


Matripanchakam of Shankaracharya

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மாத்ரு'பஞ்சகம்

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Transliterated by : Main text by Darshan Bhatt darshanbhatt at hotmail.com, detailed commentary by N. Balasubramanian bbalu at sify.com

Proofread by : Darshan Bhatt darshanbhatt at hotmail.com, detailed commentary by N. Balasubramanian bbalu at sify.com

Translated by : Darshan Bhatt darshanbhatt@hotmail.com, detailed commentary by N. Balasubramanian bbalu at sify.com

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மாட்டு'பஞ்சகம்



INTRODUCTION:- The short poem consisting of five verses (hence called panchakam) is attributed to Shri Shankaracharya. The following abbreviations are used in the comments. 1) BG Bhagavat Gita. (2) BH-Shrimad Bhagavatam. (3) VR-Valmiki Ramayanam. (4) MB-Maha Bharata.

ON DEVOTION TO MOTHER

JOY AND SORROW:- We all desire happiness and only happiness and that too we want it to last all the time. But we find that such a state of unalloyed bliss eludes us. It is punctuated with periods of unhappiness. In fact, Krishna (in BG 8-15) calls life as து:³கா²லயம் அஸாஸ்வதம் | the repository of sorrow and impermanent. Even the brief spells of joy we experience are followed by periods of sorrow or pain. It is ,then, clear that what we term as happiness is not true happiness. Hunger and thirst stalk every one right from birth. Further as one advances in age, infirmity creeps in and so do many diseases and on the top of every thing looms the fear of impending death. Because of these reasons Krishna stresses the fact that life is the repository of sorrow and impermanent. We also find that some people appear to be blessed with greater quota of happiness than some others. Some are born in rich families and are surrounded with all the comforts of life while some are born in destitution. Such situations are intriguing. We would like to know the reasons behind these variations so that we can avoid those things that beget unhappiness and do whatever is needed to get happiness. It seems that we, with our limited intellect, are not able to unravel the mystery. If it were not so, we should have found the secret key to happiness and living on cloud nine. But unfortunately it is not so. We seem to be caught in a hopeless situation.

THE REMEDY:- But we need not despair. This is where our scriptures come to our aid. They give the formula for a happy life. They say that if one does the right deeds he gets merit or punya and if he does wrong deeds he gets sin or pApam. Punya yields happiness and pApam unhappiness. ஸுபுக்குச்சு²புமாப்நோதி பாபக்கு²தபமஸ்நுதே |

VR(VI-114.24.5) Our unhappiness is attributable only to our failure to do the right deeds and doing the wrong deeds.

விஹிதஸ்யாநநுஷ்டா²நாத் நிந்தி³தஸ்ய ச ஸேவநாத் |
அநிக்³ரஹாச்சேந்த்³ரியாணம் நர: பதநம்ரு²ச்சு²தி ||

says Yagnavalkya Smriti. The deeds include actions done by the body, words and also thoughts.

காயேந குருதே பாபம் மநஸா ஸம்ப்ரதா⁴ர்ய ச |

அந்ரு²தம் ஜிஹ்வயா சாஹ த்ரிவித⁴ம் கர்ம பாதகம் || VR-II-109-21.

DHARMA:- The question, then is, how

to know which deed is right and which is not right and who is to decide this? What appears to be the right deed for one may not be so for some one else. Also, in similar situations, but at different circumstances, one may have to act differently. So, there may not be one answer for this question. Such questions have been asked by people all the time and answered by our acharyas. Right conduct is called dharma. Leading a life in dharmic way, then, is the formula for happiness. Dharma has the ability to destroy pApam or sins. Mahanarayanopanishad (79-7) says this. து⁴ர்மேண பாபமபநு³தி | Once sins are removed, the way is cleared for happiness. Sage Vyasa bewails saying that I keep on saying this, but sadly no one listens to me.

ஊர்த்⁴வபா³ஹுர்விரௌமயேஷ ந ச கஸ்சிச்சு²ரு²னேதி மாம் |
து⁴ர்மாத்³ர்த²ஸ்ச காமஸ்ச ஸ: கிமர்த²ம் ந ஸேவ்யதே ||

Manu -the author of Manusmriti - says that

by doing deeds in the right way (that is following the dharmic path) one can get all he wants (happiness) here and in the life hereafter also.

தேஷு ஸம்யக்³வர்தமாந: க³ச்²த்யமரலோகதாம் ।

யதா² ஸங்கல்பிதாம்ஸ்சேஹ ஸர்வந்காமாந்ஸம்நுதே ॥

SOURCES TO KNOW ABOUT DHARMA:-Manu clarifies his statement and says that all vedas are the basis to define dharma. What the vedas say is further elaborated by texts like smritis written by scholars well versed in the vedas, the conduct of the noble men or sadhus and finally what contributes to self-satisfaction.

வேதோ³ஶகி²லோ த⁴ர்மமூலம் ஸ்ம்ரு³திஸீலே ச தத்³விதா³ம் ।

ஆசாரஸ்சைவ ஸாதூ⁴நாம் ஆத்மந்ஸ்துஷ்டிரேவ ச ॥

Sage Vyasa said the same, but in different words in Mahabharata. (Anusasana Parva. 141-65)

வேதோ³க்த: பரமோ த⁴ர்ம: ஸ்ம்ரு³திஸாஸ்த்ரக³தோ³ஶபர: ।

ஸிஷ்டாசீர்ணோ³ஶபர: ப்ரோக்தஸ்த்ரயோ த⁴ர்மா: ஸநாதநா: ॥

Krishna told this to Arjuna in Bhagavd Gita. He said that scriptures are to be taken as the guide for deciding what is right and what is not right. If one chooses to ignore the scriptural injunctions and acts according to his sweet will he will be doing so at his own peril and will not find happiness.

ய: ஶாஸ்த்ரவிதி⁴-முத்ஸ்ரு³ஜ்ய வர்ததே காமகாரத: ।

ந ஸ ஸித்³தி⁴-மாப்நோதி ந ஸுக²ம் ந பராம் க³திம் ॥

தஸ்மாச்சா²ஸ்த்ரம் ப்ரமாணம் தே கார்யா-கார்ய-வ்யவஸ்தி²தௌ ।

ஜ்ஞாத்வா ஶாஸ்த்ரவிதா⁴நோக்தம் கர்ம கர்து-மிஹூர்ஹஸி ॥ BG(16-23 and 24).

The scriptures are taken to mean the vedas and the secondary texts like the Manu Smriti, the puranas like Shrimad Bhagavatam and (ithihasas) works like the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The secondary texts are also accepted as authoritative because they faithfully reflect the ideas contained in the vedas. Thus the Mahabharata is considered as the fifth veda. Of Ramayana it is said that when the Supreme Being chose to be born as the son of Dasaratha, the vedas too took birth as Ramayana through the sage Valmiki.

வேத³வேத்³யே பரேபும்ஸி ஜாதே த³ஸரதா²த்மஜே ।

வேத:³ ப்ராசேத³ஸாதா³ஸீத் ஸாக்ஷத்³ராமாயணத்மநா ॥

Similarly Shrimad Bhagavatam is said to be the quintessence of the vedas and the secondary texts. ஸர்வ வேதே³திஹாஸாநாம் ஸாரம் ஸாரம் ஸமுத்³த்⁴ரு³தம் | (1-3-42).

Because they all carry the essence of the vedas we can take them as a guide to our conduct without any reservation. By reading them or listening to their expositions by scholars we may learn the rules of conduct.

To sum up, there are four sources for knowing about dharma. Firstly, one can read about them from the vedas which are the primary source. We have to remember that the vedas which prescribe dharma are not of human origin. They were given out by the Lord Himself at the time of creation for the good of the people. Purusha Suktam says this as: ரு³ச: ஸமாநி ஜ்ஞரே | ச²ந்தா³ஃஸி ஜ்ஞரே தஸ்மாத் | யஜுஸ்தஸ்மாத்த³ஜாயத | The Lord withdraws everything (including the vedas) into Himself at the time of dissolution (pralayam) and releases them again at the time of creation.

அவ்யக்தாத்³வ்யக்தய: ஸர்வா: ப்ரப⁴வந்த்யஹராக³மே |
ராதர்யாக³மே ப்ரஸீயந்தே தத்ரவாவ்யக்த- ஸம்ஜ்ஞகே || BG(8-18).

Thus they are eternal. Since they were given out by Bhagavan they are known as Bhagavata dharma (பா⁴க³வத த⁴ர்மா: |).

If one is unable to access or read and understand the vedas, he can next go to the smritis and other secondary texts. If one is unable to do that also, he can observe the conduct of noble people or sadhus and follow in their footsteps. Since they are great devotees and enshrine the Lord in their hearts, one can be certain that they will not stray from the path of dharma.

One cannot call himself a devotee of the Lord if he does not, in the first place, obey His commands contained in the vedas faithfully. Shrimad Bhagavata says that, even under force of circumstances, such a devotee commits an act that appears to be improper or adharmic to the bystanders, the good Lord will condone it. (Book 11-5-42).

ஸ்வபாத³மூலம் ப⁴ஜத: ப்ரியஸ்ய த்யக்தாந்யபா⁴வஸ்ய ஹரி: பரேஸ: |
விகர்ம யச்சோத்பதிதம் கத²ஞ்சித் து⁴நோதி ஸர்வம் ஹரு³தி³ ஸந்நிவிஷ்ட: ||

This, then, is the third alternative. What happens if the sadhu himself gets

a doubt about how he should act in a particular situation and he cannot find the proper guidance in the scriptures? In such a tight situation he goes by the dictate of his conscience. Here again, we should remember that the devotee who has enshrined the Lord in his heart cannot take a step in the wrong direction. The poet Kalidasa says this in his work Abhijnana Sakuntalam: ஸ்தாம் ஹி ஸந்தே³ஹபதே³ஷு வஸ்துஷு ப்ரமாணமந்த:கரணப்ரவ்ரு'த்தய:। Dharma is classified as ஸாமாந்ய தர்ம: or general dharma and விஸேஷ தர்ம: or special dharma. The former includes those rules of conduct that apply to all, irrespective of caste, sex or any other division. They include rules such as one should not steal or covet another man's property, should not spit or urinate in the water etc. The latter apply to people of a particular class like a house holder or a sanyasi or on special occasions like birth, death, travel etc.

GENERAL DHARMA:-One of the basic rules of conduct (general dharma) belonging to the first category given in the Vedas is: மாத்ரு' தே³வோ ப'வ। பித்ரு' தே³வோ ப'வ। (Taittiriya Upanishad.I-9-2). These ask us to venerate our mother and father like God. They are commandments. No conditions are attached to them. They are, thus, to be obeyed implicitly. Not obeying them amounts to dereliction of duties and results in sin or pApam which in turn causes sorrow or suffering.

Our puranas are secondary texts. They act like the magnifying glass. They elaborate the cryptic statements contained in the Vedas through the vehicle of stories and advices by wise people like the sages. Some references from puranas and other secondary texts are given in support of the above vedic dictum.

DHARMA VYADHA:- First is the popular story of Dharma Vyadha. This appears in the Mahabharata-Vana Parva. A brahmin by the name Kaushika decided to go to the forest and perform penance for his own development. But, in the process he left behind his aged parents to fend for themselves. This is a serious lapse of dharma. As

he performed penance, he gained some supernatural powers. One day, as he was sitting in meditation under a tree, he felt some bird droppings fall on his head. He was disturbed by this incident. He looked up in annoyance. The two cranes who were responsible for the misdemeanour were reduced to ashes by his gaze. The brahmin did not expect this to happen, but was pleased at the happening. He became puffed up by his achievements. One day he went to a nearby village to beg for alms. He was made to wait at a house. He became annoyed at this. Soon he heard a lady's voice from inside the house asking him to wait and not to take her to be the cranes. The brahmin was taken aback at the statement. How did the lady of the house know the incident that happened in the remote forest? The brahmin decided to wait and meet the lady of the house who could read his innermost thoughts. After some time the lady came out and offered him alms. She offererd her apologies for making him wait, but said it was because she was serving her husband which was her primary duty. This strict adherence to dharma was the cause of her eminence. She advised the brahmin to go to a particular village and meet a butcher and learn more about dharma. Kaushika was amazed to hear that he -a brahmin- was asked to meet a butcher and learn about dharma. Anyway, he felt small by now, since his ego had been pricked by the lady. He went to the village mentioned by the lady and after some enquiry found the butcher who was attending to his customers. He stood at a distance. When he found some respite, the butcher, washed his hands and hurried to Kaushika. He apologised for making him wait and said he had a duty to perform. It may be inferior and unglamorous. But that is what he had inherited and carried on with devotion. He said he can talk to him in detail in his house. He took the brahmin to his house. But he said that he had to wait till he had ministered to his parents. The butcher came to Kaushika after attending to his parents. He said that he knew that Kaushika was sent by that particular woman to learn about dharma from him. He said that doing one's duty is the highest form of dharma and this included serving the parents with devotion. In the

following verses he narrated how well he looked after his parents. He added that this took precedence over other duties such as receiving guests. That is why he made Kausika wait till he finished serving his parents. He advised Kaushika to correct his mistake, go home and look after his parents. Kaushika was full of remorse. He hastened to his home and started serving his parents with devotion.

வ்யாத⁴ உவாச:-

பிதா மாதா ச ப⁴க³வந்நேதௌ மத்³தை³வதம் பரம் |
யத்³தை³வதேப்⁴ய: கர்தவ்யம் ததே³தாப்⁴யாம் கரோம்யஹம் ||
த்யயஸ்த்ரிம்ஸத்³ யதா² தே³வா: ஸர்வே ஸக்ரபுரோக³மா: |
ஸம்பூஜ்யா: ஸர்வலோகஸ்ய ததா² வ்ரு³த்³தா⁴விமௌ மம ||
உபஹாராநாஹரந்தோ தே³வதாநாம் யதா² த்³விஜா: |
குர்வந்தி தத்³வதே³தாப்⁴யாம் கரோம்யஹமதந்த்³ரித: ||
ஏதௌ மே பரமம் ப்³ரஹ்மந் பிதா மாதா ச தை³வதம் |
ஏதௌ புஷ்பை: ப²ல: ரத்நைஸ்தோஷ்யாமி ஸதா³ த்³விஜ ||
ஏதாவேவாக்³ந்யோ மஹ்யம் யாந் வத³ந்தி மநீஷிண: |
யஜ்ஞா வேதா³ஸ்ச சத்வார: ஸர்வமேதௌ மம த்³விஜ ||
ஏதத³ர்த²ம் மம ப்ராணா பா⁴ர்யா புத்ர: ஸுஹ்ரு³ஜ்ஜந: |
ஸபுத்ரதா³ர: ஸுஸ்ருஷாம் நித்யமேவ கரோம்யஹம் ||
ஸ்வயம் ச ஸ்நாபயாம்யேதௌ ததா² பாதௌ³ ப்ரதா⁴வயே |
ஆஹாரம் ச ப்ரயச்சா²மி ஸ்வயம் ச த்³விஜஸத்தம ||
அநுகூலம் ததா² வச்மி விப்ரியம் பரிவர்ஜயே |
அதர்மேனாபி ஸம்யுக்தம் ப்ரியமாப்⁴யாம் கரோம்யஹம் ||
த⁴ர்மமேவ கு³ரும் ஜ்ஞாத்வ கரோமி த்³விஜஸத்தம |
அதந்த்³ரித: ஸதா³ விப்ர ஸுஸ்ருஷாம் வை கரோம்யஹம் ||
பஞ்சைவ கு³ரவோ ப்³ரஹ்மந் புருஷஸ்ய பு³பூ⁴ஷத: |
பிதா மாதாக்³நிராத்மா ச கு³ருஸ்ச த்³விஜஸத்தம ||
ஏதேஷு யஸ்து வர்தேத ஸம்யகே³வ த்³விஜோத்தம |

ப⁴வேயுரக³நயஸ்தஸ்ய பரிசீர்ணஸ்து நித்யஸ: |

கா³ர்ஹஸ்த²யே வர்தமாநஸ்ய ஏஷ த⁴ர்ம: ஸநாதந: ||

WHAT THE PURANAS SAY:- Kurma Purana says that one should look after his parents with total dedication.

யாவத்பிதா ச மாதா ச த்³வாவேதௌ நிர்விகாரிணௌ |

தாவத் ஸர்வம் பரித்யஜ்ய புத்ர: ஸ்யாத்தத்பராயண: ||

Brahmanda Purana says that one gets the results of performing sacrifices, austerities, offering gifts etc., by being devoted to the parents.

யஜ்ஞாந் வேதா³ம்ஸ்ததா² காமாம்ஸ்தபாம்ஸி விவிதா⁴நி ச |

ப்ராப்நோத்யாயு: ப்ரஜாஸ்சைவ பித்ரு'ப⁴க்த்யா ந ஸம்ஸய: ||

But if one chooses to neglect them, then all the good deeds done by him will go waste says Mahabharata (Anushasana Parva).

யேந ப்ரீணாதி பிதரம் தேந ப்ரீத: ப்ரஜாபதி: |

ப்ரீணாதி மாதரம் யேந ப்ரு'தி²வீ தேந பூஜிதா |

யேந ப்ரீணாத்யுபாத்யாயம் தேந ஸ்யாத்³ ப்³ரஹ்ம பூஜிதம் |

ஸர்வே தஸ்யாத்³ரு'தா த⁴ர்மா யஸ்யைதே த்ரய ஆத்³ரு'தா: ||

அநாத்³ரு'தாஸ்து யஸ்யைதே ஸர்வாஸ்தஸ்யாப²லா: க்ரியா: ||

The Padma Purana says that blessed is the one who has his parents with him and makes them happy by his services and good behaviour. Because he need not go on a pilgrimage and take bath in Ganges to earn merit or punyam. He gets the same result daily in his house itself.

பிதரோ யஸ்ய த்ரு'ப்யந்தி ஸேவயா ச கு³ணேந ச |

தஸ்ய பா⁴கீ³ரதீ²ஸநாநமஹந்யஹநி வர்ததே ||

It is said that one gets the result of going round the world six times, going on pilgrimages to Kashi ten thousand times and taking bath in Ramasethu hundreds of times by sincerely saluting one's mother.

பூ⁴ப்ரத³கூகிணஷட்கேந காஸீயாத்ராயுதேந ச |

ஸேதுஸநாநஸுதையச்ச தத்ப²லம் மாட்டு'வந்த³நே ||

Another purana goes one step further and says that the wretch who ignores his parents living with him and goes visiting holy places seeking to harvest merit or punyam will, instead, garner only pApam or sin at those places

and return home with a big load of sin. So, these injunctions are meant to tell us that one can easily earn all the merit or punya one looks for easily, staying right in his house, by serving his parents sincerely and with devotion. They also alert us of the consequences of not obeying them. To neglect the parents, particularly in their old age, when they become weak and dependant and to cause anguish is a heinous act for which there is no atonement available says Brahmanda Purana.

பாதகாநாம் கிலாந்யேஷாம் ப்ராயஸ்சித்தாநி ஸந்த்யபி |

மாட்டு'த்³ருஹ்யமவேஹி த்வம் ந கிஞ்சித் கில நிஷ்க்ரு'தி: ||

Though the above verses talk of service to mother, we should take the word to imply parents.

CONDUCT OF GREAT PEOPLE:- The puranas and other scriptures contain many statements by great people who served their parents devotedly. Here we should remember Manu's words quoted earlier - that the conduct of noble people should be taken as the guideline and followed by us also.

Manu-the author of Manu Smriti - points out that people cannot requite in full for the suffering undergone by the parents in giving birth and bringing them up.

யம் மாதாபிதரௌ க்லேஸம் ஸஹேதே ஸம்ப⁴வே ந்ரு'ணாம் |

ந தஸ்ய நிஷ்க்ரு'தி: ஸக்யா கர்தும் வர்ஷஸதைரபி || (II-227).

RAMA AND KRISHNA:- It is said that Lord's human incarnations are intended to teach dharma to humans. They are not merely for the purpose of killing the demons. BH(5-19-5) மர்த்யாவதாரஸ்த்விஹ மர்த்யஸரிஷுணம் ரக்ஷாவதா⁴யைவ ந கேவலம் விபோ⁴ | The Lord in His incarnations as Shri Krishna and Shri Rama and Shri Shankaracharya scrupulously followed the dharmic path and set examples to others. Sages considered Krishna to be the embodiment of dharma.

யே ச வேத³விதோ³ விப்ரா: யே சாத⁴யாத்மவிதோ³ ஜநா: |

தே வத³ந்தி மஹாத்மாநம் க்ரு'ஷ்ணம் த⁴ர்மம் ஸநாதநம் || MB.Vanaparva.

Rama was also the personification of dharma - ராமோ விக்³ரஹவாந் த⁴ர்ம: | said Maricha, an enemy of Rama. So, we may study their lives and follow their footsteps, as advised by Manu. We find that they exemplified the role of good sons by the love and respect they showed to their parents.

We know that Krishna fought with the evil Kamsa and killed him. Then Krishna hastened to the prison where His parents were incarcerated. He released them and repeated what Manu said above. Even if one were to live for a hundred years, one cannot pay back his parents who gave birth and nourished his body in which he can realise all the four goals of life.

ஸர்வார்த²-ஸம்ப⁴வோ தே³ஹோ ஜநித: போஷிதோ யத: |

ந தயோர்யாதி நிர்வேஸம் பித்ரோர்மர்த்ய: ஸதாயுஷா || Shrimad Bhagavatam (10-45-5).

The Ramayana has many instances where Rama talks about this subject. One example is wherein he talks to sage Vashishta - his guru. The sage, along with Bharatha, tries to persuade Rama to return to Ayodhya from the forest. He felt that Rama will obey his words as he happened to be Rama's guru. But Rama did not take the advice, and in the course of his reply, said what Manu had said and what He had said earlier as Krishna (viz.) that one cannot adequately repay his debt to his parents for all the love and attention they have showered on him when he was a child.

யந்மாதாஇபிதரௌ வ்ரு'த்தம் தநயே குருத: ஸதா³ |

ந ஸுப்ரதிகரம் தத்து மாத்ரா பித்ரா ச யதக்ரு'தம் || VR(II-119.9).

HIGHER PLACE FOR MOTHER:- Though our scriptures advise us to treat the parents like God, they give a higher place to one's mother. Manu says that the mother is thousand times worthier than the father. ஸஹஸ்ரம் து பித்ரு'ந்மாதா கௌ³ர்வேணாதிரிச்யதே | The popular saying that there is no god equal to one's mother. ந மாதூர்தை³வதம் பரம் | is probably based on this. We find that the puranas and other texts also echo this sentiment. Mahabharata (Shanti Parva) says that the father deserves more respect than tens of acharyas and the mother more than tens of father. She is weightier than the earth itself.

உபாத்⁴யாயாந் பிதா த³ஸ | பித்ரு'ந் த³ஸ து மாதைகா ஸர்வா வா ப்ரு'திவீம்பி |
கு³ருத்வேநாபி⁴வதி நாஸ்தி மாத்ரு'ஸமோ கு³ரு: ||

In another place MB says that there is no shade (to offer solace) like one's mother and no protection equal to her. She is known as dhatri because she carries the child within her, as janani because she gives birth to the child, as amba since she helps to develop its limbs, as virasu since she got a bold son and as shushru since she nurses him. In effect she is one's alter ego.

நாஸ்தி மாட்டு'ஸமோ சா²யா நாஸ்தி மாட்டு'ஸமா க³தி: |

நாஸ்தி மாட்டு'ஸமம் த்ராணம் நாஸ்தி மாட்டு'ஸமா ப்ரியா ||

குக்ஷிஸந்தா⁴ரணாத் தா⁴தீ ஜநநாஜ்ஜநநீ ஸ்ம்ரு³தா |

அங்கா³நாம் வர்த⁴நாத³ம்பா³ வீரஸு³த்வேந வீரஸு³ ||

ஸிஸோ: ஸுஸ்ருஷணா³ச்²ஸ்ரு³ர்மாதா தே³ஹமநந்தரம் || MB (Shanti Parva)

The YakSha Prasna episode appears in the Aranyaka Parva of the Mahabharata.

It is in the form of questions by an YakSha and answers by Yudhishtira, the

son of Dharma. The answers illustrate various aspects of dharma. One of

the questions posed by the YakSha is: Which is weightier than the

earth itself? கிம்ஸ்வித்³-கு³ருதரம் பூ⁴மே:?. The answer given by

Yudhishtira is : The mother is weightier than the earth. மாதா கு³ருதரா

பூ⁴மே:| Rama also says to LakShmana that the mother and the motherland are

more precious than the heavens. ஜநநீ ஜந்மபூ⁴மிஸ்ச ஸ்வர்கா³த³பி க³ரீயஸி|

The reason may be that right from the time of conception,

the child becomes a part of the mother's body and grows drawing sustenance

from her food.Even after birth, the child is taken care of by her and

spends more time with her. She is the one who introduces others, including

the father, to the child She, in effect, becomes the first guru. Krishna

said this to his friend Kuchela when they met in Dwaraka.

ஸ வை ஸதகர்மணம் ஸாக்ஷாத்³ த்³விஜாதே-ரிஹ ஸம்ப⁴வ: |

ஆத்³யோங்க³ யத்ராஸ்ரமிணம் யதா²ஹம் ஜ்ஞாநதோ³ கு³ரு: || BH(10-80-32).

Thus the bondage with the mother is stronger than with others.

In view of this one finds that

at Gaya, where a Hindu is expected to offer oblations to his departed

parents, the custom prescribes offering of one pindam or ball of rice

to the father but sixteen to the mother. During the ceremony one says verses that recall the hardship the mother had to endure when carrying him in her womb for ten long months and later on also for several years when he was a child unable to take care of himself. The content of the verses are moving in their appeal.

EXAMPLE OF SHRI SHANKARACHARYA:-

The Skanda Purana says that even an ascetic who is adored by all should worship his mother. ஸர்வ வந்த³யேந யதிநா ப்ரஸூர்வந்த³யா ப்ரயத்தந்த: | He may sever his attachment with everyone but not with his mother. The bondage continues. He has to attend to her during her final moments and perform the last rites. Shri Shankaracharya was a great ascetic. He was a realised person and so not bound by any rules and conventions. Still, he wanted to set an example to other people. So, he bore the scriptural injunctions in mind and was with his mother during her last moments. He performed the customary rites after her death. At that time his feelings got the better of him. He poured them out in five verses in which he describes the pain and sufferings his mother had undergone for his sake and the great love she had for him. The verses are given below with the meaning. The translation is not exact, but general enough to convey the contents.

|| அத² ஸ்ரீ மாத்ரு'பஞ்சகம் ||

முக்தாமணி த்வம் நயநம் மமேதி

ராஜேதி ஜீவேதி சிர ஸுத த்வம் |

இத்யுக்தவத்யாஸ்தவ வாசி மாத:

த³தா³ம்யஹம் தண்டு³லமேவ ஸுஷ்கம் || 1 ||

Into your mouth, that said: You are the pearl of my eyes, my prince, may you live long, son!, O Mother! I now offer only dry grains of rice. (1)

அம்பே³தி தாதேதி ஸிவேதி தஸ்மிந்

ப்ரஸூதிகாலே யத³வோச உச்சை: |

க்ரு'ஷ்ணேதி கோ³விந்த³ ஹரே முகுந்த³

இதி ஜநந்யை அஹோ ரசிதோ஽மஞ்ஜலி: || 2 ||

At the time of child birth you cried out loudly -

|| Mother!! Father!! Shiva!! Krishna! Govinda! Hare! Mukunda!.. || To that mother I now bow with folded hands. (2)

ஆஸ்தாம் தாவதி³யம் ப்ரஸூதிஸமயே து³ர்வாரஸூலவ்யதா²

நைருச்யம் தநுஸோஷணம் மலமயீ ஸய்யா ச ஸாம்வத்ஸரீ |

ஏகஸ்யாபி ந க³ர்ப⁴பா⁴ரப⁴ரணக்லேஸஸ்ய யஸ்யாக்ஷம:

தா³தும் நிஷக்ரு³திமுந்நதோ஽பி தநயஸ்தஸ்யை ஜநந்யை நம: || 3 ||

At the time of giving birth to me, O mother! you suffered from

unbearable pain. You did not speak about the suffering of your body nor

of the painful condition while lying in the bed for almost an year. For

even one of the sufferings that you underwent during pregnancy, O mother!,

a son is unable to offer atonement. To that mother I offer my salutations! (3)

கு³ருகுலமுபஸ்ரு³த்ய ஸ்வப்நகாலே து த்³ரு³ஷ்ட்வா

யதிஸமுசிதவேஸம் ப்ராருதோ³ மாம் த்வமுச்சை: |

கு³ருகுலமத² ஸர்வம் ப்ராருத³த்தே ஸமக்ஷம்

ஸபதி³ சரணயோஸ்தே மாதரஸ்து ப்ரணாம: || 4 ||

When in a dream, you saw me dressed like an ascetic. You cried aloud and came

running to the school (to see me). The whole school then immediately cried

before you. At your feet, O mother! I offer my salutation! (4)

ந த³த்தம் மாதஸ்தே மரணஸமயே தோயமபிவா

ஸ்வதா⁴ வா நோ த³த்தா மரணதி³வஸே ஸ்ராத்த³த⁴விதி⁴நா |

ந ஜப்த்வா மாதஸ்தே மரணஸமயே தாரகமநு-

ரகாலே ஸம்ப்ராப்தே மயி குரு த³யாம் மாதூரதுலாம் || 5 ||

I did not offer you water at the time of your death, Oh mother! I


did not even offer the oblations as per funerary rites on the day of


your death. Nor did I repeat the mantra that delivers one across the

ocean of this world. Alas! I have come at an inappropriate time! O

mother! Bestow upon me your unequalled compassion. (5)

Commentary by N.Balasubramanian bbalu at sify.com

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Please send corrections to sanskrit@cheerful.com

