதி தத்புந: |

ப்ராயஸ்சித்தமதோ⁵பார்த்²ம் மந்யே குஞ்ஜரஸௌசவத் | 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.

நைகாந்திகம் தத்³தி⁴க்ரு³தே⁵பி நிஷக்ரு³தே மந: புநர்தா⁴வதிசேத³ஸத்பதே² |

தத்கர்மநிர்ஹாரமபீ⁴ப்ஸதாம் ஹரேர்கு³ணூருவாத:³ க²லு ஸத்த்வபா⁴வந: || 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.

கு³ருணாம் ச லக்ஷ⁴நாம் ச கு³ருணி ச லக்ஷ⁴நி ச |

ப்ராயஸ்சித்தாநி பாபாநாம் ஜ்ஞாத்வோக்தாநி மஹர்ஷிபி:⁴ || BH(6-2-16)

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

தைஸ்தாந்யகா⁴நி பூயந்தே தபோதா³நஜபாதி³பி:⁴ | நாத⁴ர்மஜம் தத³த்⁴ரு³த³யம் தத³பீஸாங்க⁴ரிஸேவயா || 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 வாஸநா) too are eradicated by devotion to the Lord's feet.

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

ஸ்ருதிஸம்ரு³த்⁴ப்யாம் விஹிதா வ்ரதாத³ய: புநந்தி பாபம் ந லுநந்தி வாஸநாம் | அநந்தஸேவா து நிக்ரு³ந்ததி த்³வயீமிதி ப்ரபோ⁴ த்வத்புருஷா ப்³பா⁴ஷிரே ||

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.

த்வதே³கரக்ஷஸ்ய மம த்வமேவ கருணாகர | ந ப்ரவர்தய பாபாநி ப்ரவ்ரு³த்தாநி நிவர்தய ||

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

ஹரி: | ஹரதி பாபாநிதி | SA(96) and VS(359) -

ஸம்ரு¹திமாத்திரேண பும்ஸாம் பாபம் ஸம்ஸாரம் வா ஹரதீதி ।

also as பாபநாசகர: । லௌகிகவைதி³க-நாமபி:⁴ கீர்தித:, ததா² லௌகிகவைதி³கை:
ஸ்தோத்ரைஸ்துத:

ததா² பஞ்சாக்ஷராதி³பி:⁴ ஜப்த: பூஜிதஸ்ச உமாஸஹாயத்வாதி³ரூபேண ஸம்ரு¹தோ
த்⁴யானேந வா

பாபநாசகர: । SS(355). Whether His names are uttered or praised by hymns
or remembered by chanting mantras like the panchAkShara or worshipped or
meditaed upon He removes the sins. தவாஸ்மி “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):
ஸக்ரு³தே³வ ப்ரபந்நாய தவாஸ்மீதி ச யாசதே । அப⁴யம் ஸர்வபூ⁴தேப்⁴யோ
த³தா³ம்யேதத்³ வ்ரதம் மம ॥

“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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

பாபிக்ஷோ²ஹம் விஷயசபல: ஸந்ததத்³ரோஹஸாலீ
கார்பண்யைகஸ்தி²ரநிவஸதி: புண்யக³ந்தா⁴நபி⁴ஜ்ஞ: ।
யத்³யப்யைவம் தத³பி ஸரணம் த்வத்³பதா³ப்³ஜம் ப்ரபந்நம்
நைநம் தீ³நம் ஸ்மரஹர தவோபேக்ஷிதும் நாத² யுக்³தம் ॥ AS(28).

ஏndshloka

Why does the poet say that his suffering does not behoove Shiva’s greatness?
Shiva is addressed here by Shridhara as அந்தகஸாஸந: । 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.

காலகால: । காலயதி நாஸயதீதி வ்யுத்³பத்த்யா காலோ யம:, தஸ்யாபி கால:,
காலயிதா உபஸம்ஹரக: இதி । SA (29).

and ம்ரு²த்யுஞ்ஜய: | ம்ரு²த்யு: மரணம் ஸ்வப⁴க்தாநாம் ம்ரு²த்யும் ஜயதி
ஸ்வோபாஸநயா பரிஹரதீதி ம்ரு²த்யுஞ்ஜய: |

“த்ர்யம்ப³கம் யஜாமஹே ஸுக³ந்தி⁴ம் புஷ்டிவர்த⁴நம் |
உர்வாருகமிவ ப³ந்த⁴நாந்ம்ரு²த்யோர்முகூய மாம்ரு²தாத” | இதி
“யஸ்மிந்யுக்தா ரு³ஷயோ தே³வதாஸ்ச, தமேவ ஜ்ஞாத்வா
ம்ரு²த்யுபாஸாஞ்சி²நத்தி” இதி ஸ்ருதேஸ்ச | 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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

தே³வ ஸ்மரந்தி தவ யே தேஷாம் ஸ்மரதோ⁵பி நார்திரிதி கீர்திம் |
கலயஸி ஸிவ பாஹீதி க்ரந்த³ந் ஸீதா³ம்யஹம் கிமுசிதமித³ம் || 3 ||
ஏndshlokab

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.

ஹரி: | “ஹரிர்ஹரதி பாபாநி து³ஷ்டசித்தைரபி ஸ்ம்ரு²த:” இதி |
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

அந்யதா² ஸரணம் நாஸ்தி த்வமேவ ஸரணம் மம |
தஸ்மாத் காரூண்யபா⁴வேந ரக்ஷ ரக்ஷ மஹேஸ்வர ||

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

So, out of mercy, please protect me.’

ப்³eginmedshloka

ஆதி³ஸ்யாக⁴க்ரு²தௌ மாமந்தர்யாமிந்நஸாவகா⁴த்மேதி |
ஆர்திஷுமஜ்ஜயஸே மாம் கிம்ப³ரூயாம் தவக்ரு²பைகபாத்ரமஹம் || 4 ||
ஏndshlokab

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).

ப்³eginmedshloka

ப்³தி³தி³ர்ஜ்ஞாநமஸம்மோஹ: கூகமா ஸத்யம் த³ம: ஸம: |
ஸுக²ம் து:³க²ம் ப⁴வோ⁵பா⁴வோ ப⁴யம் சாப⁴யமேவ ச ||

அஹிம்ஸா ஸமதா துஷ்டிஸ்தபோ தா³நம் யஸோ⁵யஸ: |

ப⁴வந்தி பா⁴வா பூ⁴தாநாம் மத்த ஏவ ப்ரு²த²க்³விதா:⁴ |

ரндshlokab

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 ஸாமாந்ய காரணம் | 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 விசேஷ காரணம் | 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 பு³த்³தி⁴:⁴ கர்மாநுஸாரிணீ | 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. பு³த்³தி⁴ம் து ஸாரதி²ம் வித்³தி⁴ 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!

யதி³ த்வம் மதீ³யம் ஸாசம் நாபநுத்³யா: ததா³ து: ³க²வஹ்நிப்ரதப்தே³ந்தரங்கே³ |
மதீ³யே ஸ்தி²தாயாஸ்தவாப்யம்³ கே²தௌ³ ப⁴வரதி³த்யஹம் சிந்தயா³ஸ்ர்தோ³ஸ்மி
பு⁴ய: ||

ப்³eginmedshloka

மந்தா³க்³ரணீரஹம் தவ மயி கருணாம் க⁴டயிதும் விபோ³ நாலம் |
ஆக்ரு³ஷ்டும் தாம் து ப³லாத் அலமிஹ மத்³தை³ந்யமிதி ஸமாஸ்வஸிமி || 5 ||
ஏndshlokab

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 மந்த: ³ 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).

ஸ்ரேயஸ்ச ப்ரேயஸ்ச மநுஷ்யமேதஸ்தௌ ஸம்பரீத்ய விவிநக்தி தீ⁴ர: |
 ஸ்ரேயோ ஹி தீ⁴ரோ⁵பி⁴ ப்ரேயஸோ வ்ரு³ணீதே ப்ரேயோ மந்தோ³ யோக³க்ஷேமாத்
 வ்ரு³ணீதே ||

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)

மந்த³ஸ்ய மந்த³ப்ரஜ்ஞஸ்ய வயோ மந்தா³யுஷஸ்ய ச |
 நித³ரயா ஹ்ரியதே நக்தம் தி³வா ச வ்யர்த²கர்மபி: ⁴ |

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).

ய: ஸாஸ்த்ரவிதி⁴முத்ஸுரு²ஜ்ய வர்ததே காமகாரத: | ந ஸ ஸித்³தி⁴மவாப்நோதி ந ஸுக²ம் ந பராம் க³திம் ||

தஸ்மாச்ச²ஸ்த்ரம் ப்ரமாணம் தே கார்யாகார்ய-வ்யவஸ்தி²தௌ | ஜ்ஞாத்வா ஸாஸ்த்ரவிதி⁴நோக்தம் கர்ம கர்த்ருமிஹார்ஹஸி ||

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

விஹிதஸ்யாநநுஷ்டா²நாத் நிந்தி³தஸ்ய ச ஸேவநாத் | அநிக்³ரஹாச்சேந்த்³ரியாணாம் நர: பதநம்ரு²ச்ச²தி ||

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 -

அக்ரு²த்யாநாம் ச கரணம் க்ரு²த்யாநாம் வர்ஜநம் ச மே | கூமஸ்வ நிகி²லம் தே³வ ப்ரணதார்திஹர ப்ரபோ⁴ ||

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).

ப்³eginmedshloka

உல்லங்க்⁴யாஜ்ஞாமுரு³பதிகலாகூட³ தே விஸ்வவந்த்³ய

த்யக்தாசார: பஸுவத³து⁴நா முக்தலஜ்ஜஸ்சராமி ।

ஏவம் நாநாவித⁴ப⁴வததிப்ராப்ததீ³ர்கா⁴பராத:⁴

க்லேஸாம்போ⁴தி⁴ம் கத²மஹம்ரு²தே த்வத்ப்ரஸாதா³த்தரேயம் ॥

ஏndshloka

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.

ப³eginmedshloka

சஞ்சலம் ஹி மந: க்ரு²ஷ்ண ப்ரமாதி² ப³லவத்³ த்³ரு²ட⁴ம் ।

தஸ்யாஹம் நிக்³ரஹம் மந்யே வாயோரிவ ஸுது³ஷ்கரம் ॥ BG (6-34).

ஏndshloka

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:

மந ஏவ மநுஷ்யாணம் காரணம் ப³ந்த⁴மோக்ஷயோ: | ப³ந்தா⁴ய விஷயாஸக்தம் முக்தம் நிர்விஷயம் ஸம்நு³தம் ||

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.

ப³eginmedshloka

த்வம் ஸர்வஜ்ஞோ஽ஹம் புநரஜ்ஞோ஽நீஸோஹமீஸ்வரத்வமஸி |

த்வம் மயி தோ³ஷாந் க³ணயஸி கிம் கத²யே துத³தி கிம் த³யா நத்வாம் || 6 ||

ஏndshloka

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).

அஜ்ஞஸ்சாஸ்ரத்³த⁴தா⁴நஸ்ச ஸம்ஸயாத்மா விநஸ்யதி |

நாயம் லோகோ஽ஸ்தி ந பரோ ந ஸுக²ம் ஸம்ஸயாத்மந: ||

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:

இந்த்³ரியாணாம் ஹி சரதாம் யந்மநோ⁵நுவிதீ⁴யதே ।

தத³ஸ்ய ஹரதி ப்ரஜ்ஞாம் வாயு-ர்நாவமிவாம்ப⁴ஸி ॥ 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.

நாயமாத்மா ப்³லஹீநேந லப்⁴ய: । 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.

நாவிரதோ து³ஸ்சரிதாந்நாஸாந்தோ நாஸமாஹித: । நாஸாந்தமநஸோ வாபி ப்ரஜ்ஞானேநைநமாப்நுயாத் ॥

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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

ஆஸ்ரிதமார்ததரம் மாமுபேக்ஷஸே கிமிதி ஸிவ ந கிம் த³யஸே ।

ஸ்ரிதகோ³ப்தா தீ³நார்திஹ்ரு³தி³தி க²லு ஸம்ஸந்தி ஜக³தி ஸந்தஸ்த்வாம் ॥ 7 ॥

ஏndshlokab

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).

அநந்யாஸ்சிந்தயந்தோ மாம் யே ஜநா: பர்யுபாஸதே ।

தேஷாம் நித்யாபி⁴யுக்தாநாம் யோக³க்ஷேமம் வஹாம்யஹம் ॥

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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

ப்ரபு⁴-ஸ்த்வம் தீ³நாநாம் க²லு பரமபி³ந்து:⁴ பஸுபதே

ப்ரமுக்²யோ⁵ஹம் தேஷாமபி கிமுத பி³ந்து⁴த்வமநயோ: |

த்வவயவ க்ஷந்தவ்யா சிவ மத³ப்ராதா⁴ஸ்ச ஸகலா:

ப்ரயத்நாத்கர்தவ்யம் மத³வநமியம் பி³ந்து⁴ஸரணி: ||

ஏndshlokab

ப்³eginmedshloka

ப்ரஹராஹரேதி வா³தீ³ ப²ணித-மதா³க்²ய இதி பாலிதோ ப⁴வதா |

சிவ பாஹீதி வதோ³ஹம் ஸ்ரு³தோ ந கிம் த்வாம் கத²ம் ந பால்யஸ்தே || 8 ||

ஏndshlokab

Meaning:- I have heard a story that You blessed a dacoit leader because he was unwittingly repeating Your name "Hara" whenever he said

prahara ப்ரஹர to mean "beat him up, and Ahara ஆஹர

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.

ஆஸ்சர்யே வா ப⁴யே ஸோகே க்ஷுதே வா மம நாம ய: |

வ்யாஜேந வா ஸ்மரேத்³யஸ்து ஸ யாதி பரமாம் க³திம் ||

A similar statement is seen in Shri Bhagavatam also.

ஸாங்கேத்யம் பாரிஹாஸ்யம் வா ஸ்தோப⁴ம் ஹேலநமேவ வா |

வைகுண்ட²-நாம-க்³ரஹணம் அஸேஷாக⁴ஹரம் விது:³ ||

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.

யதா²க்³தீ³ம் வீர்யதமமுப்யுக்³தம் யத்³ரு³ச்ச²யா |

அஜாநதோ஽ப்யாத்மகு³ணம் குர்யாந்மந்த்ரோ஽ப்யுத³ஹ்ரு³த: || 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 (ஸிவ) SIVA uttered by one even casually in the course of a conversation will remove the sins quickly.

யத்³ த்³வ்யகூரம் நாம கி³ரேரிதம் ந்ரு³ணம் ஸக்ரு³த்-ப்ரஸங்கா³த³க⁴மாஸு ஹந்தி தத் |

பவித்ரகீர்திம் தமலங்க⁴யஸாஸநம் ப⁴வாநஹோ த்³வேஷ்டி ஸிவம் ஸிவேதர: || BH(4-4-14).

ப³eginmedshloka

ஸரணம் வ்ரஜ ஸிவம் ஆர்திம் ஸ தவ ஹரேதி³தி ஸதாம் கி³ரா஽ஹம் த்வாம் |

ஸரணம் க³தோ஽ஸ்மி பாலய க²லமபி தேஷ்வீஸ பகூபாதாந்மாம் || 9 ||

ஏந்shlokab

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.

ந மந்த்ரம் ந யந்த்ரம் ந வா ஸ்தோத்ரரீதிம் விஜாநே஽ம்ப³ வக்தும் ச மத்³து:க²ரீதிம் | த்வத்³ங்க⁴ரிப்ரணம்ரோ ந பாத்ரம் ஸாச: ஸ்யாதி³தி த்வாம் ப்ரபத்³யே தவைவ ப்ரஸாதா³த் ||

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).

ப்³eginmedshloka

அபி சேத்ஸுது³ராசாரோ ப⁴ஜதே மாமநந்யபா⁴க் |
ஸாது⁴ரேவ ஸ மந்தவ்ய: ஸம்யக்³வ்யவஸிதோ ஹி ஸ: ||

கூடிப்ரம் ப⁴வதி த⁴ர்மாத்மா ஸஸ்வச்சா²ந்திம் நிக³ச்ச²தி |
கௌந்தேய ப்ரதிஜாநீஹி ந மே ப⁴க்த: ப்ரணஸ்யதி ||

ஏndshlokab

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.

ப்³eginmedshloka

அஜ்ஞாநவாரிதி⁴-மபாயது⁴ரந்த⁴ரம் மாம்
ஆஜ்ஞாவிப⁴ஞ்ஜந-மகிஞ்சநஸார்வபௌ⁴மம் |

விந்த³ந் ப⁴வாந் விபு³த⁴நாத² ஸமஸ்தவேதீ³

கிம் நாம பாத்ரமபரம் மநுதே க்ரு³பாயா: || Devanayaka Panchashat.(49).

ஏndshlokab

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.

ஸாக்ஷீ - ஸாக்ஷாத்³வ்யவதா⁴நேந ஸ்வரூபபோ³தே⁴ந ஈக்ஷதே பஸ்யதி ஸர்வமிதி ஸாக்ஷீ | 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).

யதா²க்³நி: ஸுஸம்ரு³த்³தா⁴ர்சி: கரோத்யைதா⁴ம்ஸி ப⁴ஸ்மஸாத் |
ததா² மத்³விஷயா ப⁴க்தி: உத்³த⁴வைநாம்ஸி க்ரு³த்ஸநஸ: ||

Because of this reason God gets the name

பாபநாஸந: - கீர்தித: பூஜிதோ த்⁴யாத: ஸம்ரு³த: பாபராஸிம்
நாஸயந் பாபநாஸந: | VS(992). Whether by chanting of His names, or worshipped or meditated upon He destroys the heaps of sins of His devotee.

And also

பவித்ர: - பாவந: பரமஸ்து புமாந் த்⁴யாதோ த்³ரு³ஷ்ட: கீர்தித:
ஸ்ருத: பூஜித: ஸம்ரு³த: ப்ரணத: ஸ ஸர்வாந் பாபாந் உந்மூலயதீதி ||

புஷ்கரமஹம் பவித்ரமஹ மிதி ஸ்ருதி: || 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.

இதி ஸ்ரீ ஸ்ரீத'ரவேங்கடேஸாராயக்ரு'திஷு ஆர்திஹரஸ்தோத்ரம் ஸம்பூர்ணம் ||

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 wittingly 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.

LIFE OF SRIDHARA VENKATESA

ஸ்ரீகண்ட²மிவ பா⁴ஸ்வந்தம் சிவநாமபராயணம் |

ஸ்ரீத⁴ரம் வேங்கடேசார்யம் ஸ்ரேயஸே கு³ருமாஸ்ரயே ||

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 புக³வந்நாமபூ⁴ஷணம் (Bhagavannamabhushanam) on the subject which is sadly not available now. Bodhendra Swami had also written a book நாமாமரு⁵தரஸாயநம் (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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Artiharastotram

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