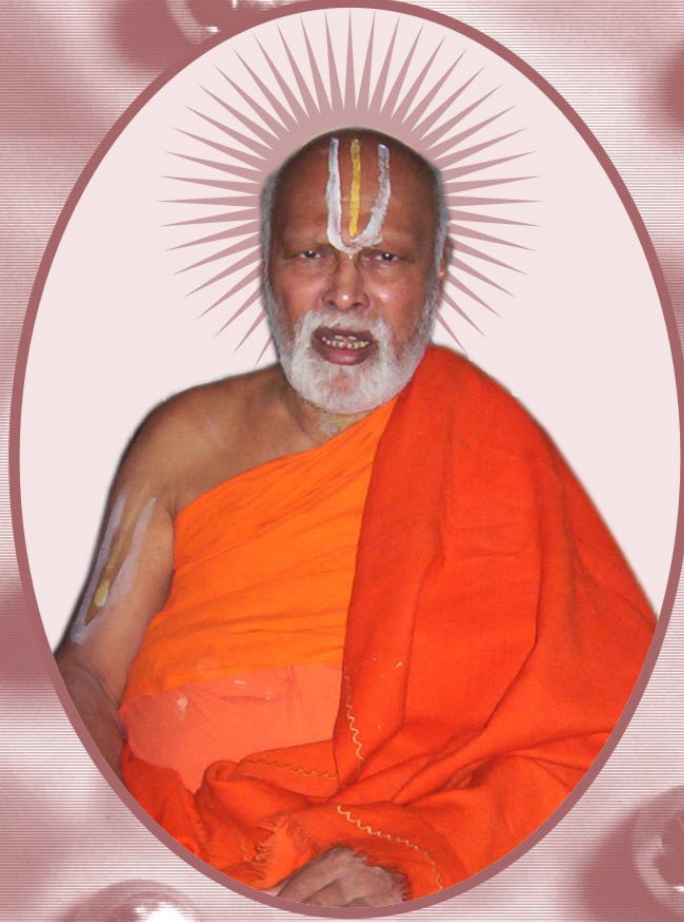




andal thayar of hedathale

Sri Rangapriya Swamigal Tiruvadigale Sharanam



Lakshminarasimhan Sridhar
-presents-
Asmath Acharyan's



Pearls of Wisdom



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Acknowledgements

Dr.V.Sadagopan Mama

My Sister Smt.Jayashree Muralidharan, USA

Respected Bhagavathas,

This 4th pearl in the Pearl string was possible because my Religious mentor and well-wisher Dr.V.Sadagopan Mama of USA sent some set of Questions which he wanted me to get the answers from Asmath Acharyan H H Sri Rangapriya Swamiji. H H Was kind enough to give the answers. Now I dedicate this pearl in the String of Pearls in "Pearls of Wisdom".

Q: Thiruman and SrIchurnam represent the sacred feet of Perumal and the ThAyAr. Why should the Lord wear such symbols or the other interpretations?

A: The meaning of symbols differ from person to person and the sacred marks are worn on the forehead of a bhAgavatha - a devotee of bhagavAn and in the above meaning the thiruman represents the feet of the Lord and SrIchurnam refers to the goddess Lakshmi Herself not Her feet. Now the same meaning does not hold in the case of bhagavAn, where it is used for alankAra - decoration. As such there is no difference of opinion. It depends on the meaning which you give to the symbol - when it is worn by a bhaktha then it means bhagavAn's feet and bhagavathi in between them whereas for bhagavAn Himself it is a mark of decoration only. This has been clearly explained by AcArya NigamAnta Maha DeSika.



Q: Urdhva puNDram

A: There are many puNDrams - Urdhva, tiriya, bindu, ardha chandran, trikONam etc. The VishNu/VaishNava mArgam is Urdhva puNDram, saiva mArgam is tiriya puNDram (that also later become Urdvam due to the presence of the eye in the middle), agni mArgam - ardha chandran etc. This is SAstra niyathi.

It is said :

Urdhva puNDraH, Urdhva gaNDaH, Urdhva vIryaH, Urdhvam gati mavApnOti.

If we seek Urdhva gati, then everything becomes VaishNavam - vishNu mArgam



(Observe different type of puNDrams)

Q: Why perform shrAddha for a mukthan?

A: A prapannan does not have jananam/maraNam. After the present life he does not have re-birth. So why perform shrAddam for a mukthan? Pitrs are called shraddha devatas and are j~nAnis. They have j~nAna mudras and piNDam. They do not have shastrAs in their hands. They are mahAtmAs. They do not participate in wars/battles (yuddham). They are always meditating. Those bhaktAs who perform ArAdhana to Pitrs, they are blessed by the Pitrs with loukeeka sukham and also pave the way for his mOksha. Does prapannan need to perform shraddha? A prapannan is a person who has had prapatti performed in a proper way, and if he is beyond a shadow of doubt a mukta Atma, then he need not have shrArdam done. As the story of Raghu maraja indicates, a person who is a liberated soul need not have shraddha.

nahi tena patha danurdyayaH
tanaya varjita piNDa kAnkshiNaH

When a person performs ArAdhana to Pitrs, he is infact performing the ArAdhana to the antaryAmi SrIman nArAyaNan. Pitrs and all other devatAs have no swAtantryam and any ArAdhana performed to them is actually done only to their antaryAmi bhagavAn SrIman nArAyaNan. All jeevans are seshas to bhagavAn.

nArAyaNa pitrrUpi
sarvAkAra janArdana priyatAm

As antaryAmi, bhagavAn accepts all the offerings that are given to the Pitrs and devatas. Pitrs are very benevolent towards their lineage and grant (apeksham) all auspiciousness towards their vamsa. They bless the growth of parampara (generations) of children, grandchildren (parampara vrddhikaraNam). Their AsheerwAdams are saphalam. Eventhough they grant lowkeeka sukham (sampath), that sukham is not j~nAna viruddham. If the sampath that is granted by them is used for bhagavad/bhAgavatha ArAdanam and kaimkaryam (sadupayOgam), then it will bear wonderful results.



We should always pray to PerumAl and PirATTi. PirATTi recommends (purushAkAram) our case to PerumAl and also prayers to Her increase the wealth (sampath) of the devotee. The meaning of sampath is explained in SrI Lakshmi sUktam:

Suddhi pAsAmalAm jyeshTAm alakshmi: nASayAmyaham

PirATTi vows (pratij~nai) to destroy alakshmi (inauspiciousness)! The manifestation of alakshmi can be seen in hunger, thirst, and disinterest in everything. When such things are destroyed by ThAyar as per Her promise, then only goodness results.

Swami DeSikan has explained in His grantham "tattva mukta kalApam" about the question of whether a grhastan gets mOksham or not! SanyAsam has another name as 'mOkshASramam". Many texts say that only SanyAsis attain moksham as there are many helpful aids (upAyAs) available in sanyAsa like ekAntham, undisturbed arAdanam etc. But that does not necessarily mean that a grhastan cannot attain moksham. Upanishadic statements exist where it says a jnAni can give upadesam to his sishyas and to his eldest son indicating that those j~nAnis were grhastas, hence grhastas can certainly attain moksham.

shrAdda krt SrutivAti ca grhasto(a)pi
mokshyate

It means a grhastan who performs shrAddams and follows the Srutis, then such a person will definitely attain moksha.



shrAddAs are krtaj~nata karmA-s. It is a form of saying thanks to our ancestors, grandparents, parents etc acknowledging that it is with their help that we have reached our present position. As George Washington says: "All that I have or ever hope to be, I owe to her (his mother)!"

So a son should always take care of his parents when they are alive and when they have reached SrI VaikuNTham, he should do shrAddam without fail for them. Every person should perform Gaya shrAddam at least once in their life time. SrI Rama says that parents should have plenty of children so that at least one of them would perform the gaya shrAddam!

So doing shrAddam is a very important karma and should not be missed. Especially for a person who dies without becoming a muktan, and if his son also abandons him (by not

performing shrAdda karma for him), then that person gets into a dire situation where he is left with no recourse.

ViSva devatas are invoked (avAhanam) in Pitr karmaas. As told before they are nyasta shastra (without weapons); do not engage in wars. They are fond of meditation at all times. To protect them from asuras the viSva devata-s are invoked. To protect both the Pitrs and viSva devatas, (shrAddha samrakshaNam) MahAvishNu is invoked - "mahAvishNum mahAyAmi"

If a person has daughters only and no son, then the daughter can do the karmaAs -

"yathA putraH tathA putrI".

The daughter can touch the darbhas that are used for the karma and then someone else can perform the shrAddam, as she may not be familiar with the mantras and other procedures. But she can involve herself mentally in the performance of the karma and help in all activities (anukoolyam) relating to the karma. The puNyam of performing the shrAddam will go to the daughter and the puNyam of helping in performance of the shrAddam will go to the person who performs the shrAddam on her behalf. If she has a son (that is dauhitran of the deceased person) then that boy can perform the shrAddam with the same adhikAram (direct authority) of a son.

The jeevan (which is not a mukta atmA) immediately after death has hunger, thirst but does not have the organs (indriyams) like hands, mouth etc to feed itself. It suffers from not knowing which way to travel or where to go, but feels intense hunger. It is said that from the 10th day of death onwards the hunger pangs become intense for the jeevan, hence the ceremonies on the 10th day consists of offering lots of annam (food) for the hungry jeevan. Eventhough it has no appendages to eat, the mere sight of food satisfies the hunger of the jeevan. Usually chiturreNDai, vadai, appam, poRi etc are made as part of the ceremonial offerings.

For a person who has no child at all, then the brothers can do the shrAddam. After death, the jeevan loses its preta deham after the ceremonies are completed and then based on its karmas, it reaches moksha loka, bhUmi or naraka etc. If a jeevan unfortunately reaches naraka, then the shrAdda karmas done for it by the people are taken up by the Pitr devatas (as the medium) and they create a swathA rUpam for the jeevan from the annam offered and make the jeevan satisfied. If the jeevan is in devata lokam then they are amruta bhoji-s and the shrAdda offerings make them satisfied too and bring their aSeervAdams. In case the jeevan has been re-born in the bhUmi as another life form (for eg) as a tiger, the Pitr devata-s know what form the jeevans have taken up in the next life,

and so the shrAdda annam that is offered is then sent to the jeevan in the form of food that he/she would enjoy in their present life.

Will be continued in next issue.....