

അച്യുതാഷ്ടകം ശ്രീധരവേങ്കടേശവിരചിതം

{॥ അച്യുതാഷ്ടകം ശ്രീധരവേങ്കടേശവിരചിതം ॥}

achyutAShTakam by Shri Shridhara Venkatesha.

The author Shridhara Venkatesha was a staunch devotee of Shiva but he had no dislike for Vishnu. He had even decried the differences displayed by people who claimed to be devotees of Siva or Vishnu to the exclusion of the other. He believed that in this age of Kali yuga when peoples' mind will be attacked by a million distractions making it impossible for one to devote himself seriously to God, they can take to chanting of His name as Shridhara believed that the name is as potent as Him in destroying the sins of the devotee. This theme is highlighted in this short poem. The poet addresses the name and not the Lord as is usually the case. The power of the Lord's name in destroying the sins is mentioned in the first verse. He cites with wonder instances when the name came to the rescue of His devotees in times of crises. One instance was the case of Draupathi when she was being subjected to humiliation and was in a helpless condition. She cried out for help and uttered Lord's name which produced unending piles of clothes to the amazement of all and frustrated the efforts of those who tried to dishonour her. The poet then cites the case of Gagendra who was caught in a tussle with a crocodile. After a long-drawn struggle the elephant, feeling helpless, called out loudly the Lord's name. This made Him rush to his rescue. The poet feels that it was the Lord's name that worked these wonders.

അഥ അച്യുതാഷ്ടകം ॥

അഭിലപനനിസർഗാദച്യുതാവ്യേ ഭജേ ത്വാം
ഹരസി മദഘൃണാദം ത്വദ്ഭൃണുക്ഷാവശാത് ത്വമ് ।
അഘൃണിതി തവാംബ പത്ര്യുത വ്യാതിദോ/ഹം
ത്വയി മമ വദ കാ വാ സംഗതിർദൈന്യവാചാമ് ॥ ൧॥

ചിരാതീതാ സാൻദീപനിതനുഭുവഃ കാലഭവന-
പ്രപ്രതിസ്തം പിതരോഃ പുനരഗമയത് സന്നിധിമിതി ।
യശഃ കൃഷ്ണസ്തേദം കഥമഹ ന ത്വാം രസനയാ
യദി ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണാവ്യേ ഭജതി സ താദനീം മുനിസുതഃ ॥ ൨॥

ഹരേര്യച്ചോരത്വം യദപി ച തഥാ ജാരചരിതം
തദേതത് സർവാംഹസ്തതികൃതേ സംകഥനതഃ ।
ഇതീദം മാഹാത്മ്യം മധുമഥന തേ ദീപിതമിദം
വദന്ത്യാഃ കൃഷ്ണാവ്യേ തവഹി വിചരന്ത്യാ വിലസിതമ് ॥ ൩॥

സഭായാം ദ്വൈപത്യാ/ംശുകസ്യുതിഭിയാ തദസ്രനയാ
ധൃതാ തസ്യാശ്ചേലം പത്രനു തദവസ്ഥം വിദധതീ ।
ധൃതാനീശ്ശൈലാഭം വസനവിസരം ചാംബ ഹരതാ-
മിയാൻ ഗോവിന്ദാവ്യേ വദ വസനരാശിസ്തവ കൃതഃ ॥ ൪॥

അധിരസനമയി ത്വാമച്യുതാവ്യേ ദധാനം
വനജഭവമുഖാനാം വൻദ്യമാഹുർമഹാൻതഃ ।
സതു വിനമതി മാതശ്ചാശ്വഗോശ്വാദനാദീൻ
ഭവതി നനു വിചിത്രാ പദ്യതിസ്താവകാനാമ് ॥ ൫॥

ജനനി മുരഭിദാവ്യേ ജാഹ്നവീനിമ്നഗൈകാ
സമജനി പദപദ്മാകുലിണസ്ത്വാശ്വിതാനാമ് ।
പരിണമതി സമസ്താഃ പാദവാർഘിൻദുരേകോ

ജഗതി നന്നു തടിന്തോ ജാഹ്നവീസഹ്യാജാദ്യാഃ ॥ ൬॥

സമവഹിതമപശ്യാൻ സന്തീയൗ വൈനതേയം
പ്രസഭവീധുതപദ്മാപാണിരീശോ/ച്യുതാഖ്യേ ।
സമവിതുമുപനീതഃ സാഗജേന്ദ്രം ത്വയാ ദ്രാക്
വദ ജനനി വിനാ ത്വാം കേന വാ കിം തദാഭൂത് ॥ ൭॥

യദേഷ സ്തൌമി ത്വാം ത്രിയുഗചരണതദ്രായിണി തതോ
മഹിമ്നഃ കാ ഹാനിസ്തവതു മമ സംപന്നിരവധിഃ ।
ശൂനാ ലീലാകാമം ഭവതി സുരസിന്ധുർഭഗവതീ
തദേഷാ കിംഭൂതാ സതു സപദി സന്താപഭരിതഃ ॥ ൮॥

ഇതി ശ്രീശ്രീധരവേങ്കടേശാർയകൃതൗ അച്യുതാഷ്ടകം സംപൂർണ്ണമ് ॥

Encoded and proofread by N. Balasubramanian bbalu at satyam.net.in

{LIFE OF SHRIDHARA VENKATESA}

ശ്രീകൺഠമിവ ഭാസ്വന്തം ശിവനാമപരായണമ് ।
ശ്രീധരം വേങ്കടേശാർയം ശ്വരേയസേ ഗുരുമാശ്രയേ ॥

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 age Kali 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 ഭഗവൽനാമഭൂഷണം (Bagavannamabhushanam) on the subject which is sadly not available now. Bodhendra Swami had also written a book നാമാമൃതരസായനം (Namamritarasayanam) on the subject wherein he had made references to the work of Ayyaval. Once Ayyaval had to perform a sraddha 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) Matrubhtasatakam. (5) Stuti paddati. (6) Shivabhakthikalpalatha. (7) Shivabhaktha lakshanam. (8) Taravali stotram. (9) Artihara stotram. (10) Kuliresvarashtakam. (11) Jambhunathashtakam. (12) Doshapariharashtakam. (13) Krishnadwadasa manjari. (14) Achyuthashtakam. (15) Dola navarathnamala. (16) Padamanimanjari – a sanskrit dictionary. (17) Shahajiraja charitam.

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