

ஸ்ரீகபாலீஸ்வராஷ்டகம்

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INTRODUCTION--

Shri Kapalishvara is the name of Lord Shiva who is the presiding deity at the ancient temple of Shiva in Mylapore, Chennai – the capital of the State of Tamilnadu. His consort has the name Kalpakambal. Ashtakam (அஷ்டகம்) means a poem consisting of eight verses. In this case the verses are in praise of Shri Kapalishvara. He is praised here with qualities referred to in the vedas, puranas and also as the Infinite Supreme Being. This shows that it is the Supreme Being that appears as Kapalishvara in the temple in Mylapore as any god in any other temple.

NOTE:-

The following symbols are used in the explanations that are given below.

- (1) – SA :- Saiva Agama. (2) – SP :- Shiva Purana. (3) – SAN – Shiva 108 Namavali.
(4) – SL – Shivanandalahari of Shri Shankaracharya. (5) – VS – Vishnu sahasranama.
(6) – BG – Bhagavad Gita. (7) – SS – Siva sahasranama (From Padmapurana)

with the commentary by late H.H. Sri Parasivendra Saraswati of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.

The vedas (Taittiriya Upanishad, Anandavalli) declare that the Supreme Being is beyond reach of senses and mind. யதோ வாசோ நிவர்தந்தே அப்ராப்ய மநஸா ஸஹ| For this, reason His qualities cannot be adequately portrayed by anyone. The Shiva Mahimmna stotram (22) puts this up in a graphic manner. The poet says that even if the blue mountain were to be a lump of ink powder, the ocean the ink-pot, the branch of the heavenly tree Parijata be pen, the earth itself the writing leaf, and by taking these Saradha the Goddess of Learning writes for eternity,

even then His virtues cannot be fully described.

அஸிதகிரிஸம் ஸ்யாத் கஜ்ஜலீ ஸிந்துஃ பாத்ரீ
ஸூரதருவரஸாகா லேகநீ பத்ரமூர்வீ ।
லிகதி யதி கஹீத்வா ஸாரதா ஸர்வகாலீ
ததபி தவ குணாநாமீஸ பார் ந யாதி ॥

The question then is, why should one take up the futile job of writing a stotram in praise of the Lord knowing full well that it can never be done satisfactorily? The same author of Mahimna Stotram provides the answer right at the beginning of the work.

மதுஸ்பீதா வாசஃ பரமமமதீ நிர்மிதவத-
ஸ்தவ ப்ரஹ்மந் கீ வாகபி ஸூரகுரோர்விஸ்மயபதம் ।
மம த்வேதரீ வாணீ குணகதநபுண்யேந பவதஃ
புநாமீத்யர்தேஸம்மிந் புரமதந புத்திர்வ்யவஸ்திதா ॥

He says that the Lord has given out the wonderful vedas which are sweet as the nectar. So, even the hymns composed by Brihaspathi, the learned guru of the devas will be insignificant to the Lord. This being so,

I have ventured to praise You because the act will purify my speech.

Our puranas repeatedly say that chanting the Lord's names and singing

His glories destroy one's sins. One need not worry about the level of

his learning to start in this endeavour. Sage Narada pointed this out

to Sage Vyasa and advised him to write about the glories of the Lord.

தத்வாக்விஸர்கோ ஜநதாகவிப்லவோ யஸ்மிந் ப்ரதிஸ்ஸலோகமபத்தவத்யபி ।
நாமாந்யநந்தஸ்ய யமோஸங்கிதாநி யச்சண்வந்தி காயந்தி
கணந்தி ஸாதவஃ ॥BH(1-5-11).

The composition may be replete with faults. Yet, if each vesre speaks of

the Lord's glory , such a work alone will be liked by noble souls. They will hear it, sing it and repeat it to the listeners. Because of this reason scholars and poets continue to write hymns in praise of the Lord.

THE TEMPLE:-

The temple of Shri Kapalishvara is many centuries old. The Lord here has been sung by several Tamil saints known as Nayanmars. The famous composer Papanasam Sivan lived in Mylapore near the temple and was an ardent devotee of Kapalishvara. He had composed many songs in praise of the Lord and Devi Kalpakambal. Originally, the temple was situated on the sea shore. But it was badly damaged by tidal waves that battered the structure in the second half of the 16th century. It was later moved to the present location where a magnificent temple has come up. There is a large tank before the temple which is used for the float festival.

Being a major temple devoted to Lord Shiva all the important festivals associated with Lord Shiva are observed punctiliously. The temple is very popular and attracts a large number of devotees even on normal days. It includes locals and tourists from from all over India and abroad too. The crowds are particularly heavy on weekends, Fridays, on important days such as pradoshams (on the Trayodashi days) and Sivaratri.

NOTE:-

In the passages that follow there may be statements that will appear to eulogise Lord Shiva as the Supreme Being and place other Gods on lower pedestals. These statements may cause some confusion or displeasure to some. There is no need at all for such feelings. Our puranas always resort to this kind of statements in which one form of God is praised as the Supreme Being and others are shown as an inferior to that particular deity. This is just to glorify that particular form. The intention is never to slight any deities. All puranas are particular in stating what

is said in the vedas – that it is the one Supreme Being which appears as different Gods and in essence all are one and the same. The Lord says clearly in Gita that He receives worship offered to God in any form.

யே யதா மரீ ப்ரபத்யந்தே தரீஸ்ததைவ பஜாம்யஹம் ।
மம வர்த்மாநுவர்தந்தே மநுஷ்யாஃ பார்த ஸர்வஸஃ ॥ BG(4-11).

We see in some movies that one actor plays the roles of the hero and also other characters. The hero frequently fights with others (played by same person). And finally some event reveals the fact that all of them are born to the same lady and are brothers. They hug each other in great joy and live happily ever after. Similarly, the one Supreme Being alone appears in various forms. So, essentially all forms depict the same Being.

LINGAM –

Shri Kapalishvara in the sanctum in the temple is in the form of a lingam.

The form has esoteric significance. The word "lingam" means a sign or emblem that characterises an object. லிங்க்யதேநேந இதி லிங்கம்।

The Agama texts, however, interpret the word to describe the Supreme Being from which the universe emerges (நிர்க்ச்சந்தி) and into which

it finally merges. லயீ க்ச்சந்தி பூதாநி ஸ்ஹாரே நிகிலாநி

ச। நிர்க்ச்சந்தி யதம்சாபி லிங்கோக்திஸ்தேந ஹேதுநா ॥ The Supreme

Being is without parts and form. (அரூப). However this form is not easily understood or suitable for worship by most people since they have intense attachment to their bodies. Krishna says this clearly.

க்வேபோ஽திகதரஸ்தேஷா-மவ்யக்தாஸக்த-சேதஸாம் ॥

அவ்யக்தா ஹி கதிர்துஃக் தேஹவத்பிரவாப்யதே ॥ BG(12-5).

Considering this problem that will face many, our shastras provide three concepts of the Lord. That is, sakala (one with form, rupa, like Nataraja, DakShinamurty etc.), nishkala (one without form, arupa) and sakala-nishkala (one with and without parts or specific form, rupa-arupa).The lingam belongs to the third category - a combination of form and formlessness. It is thus extremely suitable for worship. Its form is made of mantras and hence it is said that the Sivalinga is constituted of vidya or mantra deha. The three sections of the Shiva linga, namely the square base, the octogonal column and the upper part relate respectively to Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Rudra the annihilator.

ப்ரஹ்மா விஷ்ணும்ச ருத்ரம்ச த்ரிகண்டமிதி கத்யதே ।
ஊர்த்வீ து ஸிவபாகஸ்யாத் விஷ்ணுபாகஸ்து மத்யமஃ ।
ப்ரஹ்மாபாகஸ்த்வதஃ ப்ரோக்தஃ ஸாஸ்த்ரஜ்ஞைரலிங்ககும்பயோஃ ॥

Thus the lingam represents the Supreme Being that embodies in itself the triad of gods. One of the names of Shiva is

லிங்கரூபீ - லீநமர்தீ கமயதீதி லிங்கம் । தத்ரூபீ லிங்கரூபீ ।
அவித்யாதிரோஹித-ஜடப்ரபஞ்சஸ்ய கமகத்வீ ப்ரகாஸாத்மகஸ்ய
சைதந்யஸ்ய,
தத்ரூபீ பரமேஸ்வரஃ இத்யர்தஃ । ததுக்தீ ஸ்காந்தே -
ஸூதஃ:-
அதாதஃ ஸ்ப்ரவக்ஷ்யாமி ஸிவலிங்கீ ஸமாஸதஃ ।
யஸ்ய விஜ்ஞாநமாத்ரேண விமுக்தோ மாநவோ பவேத் ॥

ஸிவ ஏவ ஸ்வயீ லிங்கீ கமகமேவ ஹி ।
ஸிவேந கம்யதே ஸர்வீ ஸிவோ நாந்யேந கம்யதே ॥SS(653).

Now we will say a few words about some important days observed in the temple. These days may be divided into two types – festivals and vratams. Their purpose is the same, that is to make strong the remembrance of the Lord and bring us close to Him. Festivals like Deepavali and Dusserrah are marked by celebrations. The vratams, such as the Ekadasi and Shivaratri are marked by fasting, devotion, austeriry and observance of vows.

PRADOSHAM: –

We are familiar with the story of the churning of the ocean by devas and asuras to obtain the Amrit or nectar. It is said that they used the mountain Manthara as the churning pestle and the snake Vasuki as the rope. The asuras held the snake near the head and the devas the tail portion. As they started churning the snake suffered intense agony and vomitted its venom. It was very potent and threatened to engulf the world. The devas ran to Lord Shiva and prayed to Him to save them and the world. Shiva, who is the embodiment of compassion took pity on them and consumed the venom. All the devas who gathered at that time felt immense relief and worshipped the Lord in gratitude without taking any food. This was the Ekadasi day. The Lord was pleased with their worship and distributd the Amrit to them. On the following day (that is, on the dwadasi) the devas finished their puja early in the morning and had their food. On the next day, that is on trayodasi, the Lord who was pleased with their devotion performed a dance in the evening. Devi Parvati was watching the dance along with the devas. This dance performance lasted for one yAma (॥ITLD) or three hours. The period came to be known as pradosham. This is a vratam and devoted exclusively for the worship of Lord Shiva. If the pradosham falls on a Saturday then it becomes specially auspicious. The pradosham is auspicious as on that occasion all the

gods and devas assemble to have the darshan of Lord Shiva and witness His dance. So, by visiting the temple on that occasion one can have the benefit of having the darshan of Lord Shiva as also all gods. Some verses from Shiva Puranam that talk about the glory of pradosham are given below. Rough translations of the verses are also given.

ஸ்புரேவ ததா பூஜ்யோ நாந்யே விஷ்ணுவாதயஸ்ஸுராஃ ।
யத்தத்ர ஸர்வே஽பி ஸுராஸ்திஷ்டந்தி ஸிவஸந்நிதௌ ॥

அதஸ்தஸ்யார்சநீ பூஜா கதாசுணகணஸ்தவம் ।
தந்மந்த்ரஸ்ய ஜபஸ்சைவ கர்தவ்யோ மோக்ஷகரீக்ஷிபிஃ ॥

தாரித்ர்யதுஃகதாந்தாநரீ ஏதத்திவ்யாஞ்ஜநீ ஸ்மதம் ।
ணார்ணவநிமக்நாநரீ உடுபோ஽யீ ஸுதாரகஃ ॥

On that occasion (evening of pradosham day) Lord Shiva alone is to be worshipped, and not other devas like Vishnu. For, all of them are there in the presence of Lord Shiva. So, one who seeks liberation should do His puja, listen to stories that narrate His glories and chant His mantra. Those who are severely afflicted by poverty and sorrow will get relief by this. This will serve as a boat that will help those who are immersed in ocean of debts.

ப்ரதோஷே பார்வதீநாதே மஹத்தந்வதி தாண்டவம் ।
வாக்தேவீ வல்லவீந்தத்தே மதங்கீ கருடத்வஜஃ ।
ரமா காநகலரீ ப்ரஹ்மா தாலீ வேணு திவஸ்பதிஃ ॥

ஸர்வே சாந்யே ஸுபர்வாணஃ ஸேவந்தே தீ மஹேஸ்வரம் ।
புண்யக்ஷேத்ரீ ஸமாஸாத்ய மஹாலிங்கீ நிஷேவ்ய ச ॥

பஞ்சகத்வா நமஸ்குர்யாத் ஸாஷ்டாங்கீ பக்திபூர்வகம் ।
பரீஸூநரீ அங்கலக்நாநரீ ஏகைகஸ்ய நமஸ்கதௌ ॥

திவ்யவர்ஷஸஹஸ்ரீது ஸிவலோகே மஹீயதே ।

During pradosha time Lord Shiva dances along with Parvathi Devi. Sarasvati
Devi plays on veena. Vishnu plays on mridangam. Laxmi Devi sings and
Brahma plays on cymbals. Indra plays on flute. All gods witness the
glorious sight. One should reach a holy shrine and worship Mahalingam
by prostrating to Him five times. By saluting thus one gets to live
in Shivaloka for as many years as the dust particles that had stuck to
his body.

தர்ஸநீ வந்தநீ லிங்கப்ரதக்ஷிணஞ்ச தர்பணம் ।
ப்ரதோஷே ணமுக்தேஃ ஸ்யாத் பவதூலமஹாநிலஃ ।
புக்திர்மைதுநமப்யங்கீ ஹரிதர்ஸநகீர்தநே ।
வ்யர்தாலாபி ப்ரதோஷே து வர்ஜயேத்வைதிகோ ஜநஃ ॥

Having darsan of Shivalingam, circumambulating It and performing tarpanam
will pay off the five obligations one is born with. One should not indulge
in eating, sex, oil bath, darsan of Hari and idle gossip during pradosham.
விஷ்ண்வர்சநீ ஸதா கார்யீ ப்ரதோஷஸமயீ விநா ।
தத்ராபி நரஸீஹீ து கீர்தயேத்தர்ஸயேத்புதஃ ॥

ஏவீ ப்ரதோஷஸமயே பூஜரீ கர்துமஸக்நுவந் ।
கத்வா ஸிவாலயீ பஸ்யேத் பக்தோ஽பக்தோ஽தவா ஸிவம் ॥

One should worship Lord Vishnu always except on pradosham days.
It is beneficial to have darsan of Lord Narasimha and worship Him on
pradosham time. One who is unable to do puja etc., as said above during

pradosham can get the benefit by having a darsan of the temple of Lord Shiva.

NOTE:-

It is said here that one should not have darsan of Vishnu on pradosham days but it does good to have darsan and worship Narasimaha. The reason is that Narasimha is Shiva only and not different from Him. The following quote from Nrisimhapurvatapani upanishad states this clearly.

ஓ தீ ஸத்யீ பரீ ப்ரஹ்ம புருஷீ நகேஸரி விக்ரஹம் ।
கஷ்ணபிகல-மூர்த்வரேதீ விருபாக்ஷீ ப்ரகீர் நீலலோஹிதீ
உமாபதீ பஸ,பதீ பிநாகிநீ ஹ்யமிதத்யுதி-மீஸாநஃ--- ॥

SHIVARATRI.

The pradosham day occurring in the Magha month (11th in the Hindu calendar) is very special and is celebrated as Shivaratri. This is the day when Lord Shiva revealed His glorious form to the gods to show that He alone is the Supreme Being. He appeared to them in the form of infinite effulgence. He told them that they all can derive benefit by worshipping Him. Accordingly the gods offered special puja to Him. Lord Shiva was pleased with their worship. He added that the day will be known as Shivaratri and will be a very auspicious one.

திநமேதத் ததஃ புண்யீ பவிஷ்யதி மஹத்தரம் ।
ஸிவராத்திரிதி க்யாதா திதிரேஷா மம ப்ரியா ॥

Later the infinite form transformed itself into a lingam. The Lord said that whoever fasts on that day or worships Him will get all that is good in this life and will escape rebirth. He also said that the lingam will get installed in all the temples and the place where the lingam appeared first will be known as Arunachalam. Aruna means red – the colour of the flame. Achalam means mountain. Shiva in this place is

known as Arunachaleshvara.

போகாவஹீ இத் லிங்கீ புக்திமுக்த்யேக ஸாதநம் ।
தர்மந-ஸ்பர்மந-த்யாநாஜ்ஜந்தூநீ ஜந்ம மோசநம் ॥

அநலாசல-ஸ்காஸீ யதித் லிங்கமுத்திதம் ।
அருணாசலமித்யேவ ததித் க்யாதமேஷ்யதி ॥

This have occurred in Tiruvannamali where the lingam in the temple is known as tejolingam (தேஜோலிங்கம்). The event is celebrated as an annual festival in that town. A big lamp is lighted at the top of the hill behind the temple to mark the event. Thousands of people gather to witness the light.

Shivaratri day is celebrated with great deal of fervour in Shiva temples all over the country. This is a vratam and so is marked by pujas, fasting and offering prayers throughout the night. After having bath one should wear vibhuti, necklace of rudrakSha beads, worship the Lord with bilva leaves, chant thr sacred panchakShara mantra and visit Shiva temple and participate in the pujas that are done throughout the night. Fasting is prescribed as an aid to curb the wandering tendency of the mind so that it can concentrate on the job on hand - in this case the puja of the Lord. This is known to us for long. Shri Krishna mentions this in Bhagavad Gita (2-59).

விஷயா விநிவர்தந்தே நிராஹாரஸ்ய தேஹிநஃ ।

Some verses from the Shiva puranas that extol the important day are given here with rough translation.

மாககஷ்ணசதுர்தம்யரீ உபவாஸோ஽திதுர்லபஃ ।
தத்ராபி துர்லபீ மந்யே ராத்ரௌ ஜாகரணீ நணாம் ॥

Fasting on the chaturdashi day in the fortnight following the full moon day in the Magha month (ie) on Shivaratri day is not something that is easily got by everyone. Still more difficult to get is the possibility of keeping awake during the night on that day.

அதீவ துர்லபீ தத்ர ஸிவலிங்கஸ்ய தர்ஸநம் ।
ஸுதுர்லபதரீ தத்ர பூஜநீ பரமேஸித்வஃ ॥

It is very difficult to have darshan of the Shiva lingam. Still more difficult is a to get a chance to worship the Lord.

பவ-கோடி-ஸுதோபாத்த-புண்ய-ராஸரி-விபாகதஃ ।
லப்யதே வா புநஸ்தத்ர பில்வ-பத்ரார்பணீ விபோஃ ॥

Even in performing that worship to that omnipresent Lord the good fortune to offer bilva leaves to Him is got only by the fructification of good deeds done in innumerable births.

வர்ஷாணாமயுதீ யேந ஸ்நாதீ கங்காஸரிஜ்ஜலே ।
ஸகத் பில்வார்சநேநைவ தத்பலீ லப்யதே நரைஃ ॥

What merit one earns by taking bath in the river Ganga for ten thousand years is got by worshipping Lord with the bilva leaves on Shivaratri day.

அத்ரோபவாஸஃ கேநாபி கதஃ க்ரதுஸுதாயதே ।
ராத்ரௌ ஜாகரணீ புண்யீ வர்ஷ-கோடி-தபோதிகம் ॥

Fasting on the night of Shivaratri is equivalent to performing hundred vedic sacrifices. Keeping awake on that night is superior to austerities performed in ten million years.

ஏகேந பில்வ-பத்ரேண ஸிவ-லிங்கார்சநே கதே ।

த்ரையோக்யே தஸ்ய புண்யஸ்ய கோ வா ஸாதம்யமச்சதி ॥

Nothing in all the worlds equals the merit one earns by offering one
bilva leaf to the Lord on that holy day.

அஹோ பலவதீ மாயா யேந ஸைவீ மஹாதிதிஃ ।
நோபாஸ்யதே ஜநை-ர்மூடைஃ அதிமூர்கைரிவ த்ரயீ ॥

OH! great is the power of maya. Ignorant people do not observe Shivaratri
which is so glorious. This is just like the ignorant people not caring
to study the vedas.

உபவாஸோ ஜாகரணீ ஸந்நிதிஃ பரமேபரிதுஃ ।
கோகர்ணீ பரிவலோகஸ்ய நணரீ ஸோபாந-பத்ததிஃ ॥

Fasting on Shivaratri day, keeping awake during that night, visiting
the temple of the Lord, the holy place of Gokarna constitute the steps
for one to reach the abode of Lord Shiva .

THE SUMMER FESTIVAL:-

The summer festival (March-April) lasts for ten days. It attracts
huge crowds from in and around the city of Chennai. We can have
the darshan of the Lord riding on the bull Nandi on the fifth day.

One of the Lord's name is ஷபாரூடஃ. The bull or rishabha
(ஷபஃ) represents dharma which showers all desired results
like dharma. artha kama and also gives purity of mind that helps
in pursuing mokSha. The commentator says :- "வஷ ஸேசநே"

வர்ஷணாத் ஸர்வகாமாநரீவஷபஃ, தர்மரூபதயா ஸர்வகாமப்ரதத்வாத்,
தமாரூடஃ; வஷபவாஹநஃ இத்யர்தஃ ISAN(40). The Lord also has

the bull as the mark in His flag. Because of this He also has the name
வஷாங்கஃ ISAN(39).. This shows the great importance the Lord

attaches to dharma.

On the seventh day we have the car festival when He goes round the streets

in a car. It is very popular and attracts huge crowds. It is said that

one who can have the darsan of the Lord in the car will escape rebirth.

ரதஸ்தீ வாமநீ தஷ்ட்வா புநர்ஜந்ம ந வித்யதே । The "car"
represents the body.

ஆத்மாநீ ரதிநீ வித்தி ஸரீரீ ரதமேவ ச ।

புத்தி து ஸாரதீ வித்தி மநஃ ப்ரக்ரஹமேவ ச ॥

says Katha Upanishad (1-3-3).

The Self within the body is the charioteer, the one who rides in

the chariot. The வாமநஃ or dwarf mentioned herein refers to the

Self, Supreme Being, the size of the thumb, who resides in the body,

in the small chamber of the heart of everyone. The Katha Upanishad says

this. (KU-2-1-12).

அங்குஷ்டமாத்ரஃ புருஷோ மத்ய ஆத்மநி திஷ்டதி ।

ஈஸாநீ பூதபவ்யஸ்ய ந ததோ விஜ,குப்ஸதே ॥

Even though the Self is all pervading, It is conceived as a dwarf residing

in the heart to facilitate meditation on It.

Another important festival is the day when the 63 saivaite saints,

known as Nayanmars are taken in a procession and the Lord follows His

devotees. A popular Tamil poet Avvaiyar has said in one of her poems

that a devotee of the Lord is greater than the Lord Himself as he has

the Lord enshrined in his heart! This will remind us of what Sri Krishna

told about His devotees to His friend Uddhava in the Uddhava Gita.

நிரபேக்ஷீ முநீ ஸாந்தீ நிர்வைரீ ஸமதர்ஸநம் ।

அநுவ்ரஜாம்யஹீ நித்யீ பூயயேத்யங்க்ரிரேணுபிஃ ॥

(Srimad Bhagavatam-11-14-16).

He said that He invariably follows His devotees.

This festival is celebrated on the eighth day.

On the ninth day one can have the darshan of the Lord as பிக்ஷாடநஃ

a mendicant going around the streets with a begging bowl. The question

now arises as to why the Lord is reduced to state of nothingness? Puranas

tell that Lord Shiva took on the role of a beggar with a dishevelled

appearance to teach a lesson to some sages who were staunch adherents of

the path of karma and ignored the higher path of jnana. They were proud

of their of achievements in this path that got them some supernatural

powers also. The beggar was extremely handsome. On seeing Him many of

the men and women in the ashram precinct lost their balance and started

following Him. When the sages saw this they were furious. They cursed

him and let loose some demons created by their spiritual power. But their

attempts to harm the beggar utterly failed and they felt humiliated. They

surrendered to the Lord.

The ten days festival concludes with the wedding of the divine couple

(Lord Kapali and Devi Kalpakambal). The function is celebrated with

great deal of enthusiasm by the people as they consider it as a marriage

happening in their own house. Everyone brings presents to the "bride"

and "groom" in the form of silk sarees and silk dhoties etc. Many offer

pieces of jewellery. They also bring sweet and savoury items prepared

specially for the occasion. Thus the marriage turns out to be a memorable

occasion. After the function gets over the devotees are given prasad

offered to the divine couple. The wedding signifies the union of the

Jivatma and Pramatma who were never separate, but felt separated due to

the veil of avidya or nescience. The Lalithasahasranamam describes Devi

Lalitha as காமேஸ்வரி-பத்த-மாங்கல்யஸூத்ர-போபித-கந்தரா। Devi's

neck shines with the Mangalya thread tied by the Lord who, therefore

has the name அம்பிகாநாதம் = அம்பிகாயா நாதம் பதிம்। இது சார்த்தம்

ஸ்ருதி-ப்ரஸித்தீ நாம। "நமோ ஹிரண்ய-பாஹுவே ஹிரண்ய-வர்ணாய

ஹிரண்ய-ரூபாய ஹிரண்ய-பதயே஽ம்பிகா-பதய உமா-பதயே பஸு-பதயே

நமோநமம்।

We also have the float festival (in January-February) when the Lord goes

round the tank in a float. This symbolises the fact that the Lord Siva,

like a boatman, goes in a boat or raft, scours the ocean of samsara and

looks for people who are struggling in the ocean and seeking His help

to come out of it. So Siva has these names .

ஸீஸாரார்ணவ-மக்நாநரீ ஸமுத்தரண ஹேதும் -

ஸீஸாரம் ஜநநமரணாதிஸமுஹம் ஸ ஏவார்ணவம், ஸமுத்ரம் அபாரத்வாத்,

தத்ர மக்நாநரீ ஸர்வதா தும்கநுபவிதணரீ,

தும்கநாமகரப்லவாதிரஹிதாநரீ, ஸமுத்தரணே,

தேஷரீ தும்கநாமநே ஹேதும் காரணீ வேதாந்தமஹாவாக்யஜந்ய-

வத்த்யாஸூடம் ஸந் ஸீஸரபாமவிச்சேதகரத்வாத் ॥

"ஜ்ஞாத்வா தேவீ ஸர்வபாமாபஹாநிரிதி" ஸ்ருதிம் ॥SS(408) and

விஷயார்ணவமக்நாநரீ ஸமுத்தரணஸேதும் -

விஷயஸுப்தேந விஷயாநுபவஸூபஸீஸார உச்யதே ॥ ஸ ஏவார்ணவம்

ஸமுத்ரம் விஷயார்ணவம், தஸ்மிந் ஸீஸாரஸமுத்ரே மஹதி,

அவித்யாகாமகர்மப்ரபவதும்கோதகே தீவ்ரரோகஜராமத்யுமஹாக்ரஹே

அநாதாவநந்தே஽பாரே நிராலம்பே

விஷயேந்த்ரியஜநிதஸுகலவலக்ஷணவிப்ரமே,

பஞ்சேந்தரியோத்ததண்மாருத- விசுஷாபோத்திதாநர்தமதமஹோர்மிணி,
மஹாபாதகாத்யநேகநிரயகதே, (துர்வாரவாரிசரகர்பே) ஹாஹேத்யாதி-
கூஜிதாக்ரோபநோத்பூதமஹார்ணவே மக்நாந் ஸமுத்தரணே
ஸம்யகுத்தரணே
ஸேதுரிவ ஸேதுஃ ।

"த்ரிருந்நதீ ஸ்தாப்ய ஸம் ஸரீர்
ஹதீந்த்ரியாணி மநஸா ஸந்நிவேம்ய ।
ப்ரஹ்மோடுபேந ப்ரதரேவ வித்வாந்
ஸ்ரோதரீஸி ஸர்வாணி பயாவஹாநி ॥" இதி ப்ருதிஃ ॥SS(477).

This will bring to our mind the verse from the popular Karavalamba
stotrAm wherein Shri Shankaracharya beseeches Lord Laxmi Narasimha to
extend His hand and pull him out of the fearsome ocean of samsara.

ஸீஸார-ஸாகர-நிமஜ்ஜந-முஹ்யமாந்
தீந் விலோகய விபோ கருணாநிதே மாம் ।
ப்ரஹ்லாத-கேத-பரிஹார-பராவதார-
லக்ஷ்மீநஸீஹ மம தேஹி கராவலம்பம் ॥(கம) ॥

Every individual is struggling in the ocean of samsasra, but does not
know how to reach the shore. Also he does not have the ability to know
the means. In such a precarious situation the kindly acharya tells us
that reaching out to the Lord is the only way. One struggling in the
sea for a long time swallows the bitter water, feels weak and faint. In
the same way one caught in the ocean of samsara takes in the poison of
pleasures and pains through the senses and is befuddled. The acharya
herein gently reminds the Lord that saving someone caught in the sea
is not something new to Him. On an earlier occasion He had rescued
Prahlada who was bound to a big slab of stone and thrown into the sea
by saying ப்ரஹ்லாத-கேத-பரிஹார-பராவதார। The kindly Lord is
one who is capable of helping us to get out of samsara and administer

the required treatment. He is renowned in the vedas as the foremost and devine physician. Shri Rudram says this.அத்யவோசததி வக்தா ப்ரதமோ தைவ்யோ பிஷக்। Krishna says that He will lift up those who have exclusive devotion to Him from the ocean of samsara. Gita (12-7).

தேஷாமஹீ ஸமுத்தர்தா மத்யுஸீஸாரஸாகராத் ।
பவாமி ந சிராத்தபார்த மய்யாவேஸிஅதசேதஸாம் ॥

There is a separate temple inside the main temple for Devi who bears the name Kalpakambal. It is said that She took the form of a peacock and worshipped the Lord here to demonstrate the power of devotion. Peacock is called "mayil" in Tamil. Thus the place has come to be known as Mailai or as Mayilapuri and as Mylapore.

Kapali is one of Shiva's names. (No.24-Shiva 108 namavali). Kapala means a skull. Siva wears a garland of skulls. Each skull in His garland is said to be that of one Brahma, the creator god after Brahma's demise at the time of resolution or pralaya. Brahma is only the name of the post, like that of the President or the Prime Minister. When the post is vacated by the occupant another suitable person takes up the post and the work of creation continues. This period is known as கல்பீ kalpam. At the time of Kalpam, Shiva withdrws the creation within Himself and releases it at the beginning of the next Kalpa. Krishna says this in Gita-(9-7).

ஸர்வபூதாநி கௌந்தேய ப்ரகதீ யாந்தி மாமிகாம் ।
கல்பக்ஷயே புநஸ்தாநி கல்பாதௌ விஸஜாம்யஹம் ॥

Brahma has a very long life according to our calendar. We may get an idea about Brahma's longevity from the following figures. 360 human years = 1 year of devas. 12,000 years of the devas = The duration of 4 yugas. 2000 such periods = One day of Brahma. Brahma has a life of 100 years

made of such days and is equal to 432 million years of mortals. Thus, it is very very long as per our reckoning. Still, Brahma has a finite life only, however long it may be. It has an end. So, every one, including Brahma, is absorbed by Lord's Prakriti and released again. Shiva wearing a garland made of skulls of Brahmas indicates that Shiva is beyond time, is eternal and lasts even after other lesser gods like Brahma who are in the grip of time meet their end. Shri Nilakanta Dikshita explains this in his Shivatattvarahasyam as follows. SAN(24).

கபாலீதி - கபாலீ ப்ரஹ்மகபாலீ அஸ்யாஸ்தீதி கபாலீ | ஏதேந
அநேக-ப்ரஹ்மாத்யய-தர்பரித்வ-லக்ஷணீ ஸநாதநத்வமுக்தீ பவதி |

Now we are faced with a peculiar problem. What can we ask of Kapaleeshvara, who Himself goes around with a begging bowl (kapalam or skull) in His hand? Shri Shankaracharya too faced this problem and had come out with an ingenious solution. He had seen that wandering beggars usuallu keep with them dogs, monkeys and such small animals. They make the animals do some simple tricks, entertain the people and collect alms. He says that he has a monkey called his mind that is very frisky, mischevous and uncontrollable. He beseeches the Lord to tie it with the cord of devotion and take it with Him. Please look at this entreaty that is addressed to Kapali.

ஸதா மோஹாடவ்யரீ சரதி யுவதீநரீ குச-கிரௌ
நடத்யாமாமாகாவடதி ஂஹடிதி ஸ்வைரமபிதஃ |
கபாலிந்! பிக்ஷா! மே ஹதய-கபிமத்யந்த-சபலீ
தட் பத்வா ஸிவ பவததீந் குரு விபோ! || SL (20).

Thus, the hymn that follows is about the Infinite Supreme Being who appears as Kapali for the benefit of devotees and who is none other than Lord Shiva. Devi Kalpakamba is His Maya shakti also known as Prakriti. The Supreme Being

associated with maya is known as Ishwara or Maheshwara. This is said in the Svethasvaropanisad as: மாயர் து ப்ரகதீ வித்யாந்மாயிந் து மஹேஸ்வரம் | Maya has names as Parvati, Shiva, Uma etc. Shiva means auspiciousness. SS(18). ஸிவோ மங்கலரூபஃ |

நிர்மாஷ்ட-நிகில-துஃகாநுஷங்க-பரமாநந்த-ரூப இத்யர்தஃ |

So is also Devi Kalpakamba who has the name Mangala (meaning auspicious). The following popular verse from Saptasloki Durga says this clearly.

ஸர்வமங்கலமாங்கல்யே ஸிவே ஸர்வார்தஸாதிகே |
ஸரண்யே த்ர்யம்பிகே கௌரி நாராயணி நமோஸ்து தே ||

Thus, by saluting them whose very names spell auspiciousness, one is bound to get all that is good in life here and hereafter. The following popular verse says this.

யஃ ஸிவோ நமரூபாயர் யா தேவீ ஸர்வமங்கலா |
தயோஃ ஸீஸ்மரணாத் பிஸர் ஸர்வதோ ஜய மங்கலம் ||

The Kaivalyopanisad (7) says:-

உமாஸஹாயி பரமேஸ்வரீ ப்ரபி
த்ரிலோசநீ நீலகண்டீ ப்ரஸாந்தம் |
த்யாத்வா முநிர்கச்சதி பூதயோநி
ஸமஸ்தஸாக்ஷி தமஸஃ பரஸ்தாத் ||

that one, by meditating on the highest Lord who is allied to Uma, supremely powerful, three eyed, has a blue neck and tranquil reaches Him who is the source of all, the witness of all and is beyond darkness (ignorance or avidya).

This is said in the following verse also.

கல்பகாம்பா-கபாலீஸௌ பக்தரக்ஷண-தத்பரௌ |

தயோஃ அநுக்ரஹோ யத்ர வர்ததே தத்ர மங்கலம் ॥

॥ ம்ரீ கபாலீம்வராஷ்டகம் ॥

கபாலி-நாமதேயக் கலாபி-புர்யதீம்வரீ
கலாதரார்த-ஸோகரீ கரீந்த்ர-சர்ம-பூஷிதம் ।
கபா-ரஸார்த்ர-லோசநீ குலாசல-ப்ரபூஜிதீவ்
குபேர-மித்ரமுர்ஜிதீ கணேஸ-பூஜிதீ பஜே ॥ க ॥

பஜே புஜங்க-பூஷணீ பவாப்தி-பீதி-பஞ்ஜநீ
பவோத்பவீ பயாபஹீ ஸுகப்ரதீ ஸுரேம்வரம் ।
ரவீந்து-வஹ்நி-லோசநீ ரமா-தவார்சிதீ வரீ
ஹ்யுமா-தவீ ஸுமாதவீ-ஸுபூஷிஅதீ மஹாகுரும் ॥ உ ॥

குரீ கிரீந்த்ர-தந்விநீ குஹ-ப்ரியீ குஹாஸயீ
கிரி-ப்ரியீ நக-ப்ரியா-ஸமந்விதீ வர-ப்ரதம் ।
ஸுர-ப்ரியீ ரவி-ப்ரபீ ஸுரேந்த்ர-பூஜிதீ ப்ரபீ
நரேந்த்ர-பீட-தாயகீ நமாம்யஹீ மஹேம்வரம் ॥ ங ॥

மஹேம்வரீ ஸுரேம்வரீ தநேம்வர-ப்ரியேம்வரீ
வநேம்வரீ விஸ,த்த-சித்த வாஸிநீ பராத்த்பரம் ।
ப்ரமத்தவேஷ-தாரிணீ ப்ரகஷ்ட-சித்ஸ்வரூபிணீ
விருத்த-கர்ம-காரிணீ ஸுஸிக்ஷகீ ஸ்மராம்யஹம் ॥ ச ॥

ஸ்மராம்யஹீ ஸ்மராந்தகீ முராரி-ஸேவிதாங்க்ரிகீ
பராரி-நாஸந-க்ஷமீ புராரி ரூபிணீ ஸ,பம் ।
ஸ்புஅரத்-ஸஹஸ்ர-பாநு-துல்ய தேஜஸீ மஹௌஜஸீ
ஸு-சண்டிகேஸ பூஜிதீ மடீ ஸமாப்ரயே ஸதா ॥ ரு ॥

ஸதா ப்ரஹுஷ்ட-ரூபிணீ ஸதரீ ப்ரஹர்ஷ-வர்ஷிணீ
பிதா விநாஸ-காரண ப்ரமாணகோசரீ பரம் ।
முதா ப்ரவத்த-நர்தநீ ஜகத்பவித்ர-கீர்தநீ
நிதாநமேகமத்புதீ நிதாந்தமாப்ரயேஹ்யஹம் ॥ ௬॥

அஹீ-மமாதி தூஷணீ மஹேந்த்ர-ரத்ந-பூஷணீ
மஹா-வஷேந்த்ர-வாஹநீ ஹ்யஹீந்த்ர-பூஷணாந்விதம் ।
வஷாகபி-ஸ்வரூபிணீ மஷா-பதார்த-தாரிணீ
மகண்டுஸூநு ஸீஸ்துதீ ஹ்யபீதிதீ நமாமி தம் ॥ ௭॥

நமாமி தீ மஹாமதீ நதேஷ்டதாந-சக்ஷணீ
நதார்தி-பஞ்ஜநோத்யதீ நகேந்த்ர-வாஸிநீ விபும் ।
அகேந்த்ரஜா ஸமந்விதீ மகேந்த்ர விக்ரமாந்விதீ
ககேந்த்ர-வாஹந-ப்ரியீ ஸுகஸ்வரூபமவ்யயம் ॥ ௮॥

ஸுகல்பகாம்பிகா-பதி-ப்ரியீத்விதீ மநோஹரீ
ஸுகூடகாஞ்சிராமகஷ்ண யோகிஸிஷ்ய ஸீஸ்துதம் ।
மஹாப்ரதோஷ புண்யகால கீர்தநாத்ஸ,பப்ரதீ
பஜாமஹே ஸதாமுதா கபாலி மங்களாஷ்டகம் ॥ ௯॥

கபாலி துஷ்டிதாயகீ மஹாபதி ப்ரபாலகீ
த்வபீஷ்ட-ஸித்தி-தாயகீ விஸிஷ்ட-மங்கலாஷ்டகம் ।
படேத்ஸுபக்திதஃ கபாலி ஸந்நிதௌ க்ரமாத்
அவாப்ய ஸர்வமாயுராதி மோததே ஸுமங்கலம் ॥ ௧௦॥

இதி கூடலூர் ஸ்ரீராமகஷ்ணாநந்த யதீந்த்ர ஸிஷ்ய
ஸ்ரீ ராமசந்த்ரேண விரசித்
॥ ஸ்ரீ கபாலீஸ்வராஷ்டகீ ஸம்பூர்ணம் ॥

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