

Srī:

Srī Krishnāshṭakam

The verses in this *ashtakam* which is a composition of Srī Ādhi Śankara are beautiful. The opening verse is of interest. The *paramānandam* of Dévaki is possible to all of us as well. The Lord removed the obstacles in her way (Kamsa and Chānūra) on His own so that Dévaki could experience the Divine bliss fully and totally. Indirectly it tells us that the Lord Himself will remove all the obstacles in our way so that we can experience His divine enchanting bliss. This is similar to all of āzhwārs' pasurams. We will refer here to the verse 107 from Thirucchandaviruttam of Sri Thirumazhisai pirān with the meaning and commentary.

காய்சினத்தகாசிமன்னன் வக்கரன் பவுண்டிரன்
மாசினத்தமாலிமா சுமாலிகேசிதேனுகன்
நாசமுற்றுவிழநாள் கவர்ந்தநின் கழற்கலால்
நேசபாசமெத்திறத்தும் வைத்திடேன் எம்மீசனே 107.

kaay sinaththa kaasi mannan vakkaran pavundiran
maa sinaththa maali ma sumaali kési thénukan
naasamutru veezha naal kavarntha nin kazharkalaal
nésa paasam eththiraththum vaiththidén em eesané (107)

O' my Lord! I would not tie anything else with the rope of my devotion other than Thine holy feet which caused many demons like the violent Kaasirajan, Dantavakkaran, Paundrakan, the violent tempered Maali, the giant Sumaali, Kési and Denukan to suffer, fall and give up their lives.

In the previous two verses, Azhwar gave the Lord's beauty and His all protective nature as reasons for his and his heart's devotion to the Lord. In this verse, he further states that he would not love anything other than His holy feet which eliminated all his karmas which were inimical to his *bhakthi*, like they eliminated all the demons.

காய் சினத்த காசிமன்னன் kaay sinaththa kaasi mannan – the king of Kaasi who was "Tamasic" in nature and full of anger to the destruction of all "Saatvikaas". வக்கரன் vakkaran - Vakkaran with similar nature,
பவுண்டிரன் pavundiran – Paundraka Vasudevan who had a big ego and claimed to be "true Vasudeva" wearing the discus and the conch

மாசினத்த மாலி maa sinaththa maali – Maali with violent rage
மா சுமாலி maa sumaali – Sumaali with the giant like form and also with violent anger
கேசி kési – the demon who came in the form of a horse to the Vraja to kill Krishna and caused fear in the hearts of all the cowherds
தேனுகன் thénukan – Dénuka another demon who was also sent by Kamsa to Gokulam

Azhwar details all the terrible havocs caused by these demons to indicate all the terrible havocs caused by the adversaries against his Bhakti in the form of his karma.

நாசமுற்று naasamutru – making them suffer

வீழ veezha – and fall

நாள் கவர்ந்த naal kavarntha - and taking their life

This describes the act of the Lord whereby He treats the adversaries of His devotees as His own enemies and therefore destroys them and eliminates them.

நின் கழற்கலால் நேசபாசமெத்திறத்தும் வைத்திடேன்

nin kazharkalaal nésa paasam eththiraththum vaiththidén – I will not tie the rope of my love (devotion) to anything other than Thy holy feet (which has the nature of destroying all adversaries)

நேச பாசம் nésa paasam – Azhwar describes "bhakti or love towards the divine" as a rope எட்டினோடு இரண்டெனும் கயிற்றினால் ettinōdu irandenum kayitrinaal (verse 83)

எம்மீசனே em eesané - my Lord!

Azhwar indicates here that he is the possession of the Lord and it is for that reason the Lord intervenes to eliminate all the obstacles in his way and turns him towards *bhakthi*.

The beauty of Sri Krishna avathāram is that the Lord's "*Saulabhyam*" (easy accessible nature). Lord Krishna made Himself available to all who just loved Him like the cows, the calves and all of the cowherds' families. (குன்றெடுத்து குளிர் மழை காத்தபிரான் – *kundredutthu kulir mazhai kāththa pirān* –the benefactor who shielded the cows and the cowherds from the hail storm, by lifting and holding the Gōvardhana Mountain).

In the remaining 7 verses, Acharya describes in detail the Lord's auspicious divine form and His leelās that reveal His *kalyāna gunās* - auspicious attributes. All of these allow us to focus and meditate on the divine form of the Lord. It is of interest to note that the word "Mahéshvāsm" is used by the ācharya in verse #7, This nāma Mahéshvāsah is also in Sri Vishnu sahasranāma verse # 20, which means "the enchanting wielder of the great bow" śārngam" as per the commentaries of both Srī Śankara as well as Srī Parasara Bhattar (the famous Srī Vaishnava ācharya). Interestingly this nāma refers to Srī Rāma avathāram.

The 108 th verse in Srī Vishnu Sahasranāmam starting with the words "Vanamāli gadī śārngi śankī chakrī) is familiar to most of us. All of these attributes are in fact described in verse -8 of this ashtakam. The last verse of course is the *Phala sruti*.(benefits from chanting , singing or reading the verses). The word "pāpam" here should be taken to indicate all of the obstacles in our way.

Adiyén first heard *Srī Krishnāshtakam* sung by a lady during Navarāthri Oonjal Sévai of Srī Srīnivasa Perumāl and Thāyārs in Kodavasal, the village where we were raised. I was a young boy at the time. My immediate two older brothers were also there at the time. We were all impressed by the *ashtakam* and the way it was sung in the *madhyamāvathi rāgam*. I was too

young to remember all details. We also did not know all the lines of the *ashtakam* at that time. The rhythm and the melody were repeated throughout all the *ślōkās*. I was therefore able to remember that and just repeat the first verse now and then through the many years that have gone by. Recently adiyén received a photo of our Kodavasal Perumal and Thāyārs taken during this year's Navarāthri forwarded by my niece. It triggered adiyén's childhood memories of the beautiful Navarāthri Oonjal Sevai from our village temple. *Srī Krishnāshtakam* experience surfaced along with a wish to record the whole *ashtakam* in the same *madhyamāvathi rāgam*. . I am happy to report that with the Lord's grace, adiyén was able to complete the recording. Please see the links for the recording as well as the text.

If you happen to like the recording, please sing it daily. It only takes 8 minutes and 30 sec. Or just include the same in your daily practice (*anusandhānam*).

Ōm Srī Rukminī Satyabhāma saméta Srī KrishnaParamātmané namaha.

Adiyén rangathan/ Oct 28-2021