

## કાવેરી પ્રાર્થના

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મરુદ્ધતે મહાભાગે મહાદેવિ મનોહરે ॥

સર્વાભીષ્ટપ્રદે દેવિ સ્થાસ્થિતાં પુણ્યવર્ધિનિ ॥ ૧ ॥

સર્વપાપક્ષયકરે મમ પાપં વિનાશય ॥

કવેરકન્યે કાવેરિ સમુદ્રમહિષિપ્રિયે ॥ ૨ ॥

દેહિ મે ભક્તિમુક્તિ ત્વં સર્વતીર્થસ્વરૂપિણિ ॥

સિન્ધુવર્યે દયાસિન્ધો મામુદ્ધર દયાબુધે ॥ ૩ ॥

સ્ત્રિયં દેહિ સુતં દેહિ શ્રિયં દેહિ તતઃ સ્વગા ॥

આયુષ્યં દેહિ ચારોગ્યં ઋણાન્મુક્તં કુરુષ્વ મામ્ ॥ ૪ ॥

તાસાં ચ સરિતાં મધ્યે સદ્ધકન્યાઘનાશિનિ ॥

કાવેરિ લોકવિખ્યાતા જનતાપનિવારિણિ ॥ ૫ ॥

ઈતિ બ્રહ્માણ્ડ પુરાણે કાવેરી પ્રાર્થના ॥

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These verses are in praise of river Kaveri – a sacred river flowing in the southern peninsula of India. The river is one of the five great rivers flowing in South India. The other four are Mahanadi, Godavari, Narmada and Krishna. It is also the smallest of them all, being only 765 Km long. The

river is known for the scenic beauty of the regions it flows through. The entire region it passes through is considered sacred. It has its birth at Talakaveri at a height of 1320 feet in the Brahmagiri mountain in the Western Ghats in Karnataka State. There is a small temple there where people offer worship to Kaveri. After flowing through Karnataka State the river meanders through Tamil Nadu State and empties into the Bay of Bengal on the eastern side of the peninsula. It starts as a thin strand of water and as it enters the plains at Bhagamandalam a small river Gajoti joins it. Bhagamandalam is a picturesque small village at the foothills of thickly forested mountains with the two rivers flowing through it. It has a small temple for Shiva who has the name Bhagamandaleshvara. Later on rivers Hemavati and Lakshmana Teertham join Kaveri and it becomes large and deep. Here the waters of the three rivers are collected at the Krishnaraja Sagar dam. Other tributaries that join Kaveri are Shimsha, Hemavati, Arkavati, Kabini and Bhavani. Near Tiruchy, in Tamil Nadu, the river branches and joins again after a couple of kilometers further forming the island of Srirangam. Nearby we have the Grand Anicut (Dam). It is 323 mts. long and 20 mts. high and built of stones. It was built during the 2nd century AD and stands as a tribute to the expertise of the builders of those days.

The river flows through some of the richest lands of the country and blesses the people on its course. In return the people worship it. People of Tamil Nadu worship the floods with a festival called 18th day of Aadi month (July–August). They offer puja, light lamps and offer sweetmeats and, fruits and flowers.

One may have a question as to whether it is rational to worship an inanimate object like a river. The answer follows. Our scriptures say that it is the one God who permeates everything. The Narayana Suktam says this clearly. It says that whatever is there that is seen or heard of in the universe is pervaded in and out by the Lord.

यस्य त्रिजिह्वात्सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा ॥  
अन्तर्बहिश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः ॥

Lord Krishna echoes this in Gita (9-4). मया तत्तमिदं सर्वं  
जगद्व्यक्तं मूर्तिना ॥ He says that the universe is pervaded by Him –  
the unseen One. So, what we see as the world is The Lord only. The very  
first name in the Vishnu-sahasranama is विश्वम् = the universe. But  
we see the world as made of myriad objects and do not see the God.  
Why so? Krishna gives the reason too in Gita.(7-13).

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥  
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥

The world is deluded by His power of maya and so, does not see Him who is beyond them. An example will provide the answer. We see an ornament – say – a chain made of gold. We see the chain and talk about the chain only and not the gold which really is the substance. The 'chain' is not a substance at all. There is no chain apart from gold. When we wear the chain or handle it or lock it up in the cupboard we, in fact we are doing all these with gold only in the garb of a chain. The 'chain' is only a name for a particular form of gold. In fact there is no such 'thing' as chain! The

'chain' has its birth from gold, has its existence in gold and goes back into gold when it is melted. Gold is the substratum or(અધિષ્ઠાનમ્). So also

is God the substratum of everything. He is known as theઅધિષ્ઠાનમ્ –

અધિતિષ્ઠન્તિ ભૂતાનિ ઉપાદાનકારણત્વેન બ્રહ્મેતિ અધિષ્ઠાનમ્ ॥

।દ્વમત્સ્થાનિ સર્વભૂતનિદ્વ (ગીતા ૮।૪) ઇતિ ભગવદ્વચનાત્ ॥

(Vishnusahasranamam – 324) A verse in Shri Bhagavatam (VIII-3-3) makes this

abundantly clear. This was said by Gajendra the elephant in praise of the

Lord who rescued him from the grip of the crocodile. He said 'I take refuge

in the self-existent Being in whom the universe rests, from whom it has

sprung, by whom it it has been brought into being, who Himself constitutes

it, and who is at the same time distinct from both the cause and effect.'

યસ્મિન્નિદં યતશ્ચેદં યેનેદં ય ઇદં સ્વયમ્ ॥

યોઽસ્માત્ પરસ્માય પરસ્તં પ્રપદ્યે સ્વયમ્ભુવમ્ ॥

Taking the example of the chain, we find that it has its birth from the gold,

its existence in gold and finally goes back into gold when melted. So is

the case with everything in the universe. The lay person sees movie and

misses the screen on which it is projected though he is looking at it all

the time! To extend the logic further he sees the world and misses the Lord

behind. The 'world' we see is constituted of very many objects, animate

and inanimate. But though they appear to be different and bear different

names they are all the forms and names of the one Supreme Being only. So

the Lord has the nameવિશ્વમ્ as said above. That is the reason we

have the custom of worshipping all objects. Because the worship of any

object or being is equivalent to the worship of the Lord. All animals

including the cow, the monkey and even the snake are objects of worship.

Even the 'inanimate' objects such as the books, trees, mountains and rivers are holy. There can be no such thing as a bad or evil thing.

The seers of ancient times had this grand vision. They could see through the superficial layer and perceive God in everything. Krishna says that a realised person will see only God in anything: for example a learned righteous brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog which is considered unclean, and also a mean outcast who eats the flesh of the dog. Gita(5-18).

વિદ્યા-વિનય-સંપન્ને બ્રાહ્મણે ગવિ હસ્તિનિ ॥  
શુનિ ચૈવ શ્વપાકે ચ પણ્ડિતાઃ સમદર્શિનઃ ॥

The wordસમં in this context means the Supreme Being and not 'equal.'

This is made clear by Krishna in the very next verse (5-19).નિર્દોષં

હિ સમં બ્રહ્મ ॥ The famous vedic hymn Shri Rudram salutes the Supreme Being by addressing Him by names of various objects, both good and 'not good' according to common man's perception. There are salutations to trees, mountains, birds, dogs etc. There are even salutations to thieves, and cheats who are nothing but forms of God only, because there cannot be anything but God. He is the rivers also. Rudram salutes Him asનમો નાદાય. This nameનાદઃ is in the Sivasahasranamam (No.684. Padmapuranam). The commentator sayનદીગત જલરૂપો નાદઃ ॥ નમો નાદાય એતિ શ્રુતિઃ ॥

For this reason we consider the rivers as sacred. They are not to be polluted. Do not urinate or spit in the waters advises the vedas.નપ્સ્યુ

મૂત્રપુરીષં કુર્યાત્ ॥ ન નિષીવેત્ ॥ Our pilgrimages include visiting famous temples and also taking bath in sacred rivers like Ganaga, Kaveri, Yamuna etc.. We have hymns in praise of these rivers. Here we have a short hymn in praise of the sacred river Kaveri.

The river is mentioned in the vedas and puranas. The Aghamarshana Suktam(અઘમર્ષણસૂક્તમ્) which forms part of Mahanarayanavalli in the Taittiriyaopanishad is a prayer addressed to Lord Varuna – the god of waters. This is normally chanted before taking bath.અર્ગ્ = sin.મર્ષણમ્ = cleaning or wiping off. So, this is a prayer to Varuna to make us free from sins. In this sukta we come across the following prayer addressed to some famous rivers.

ઈમં મે ગઙ્ગે યમુને સરસ્વતિ શુતુદ્રિ સ્તોમગ્ં સચતા પરુષિણ્યા ॥  
અસિક્કિયા મરુદ્ધૃદે વિતસ્તયા ડડજીકીયે શૃણુહ્યા સુષોમયા ॥

The rivers mentioned in this mantra are, Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Shutudri (Sutlej), Parushni (Rabi), Asikni (Seenab), Vitasta (Jilam), Sushoma (Sohan). The last four rivers mentioned here were flowing in the Sind Province. In this mantra the word(મરુદ્ધૃતે) Maruddhrute is a reference to Kaveri. In fact the hymn given in the beginning of this article starts addressing Kaveri by this name only. The Bhagavata Purana mentions the river more than once. It says that during his pilgrimage Lord Balarama visited Kanchi and the sacred river Kaveri.કામકોટિપુરીં કાઞ્ચીં કાવેરીં ચ સરિદ્ધરામ્ ॥ (10-79-14). Again later on in Book 11 the sage Karabhajana, in his conversation with King Nimi talks of the

merits of Kaliyuga and says that it is in this age that great devotees of the Lord will appear everywhere, especially in the Dravda country where the rivers Tamaraparni, Kritamala, Payasvini, the extremely sacred Kaveri and the great river Mahanadi which flows towards the west they will be found in large numbers. (11-5-39).

ऽवचित् ऽवचिन्महारज द्रविडेषु च भूरिशः ॥  
ताम्रपर्णी नदी यत्र कृतमाला पयस्विनी ॥  
कावेरी च महापुण्या प्रतीची च महानदी ॥

(भविष्यन्ति नारायणपरायणः ॥)

Valmiki talks about it in his Ramayana. Sugriva sends various groups of soldiers to search for Sita. He sends a group headed by Angada to search in the southern direction. He gives details of places he will have to search. At that time he describes the southern mountain range and the holy river Kaveri as follows. He says that Angada will see the blessed heavenly river Kaveri carrying pellucid waters and celestial nymphs sporting in the river.

ततस्ताम्रपर्णां दिव्यां प्रसन्नसलिलां शिवाम् ॥  
तत्र द्रक्ष्यथ कावेरीं विहतां अप्सरोगणैः ॥

(Kishkindha Kanda -41-14).

Kaveri is also known as DakShin Ganga – Ganga of the South and the river's water is reputed to be limpid and sweet

अहं दक्षिणगङ्गेति विश्रुता वेदमूर्धनि ॥  
धमां मधुरपानीयां दक्षिणापथजह्वीम् ॥

The Agnaeya Purana says that those who are contacted by the breeze blowing from Kaveri get release from rebirth and reach the lotus feet of the Lord.

કાવેરિ ત્રિજન્માનઃ કાવેરિ સલિલાપ્લુતા ॥

કાવેરિ વાતાઘૈ સ્પૃષ્ઠા યાન્તિ હરેઃપદમ્ ॥

The Brahmavaivarta Puranam defines the word Kaveri as follows.

કકારઃ કલુષં હન્તિ, વેકારો વાઞ્છિતપ્રદઃ ॥

રીકારો મોક્ષદો નૃણાં કાવેરીત્યવધારય ॥

The letter ka stands for the destruction of sins, ve for the bestowal of desires and ri for the granting of mokSha or liberation from the cyclic births. Kaveri is also known as Kanakasari(કનકસરિત્). Kanakam (કનકમ્) means gold and sarit(સરિત્) means river. The sand in the bed of Kaveri is said to be rich in gold content. Kaveri is called Ponni (pon = gold) in Tamil. The great acharya Shri Vedanta Desika mentions the glory of the river in his famous work Sri Bhagavaddhyana sopanam (verse no.2).

વેલાતીત શ્રુતિપરિમલં વેધસામૌલિ સેવ્યં

પ્રાદુર્ભૂતં કનકસરિતસસૈકતે હંસજુષ્ટે ॥

લક્ષ્મીભૂમ્યોઃ કરસરસિજૈર્લાલિતં રજ્જ્ભર્તુઃ

પાદ્મભોજ પ્રતિપલતુ મે ભાવનાદીર્ઘિકાયામ્ ॥

The acharya says that the lotus feet of the Lord Ranganatha appeared on the golden sands of Kaveri which are home to hamsas or swans. It is said that swans do not like to stay in turbid waters.ન બદ્ધ્નાતિ રતિં હંસઃ



कदचित्कर्मभेदम्सि ॥ The water of Kaveri is clean and have gold

content in the sands. So, the birds prefer to stay in such lovely place.

The word कर्म: also mean sanyasins of the highest order – paramahansa sanyasis. This means that the great sanyasis gather on the shores of Kaveri because of its sacredness.

#### STORY OF THE RIVER KAVERI

There was a king by name Kavera. He was righteous and ruled his kingdom according to the injunctions of the scriptures. He sought liberation or mokSha and with this in mind he did severe penance. Brahma the creator was pleased with his penance and appeared before the king and wanted to know his wish. The king requested Brahma to grant him mokSha. Brahma said that this is not something which He can grant but can be attained only by one getting spiritual wisdom or jnanam. He requested Maya Devi to appear before them. Brahma asked Maya to be born as the king's daughter and impart him the required knowledge. In addition Brahma told her to become a river by name Kaveri and save all beings and also she, by another aspect to become the wife of sage Agastya and spread spiritual wisdom. Accordingly Maya appeared before the king Kavera as an infant. The king was very happy at this. He took the child with him and brought it up with loving care. After some years, the king renounced the kingdom, repaired to the forests, performed severe penance and attained liberation. Kaveri wanted to serve the world in the form of a river and to achieve this she prayed to Lord Narayana and did penance. Pleased with her devotion, the Lord appeared before her and learned of her desire. He told her that He will reside in a gooseberry tree in the Sahyadri hills. Brahma will

worship Him in the tree and wash His feet with the water from the river Vraja in his conch. She should merge herself with those waters and flow in the southern regions and sanctify that area. She will get the names Sahya amalaka Tirtha, Shanka Tirtha and DakShina Ganga. In this period sage Agasthya was performing penance. Brahma appeared before him and advised him to get married and lead the life of a householder. At first he sage was not agreeable to this idea. Brahma explained to him the greatness of a householders' life and suggested that he marry His daughter Kaveri. This will be of advantage to him and also to everyone. Agasthya was convinced of Brahma's words and agreed to marry Kaveri. He went to the Himalayas and met Kaveri who was performing penance there. He told her of Brahma's advice to him. Kaveri agreed to marry the sage. She divided herself into two forms. With the name Kaveri she entered the(ऽमृतकुण्ड) waterpot of the sage. With another body and the name(लोपमुद्रा) Lopamudra she bowed to the sage. The gods assembled at that place. Brahma got Lopamudra married to Agasthya as per the vedic rules. The sage with his wife saluted to the gods assembled there. Sarasvathi Devi, her mother, advised her in detail the duties of a householder's wife. After the marriage Agasthya with his wife started his journey to the south, crossed the Vindhya mountains and reached the Sahya mountains. He kept his water pot in a place and told his disciples that he is going to the nearby Swarnamukhi river to perform his ablutions and till his return to look after it. At that time Brahma saw Lord Vishnu shining in a gooseberry tree nearby. He was overjoyed. He circumambulated the tree and washed the feet of the Lord with the water that had the essence of

all the holy waters from the conch (that represented the Gaytri mantra) he had. The holy water grew into a stream and flowed down the mountain. Kaveri who was staying in sage Agasthya's water pot saw this and was filled with joy. At that time a heavenly voice addressed Kaveri and said that the time for fulfilment of her wish is very near. "The time for you to reach the ocean has come. The holy autumn(शुद्ध) season has come. In this season even a small gift given to a deserving person will yield immense benefit. As the result of your severe penance this also happens to be birth of the month of Thula (7th month of the solar calendar). You should proceed and mingle with the holy waters that is flowing from the worship offered by Brahma. You will be conferring great benefit to the people of the country". By divine will a strong wind accompanied by heavy rain started blowing at that time. The disciples of the sage forgot all about the sage's advice to take care of his water pot and ran for cover. The strong wind upset the pot. Kaveri flowed from the pot, mixed with the waters in the stream and started to flow in the southern direction. Sage Agasthya returned after finishing his ablutions and saw what had happened. He was very happy to see Kaveri flowing down the mountain as a river. He summoned Kaveri and blessed her. She told the sage what all happened in his absence and how she got mixed with the holy waters from bathing the feet of Lord Vishnu who appeared in the tree. Sage Agasthya was pleased by the answer of Kaveri. He lauded her and said that the Southern Peninsula will derive great benefit from her. Then he also passed on to her some secret information he knew by his great spiritual power.

महारहस्यं किञ्चात्र शृणुष्वत्यद्भुतं शुभे ॥  
अवीमि दिव्यदृष्ट्याद्य सर्वशास्त्रेषु निश्चितम् ॥

महापातकिनां पापं मोचयन्त्यः क्षणेन हि ॥  
गङ्गादिना महानद्यस्तीर्थानि च महान्ति च ॥

मलीकृताश्च तत्पापैः अशक्तास्तद्विमोचने ॥  
शोचयन्त्यः परं देवं यान्ति लोकपितामहम् ॥

तासां विशुद्धये ब्रह्मा सत्मायां मुनिभिः सह ॥  
सम्यग्विचार्य शास्त्रेषु वेदेषु च पुनः पुनः ॥

हरिणा च ततः प्रोक्तं प्रायश्चित्तं विधास्यता ॥  
स्नास्यन्तु सल्लघात्यग्रे कावेर्या तौलिसङ्गमे ॥

The rivers like Ganga that are renowned to cleanse people who take bath in them of their sins were polluted by the sins washed into them. They were sad at this and approached Brahma, the Creator, to find a way to get themselves rid of this huge load of sins dumped into them. Brahma discussed this issue with the sages assembled in his court at that time and looked into the scriptures also for an answer. They came across the expiation mentioned by Shri Hari – that is they should take bath in Kaveri in the seventh month(तुल्ल) of solar calendar. The 66 crores of waters from all the 14 worlds come to Kaveri at that period to wash off their sins. They should also go to Kaveri and take bath at that time.

ષટ્ષષ્ટિકોટિ તીર્થાનિ દ્વિસપ્ત-ભુવનેષુ ચ ॥  
તાનિ ચાયાન્તિ કાવેર્યા સ્વાઘૌઘ-વિનિવૃત્તયે ॥

Such a holy river naturally attracts holy men to its banks. He said  
that he as also many other sages will have residence on her banks.

અહં તુ વૈખાનસ વાલખિલ્યૈરન્યૈઃ મુનીન્દ્રૈસ્સનકાદિભિશ્ચ ॥  
સર્વત્ર તે પુણ્યતટે વસામિ ॥

Sage Agastya told this to Kaveri and blessed her saying that she will  
confer all prosperity for those living in the southern part of the  
country.

વિભૂત્યૈ દક્ષિણત્યાનાં ક્ષેમાય વિજયાય ચ ॥  
મયા ચૈવાભ્યનુજ્ઞાતા ગચ્છ દેવિ યથાસુખમ્ ॥

We are indeed blessed to have such sacred rivers in our country. Let  
us pray to Kaveri and be cleansed of our sins. The following verse gives  
a description of Kaveri devi and is suitable for meditation on Her.

અચ્છ-સ્વચ્છ-લસદ્-દુક્કૂલવસનાં પદ્માસનાધ્યાયિનીં  
હસ્ત-ન્યસ્ત-વરાભયાબ્જ-કલશાં રાકેન્દુ-કોટિ-પ્રભામ્ ॥  
ભાસ્વદ્-ભૂષણ-ગન્ધ-માલ્ય-રુચિરં ચારુ-પ્રસન્નાનનાં  
શ્રીગજાદિ-સમસ્ત-તીર્થ-નિલયાં ધ્યાયામિ કાવેરિકામ્ ॥

The verse, roughly translated, says that I meditate on Kaveri who wears  
spotlessly clean silk garments, and is seated in the Padmasana pose. She  
has one palm of the hand pointing down indicating that She will grant

desires of those who seek her and another palm of the hand pointing up  
indicating She will protect and grant freedom from fear. She wears shining  
jewels and fine smelling garlands and has a pleasing smiling face. She is  
the repository of all holy wates like Ganga.

}

॥ ॐ नमः ॥

Encoded, proofread, and commented by N.Balasubramanian bbalu@sify.com

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