

ಚಿದಮ್ಬರಂ ಶ್ರೀನಟರಾಜಸ್ತುತಿ

{|| ಚಿದಮ್ಬರಂ ಶ್ರೀನಟರಾಜಸ್ತುತಿ ||}

ನಮಸ್ತೇ ರೂದ್ರ ಮನ್ಯವ ಉತೋತ ಇಷವೇ ನಮಃ |

ನಮಸ್ತೇ ಅಸ್ತು ಧನ್ವನೇ ಕರಾಭ್ಯಾಂ ತೇ ನಮೋ ನಮಃ || ೧ ||

ಯಾತೇ ರುದ್ರ ಶಿವಾ ತನೂಃ ಶಾನ್ತಾ ತಸ್ಯೈ ನಮೋ ನಮಃ |

ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು ನೀಲಗ್ರೀವಾಯ ಸಹಸ್ರಾಕ್ಷಾಯ ತೇ ನಮಃ || ೨ ||

ಸಹಸ್ರಪಾಣಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಮೀಢುಷ್ಣಮಾಯ ತೇ ನಮಃ |

ಕಪರ್ದಿನೇ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಕಾಲರೂಪಾಯ ತೇ ನಮಃ || ೩ ||

ನಮಸ್ತೇ ಚಾತ್ತಶಸ್ತ್ರಾಯ ನಮಸ್ತೇ ಶೂಲಪಾಣಯೇ |

ಹಿರಣ್ಯಪಾಣಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಹಿರಣ್ಯಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ || ೪ ||

ನಮಸ್ತೇ ವೃಕ್ಷರೂಪಾಯ ಹರಿಕೇಶಾಯ ತೇ ನಮಃ |

ಪಶೂನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಪಥೀನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ || ೫ ||

ಪುಷ್ಪಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಾಣಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |

ಆತತಾವಿಸ್ವರೂಪಾಯ ವನಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ || ೬ ||

ರೋಹಿತಾಯ ಸ್ತಪತಯೇ ವೃಕ್ಷಾಣಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |

ನಮಸ್ತೇ ಮನ್ರಿಣೇ ಸಾಕ್ಷಾತ್ ಕಕ್ಷಾಣಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ || ೭ ||

ಓಷಧೀನಾಂ ಚ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ ಸಾಕ್ಷಾತ್ಪರಾತ್ಮನೇ |

ಉಚ್ಚೈ ಘೋಷಾಯ ದೇವಾಯ ಪತ್ತೀನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ || ೮ ||

ಸತ್ವಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಘನಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |
ಸಹಮಾನಾಯ ಶಾಂತಾಯ ಶಂಕರಾಯ ನಮೋ ನಮಃ || ೯ ||

ಆಧೀನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ವ್ಯಾಧೀನಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |
ಕಕುಭಾಯ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ನಮಸ್ತೇಽಸ್ತು ನಿಷಜ್ಞಿಣೇ || ೧೦ ||

ಸ್ತೇನಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಧನಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |
ತಸ್ಯರಾಣಾಂ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಪತಯೇ ಪಾಪಹಾರಿಣೇ || ೧೧ ||

ವಜ್ರತೇ ಪರಿವಜ್ರತೇ ಸ್ತಾಯೂನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |
ನಮೋ ನಿಚೇರವೇ ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಅರಣ್ಯಾನಾಂ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ || ೧೨ ||

ಉಷ್ಣೀಷಿಣೇ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ನಮಸ್ತೇ ಪರಮಾತ್ಮನೇ |
ವಿಸ್ತೃತಾಯ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಆಸೀನಾಯ ನಮೋನಮಃ || ೧೩ ||

ಶಯನಾಯ ನಮ್ಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಸುಷುಪ್ತಾಯ ನಮೋ ನಮಃ |
ಪ್ರಬುದ್ಧಾಯ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ಸ್ಥಿರಾಯ ಪರಮಾತ್ಮನೇ || ೧೪ ||

ಸಭಾರೂಪಾಯ ತೇ ನಿತ್ಯಂ ಸಭಾಯಾಃ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ |
ನಮಃ ಶಿವಾಯ ಸಾಮ್ಭಾಯ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣೇ ಸರ್ವಸಾಕ್ಷಿಣೇ || ೧೫ ||

|| ಇತಿ ಸೂತಸಂಹಿತಾಯಾಂ ಮುಕ್ತಿಕಾಣ್ಡೇ ಸಭಾಪತಿಸ್ತುತಿಃ ಸಮ್ಪೂರ್ಣಮ್ ||

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The following abbreviations are used in the commentary.

SS - Shiva Sahasranamam (Padmapuranam with the commentary of Shri

Paramasivendra Sarasvati)

VS – VishnuSahasranama. BG – Bhagavad Gita

The above verses are in praise of Lord Nataraja at the famous shrine in

Chidambaram. They are from Suta Samhita, Mukti Kanda. The Suta

Samhita talks about the glory of Chidambaram in chapters 9 and 10.

The puranas say that it is one of the most hallowed places on earth. For

For vaishnavas, the word 'temple' refers to Shrirangam. Others refer

to Chidambaram as 'temple'. It is one of the **ಮುಕ್ತಿ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಮ್** -

places where one gets liberation just by seeing it. The following

verse says that.

ದರ್ಶನಾದಭ್ರಸದಸಿ, ಜನ್ಮನಃ ಕಮಲಾಲಯೇ |

ಕಾಶ್ಯಾನ್ತು ಮರಣಾತ್ ಮುಕ್ತಿಃ, ಸ್ಮರಣಾದರುಣಾಚಲೇ ||

MEANING:- One gets liberated by seeing Chidambaram, by being born in

Tiruvarur where there is the tank Kamalalaya, by dying at Kashi and by

merely thinking of Arunachala. Chidambaram is also one of the places

renowned as Kailas on earth where the Lord is ever present and confers

liberation. The following verse says that.

ಸೇತುರ್ವಾತಪುರೀ ಚಿದಮ್ಬರಸಭಾ ಗೋಕರ್ಣ-ಪಮ್ವಾಪುರೀ

ಶ್ವೇತಾರಣ್ಯ-ವಟಾಟವೀ ಶ್ರುತಿಪುರೀ ಶೋಣಾದ್ರಿ ವೃದ್ಧಾಚಲಾಃ |

ಕಾಞ್ಜೀ ಶ್ರೀಗಿರಿ ಕಾಲಹಸ್ತಿನಗರೀ ಕೇದಾರ-ವಾರಾಣಸೀ

ಕೈಲಾಸಾ ಇತಿ ಶಂಕರಸ್ಯ ನಿಲಯಾ ಖ್ಯಾತಾಶ್ಚ ಮುಕ್ತಿಪ್ರದಾಃ ||

Maharshi Jaimini, in his Vedapadastava ಶ್ರೀವೇದಪಾದಸ್ತವಃ says that

one who utters the name Chidambaram sets out on his way to liberation.

ಚಿದಮ್ಬರಮಿತಿ ಬ್ರೂಯಾತ್ ಸಕೃಜ್ಜನನವರ್ಜಿತಃ |

ಮುಕ್ತಿಘಣ್ಣಾಮಣಿಪಥಂ ಮೋಕ್ಷಮೇವ ಸಮಶ್ನುತೇ ||

The holy place is said to be the heart (ಹೃದಯ ಸ್ಥಾನಮ್) of the Virat Purusha representing the universe. The deities at other temples are said to merge with Nataraja after the last puja for the day is over and the temples are closed for the day.

THE TEMPLE:- The origin of the temple is lost in antiquity. Historical references to it take one back to 6th century CE. It was built in 10th century. Krishnadeva Raja, the king of Vijayanagar has also contributed to the building of the temple. It is a magnificent edifice and occupies a vast area of about 18 acres. Amongst the temples in India it occupies a pre-eminent place because of its antiquity, richness in terms of worship, the festival traditions and the architectural and sculptural profusion. Its association with music and dance is unique in nurturing the cultural heritage of our country. It has four towers of about 50 meters tall. They carry elaborate carvings including the 108 classical dance postures.

The sanctum is known as Kanaka Sabhaಕನಕ ಸಭಾ or the golden hall.

So, He is known asಕನಕಸಭಾಪತಿ Kanaka Sabhapati or simply as

ಸಭಾಪತಿ Sabhapati, Sabesan and Sabhanayakan. The Lord

also has the golden hue. He, therefore has the name (SS-273)

ಹಿರಣ್ಯಃ- ಹಿರಣ್ಯಸದೃಶ-ಸರ್ವಾಜ್ಞೋ ಹಿರಣ್ಯಃ |

ಆಪ್ರಣವಾತ್ಸರ್ವ ಏವ ಸುವರ್ಣ ಇತಿ ಶ್ರುತಿಃ ||

He dances in the golden hall. The sabha or hall represents the heart.

One is advised to meditate on Him as available in the heart.

Taittiriya Upanishad (1-6)says this.

ಸ ಏಷೋಽನ್ತರ್ಹೃದಯ ಆಕಾಶಃ | ತಸ್ಮಿನ್ನಯಂ ಪುರುಷೋ ಮನೋಮಯಃ | ಅಮೃತೋ ಹಿರಣ್ಮಯಃ |

So, one who can see the Lord in the sabha or within the

heart gets liberated. This is what is meant by saying quoted

above ದರ್ಶನಾದಭ್ಯಸದಸಿ that one gets freed by seeing

Chidambaram. ದಭ್ಯ = small or little. The small space in the

heart is referred to here. The Mundaka upanishad (3-1-3) makes this

abundantly clear.

ಯದಾ ಪಶ್ಯಃ ಪಶ್ಯತೇ ರುಕ್ಮವರ್ಣಂ ಕರ್ತಾರಮೀಶಂ ಪುರುಷಂ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಯೋನಿಮ್ |

ತದಾ ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ಪುಣ್ಯಪಾಪೇ ವಿಧೂಯ ನಿರಂಜನಃ ಪರಮಂ ಸಾಮ್ಯಮುಪೈತಿ ||

MEANING:- When one sees the Purusha (Self within) - the One having

the colour of shining gold, the creator, the Lord and who is the source

then he becomes illuminated, completely shakes of all bondage (karmas

that bind and cause rebirth), becomes pure and becomes one with Him.

The same subject is also discussed in chapter 8 of Chandogyopanishad

wherin the subject is called ದಹರ ವಿದ್ಯಾ | ದಹರ means

small and the heart itself. It says:-

ಅಥ ಯದಿದಮಸ್ಮಿನ್ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಪುರೇ ದಹರಂ ಪುಣ್ಣರಿಕಂ ವೇಶ್ಯ

ದಹರೋಽಸ್ಮಿನ್ನಂತರಾಕಶ-ಸ್ತಸ್ಮಿನ್ ಯದಂತಸ್ತದನ್ವೇಷ್ಟವ್ಯಂ,

ತದ್ವಾವ ವಿಜಿಜ್ಞಾಸಿತವ್ಯಮಿತಿ || ೧.೧ ||

MEANING:- In this body there is a small house; in it there is space;

one should seek and find what is in it. The space is known as

ದಹರಾಕಾಶಮ್ small sky to differentiate it from the big sky we see

around us. Shri Krishna clearly talks about this more than once.

ಜ್ಯೋತಿಷಾಮಪಿ ತಜ್ಞೋತಿ-ಸ್ತಮಸಃ ಪರಮುಚ್ಯತೇ | ಜ್ಞಾನಂ ಜ್ಞೇಯಂ
ಜ್ಞಾನಗಮ್ಯಂ ಹೃದಿ ಸರ್ವಸ್ಯ ವಿಷ್ಟಿತಮ್ || (BG 13-17)

again:-

ಸರ್ವಸ್ಯ ಚಾಹಂ ಹೃದಿ ಸನ್ನಿವಿಷ್ಟಃ ಮತ್ತಃ
ಸ್ಮೃತಿಜ್ಞಾನಮಪೋಹನಂ ಚ | ವೇದೈಶ್ಚ ಸರ್ವೈರಹಮೇವ ವೇದ್ಯಃ
ವೇದಾಂತಕೃದ್ವೇದವಿದೇವ ಚಾಹಮ್ || (BG 15-15)

The gist of the above verses may be said as this. The Lord is seated
in the heart of all and is behind all their actions. He is of the
form of pure wisdom. He is to be known and can be known only by wisdom.

The following verse, also from the mouth of Krishna says that He is not
just sitting in the hearts, but enlivens every cell in the body.

ಈಶ್ವರಃ ಸರ್ವಭೂತಾನಾಂ ಹೃದ್ಧೇಶೇಽರ್ಜುನ ತಿಷ್ಠತಿ |
ಭ್ರಾಮಯನ್ ಸರ್ವಭೂತಾನಿ ಯನ್ತ್ರಾರೂಢಾಣಿ ಮಾಯಯಾ || (BG 18-61).

Modern science confirms the fact that cells in the body have
intelligence. Even when one is asleep or in coma or under sedation,
activities go on within the body of which one is not aware. The blood
circulation goes on. Cells receive nutriron from the blood stream
and exchange waste material and accept oxygeon and so on. Similar
activities take place within every living being including plants. This
shows that the Lord in the form of consciousness pervades the entire
universe. This activity of the Lord who is seated in the heart is
called His dance.

To sum up, Chitಚಿತ್ means intelligence and also Brahman – the Supreme Being. Ambaram -ಅಮ್ಬರಮ್ means the space or ether. The scriptures often compare Brahman to space, because they share many common attributes. For example space envelops everything – the entire universe – in fact and is imperceptible to senses. So, the place Chidambaram may be taken to be the external representation of the Chidambaram within every one.

For these reasons said above Chidambaram occupies a prime position in our culture comparable to Kashi and Rameshvaram. Our tradition says that one should make it a mission to visit Chidambaram and see the temple in one's lifetime – else the purpose of life is not fulfilled. The Tamil shaivaite saints, known as Nayanmars have gone ecstatic on seeing the Lord, sung at Chidambaram and poured out their joy in many songs in praise of the Lord . Normally a devotee prays to the Lord to spare him from the agony of rebirth. But one nayanmar wished that to drink in the divine beauty of the Lord at Chidambaram he should be born again and again. Another nayanmar says in one of his songs that any day that one does not talk of the Lord is wasted as he can be deemed to be not born on that day.

One unique feature of the temple at Chidambaram is that as one stands facing the sanctum of Nataraja, he can also have the darshan of Lord Ranganatha (ರಙ್ಗನಾಥಃ) lying on His splendid serpent bedಶೇಷ ಸಯನಮ್ and in the lotus that comes out of His navel is seated Lord Brahma the creator. Thus the fortunate visitor to the temple can have the darsan of all the three gods – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva – at one go. Lord Nataraja is also the very personification

of bliss. According to Saiva Agamic texts the ananda aspect of the Lord is represented by the form of Nataraja. The realisation of Nataraja's dance within the recess in the devotee's heart unites him with Shiva as said above. Ranganatha (who is Vishnu) is also bliss personified. He has the name

ಆನಂದಃ:- ಆನಂದಸ್ವರೂಪಮಸ್ಯೇತಿ ಆನಂದಃ, |ದ್ವೀತಸ್ಯೈವಾನಂದಸ್ಯ
ಅನ್ಯಾನಿ ಭೂತಾನಿ ಮಾತ್ರಾಮುಪಜೀವಂತಿರ್ದ್ವೀ ಇತಿ ಶ್ರುತೇಃ| (VS -526). He is also of golden hue says the sahasranama (737, 738) ಸುವರ್ಣವರ್ಣಃ, ಹೇಮಾಂಕಃ| He also shines in the devotees' hearts. The great Acharya Vedanta Deshika says this in his wonderful poem Shri Bhagavaddhyana sapanam (ಶ್ರೀ ಭಗವದ್ಧ್ಯಾನ ಸೋಪಾನಮ್). In fact this is the very first verse in the poem. Please note how wonderfully sweet is this verse.

ಅನ್ತಜ್ಯೋತಿಃ ಕಿಮಪಿಯಮಿನಾಮಜ್ಜನಂ ಯೋಗದೃಷ್ಟೇಃ ಚಿಂತಾರತ್ನಂ
ಸುಲಭಮಿಹ ನಃ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಮೋಕ್ಷಾನುರೂಪಮ್ | ದೀನಾನಾಥ ವ್ಯಸನಶಮನಂ
ದೈವತಂ ದೈವತಾನಾಂ ದಿವ್ಯಂ ಚಕ್ಷುಃ ಶ್ರುತಿಪರಿಷದಾಂ ದೃಶ್ಯತೇ
ರಜ್ಜಮಧ್ಯೇ ||

Thus, He and Nataraja are one and the same but have different forms. The great scholar devotee Shri Appayya Dikshitar spent his last days in Chidambaram. He was a staunch advaitin and so saw no difference between the two - Nataraja and Ranganatha. He has composed a unique poem ಹರಿಹರ ಅಭೇದ ಸ್ತುತಿಃ wherein he says he sees no difference between the two. The Chidambaram temple has a separate shrine within the main temple dedicated to Devi who bears the name Shivakamasundari. She represents the Maya shakti of Shiva.

When Lord Nataraja is dancing at Chidambaram four persons – Patanjali, Vyagrapada, Nandhi and Bhringi are the blessed ones who witness the devine phenomenon. The first two are maharishis and the other two are devarishis. Devarshis are deified divine sages, such as Atri, Bhrgu, Angiras etc. Thus Nandhi and Bhringi are always with the Lord. Just like the sun setting at a village in the evening also sets in all other places in the evening, so also Shiva dances at Chidambaram in the evenings implies that He dances in the evenings at other places too. The dance of Lord Shiva is described in the following verse from Shiva thandava stotram. The third line of the verse mentions who are all witnessing the dance.

ಅನಂತನವ-ರತ್ನ-ವಿಲಸತ್ಕಟಕ-ಕಿಂಕಿಣಿ-ಲಲಿಪ್ಪ ಲಯಲಿಪ್ಪ ಲರವಂ
ಮುಕುಂದ-ವಿಧಿ-ಹಸ್ತ-ಗತ-ಮದ್ದಲ-ಲಯದ್ವನಿ-ಧಿಮಿದ್ಧಿಮಿತ-ನರ್ತನಮ್ |
ಶಕುಂತಲ-ಬರ್ಹಿರಥ-ನಂದಿಮುಖ-ದಂತಿಮುಖ-ಭೃಂಗಿ-ರಿತಿ-ಸಂಘ-ನಿಕಟಂ
ಸನಂದ-ಸನಕ-ಪ್ರಮುಖ-ವಂದಿತ-ಪದಂ ಪರ-ಚಿದಮ್ಬರ-ನಟಂ ಹೃದಿ ಭಜ ||

ಶಕುಂತಲ = one who has the bird as His vehicle -

ಶಕುಂತಲಃ = bird. ರಥಃ = chariot or vehicle. So,

the word ಶಕುಂತಲಃ refers to Vishnu who has Garuda as

his vehicle. Next, ಬರ್ಹಿರಥ = One who has peacock as

His vehicle. ಬರ್ಹಿನ್ = peacock. So, the word ಬರ್ಹಿರಥಃ

refers to Kartikeya. ದಂತಿಮುಖ = one having the face of an

elephant. ದಂತಿನ್ = elephant. ಮುಖಮ್ = face. Refers to

Ganapati. ಭೃಂಗಿ-ರಿತಿ-ಸಂಘ-ನಿಕಟಂ = The group consisting

of those mentioned here, namely, Vishnu, Kartikeys, Nandi, Ganesha

and the sages Bhiringi and Riti. ಸಂಘಮ್ = group. ನಿಕಟಮ್

= nearby. Of course we have to include His consort Parvati Devi who is always with Shiva. The last line asks us to meditate on the feet of Nataraja which is worshipped by great sages such as Sanaka and Sananda. Shiva as Nataraja and DakShinamurthy are facing the south which is the direction presided over by Yama the god of death. By this they show that those devotees who approach Him will not be bothered by Yama. Both are having the demon Apasmara who represents ignorance or avidya under their foot. Thus there is no difference between the two. The Tamil saint Thirumular in his famous work Thirumandiram says that the dance of Lord Nataraja symbolises His five acts. The five acts of Lord Shiva are said in the following verse from Sarvadarsanasangraha (ಸರ್ವದರ್ಶನಸಂಘ್ರಹಃ). They are creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration and blessing.

ಪೞ್ವವಿಧಂ ತತ್ಕೃತ್ಯಂ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿ-ಸ್ಥಿತಿ-ಸಂಹಾರ-ತಿರೋಭಾವಃ |
ತದ್ವದನುಗ್ರಹಕರಣಂ ಪ್ರೋಕ್ತಂ ಸತತೋದಿತಸ್ಯಾಸ್ಯ ||ಇತಿ|

The small drum He holds in His hand signifies SRISHTI or creation; the lower right hand that offers protection signifies STHITI or preservation; the upper right hand that holds the flame stands for destruction; the foot that keeps down the asura Apasmara indicates TIROBHAVA or obscuration and finally the perennial dance indicates ANUGRAHA or blessing; all these to bless the devotees. The Lalitha Sahasranama mentions all these five actions.

ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಕರ್ತ್ರೇ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮರೂಪಾ ಗೋಪ್ತೀ ಗೋವಿನ್ದರೂಪಿಣೀ || ೧೧೪ ||

ಸಂಹಾರಿಣೀ ರುದ್ರರೂಪಾ ತಿರೋಧಾನಕರೀಶ್ವರೀ |

ಸದಾಶಿವಾನುಗ್ರಹಾ ಪಿಷ್ಠಾಕೃತ್ಯಪರಾಯಣಾ || ೧೧೫ ||

LEGEND:- Sage Saunaka once met Nandhikeshvara and expressed his desire to see the dance of the Lord. Nandhikeshvara said that himself, Uma Devi, Lord Ganesha and Lord Guha witness His dance in Kailasa every day in the evenings as said above. The time is known as ಪ್ರದೋಷ time. ಪ್ರದೋಷೋ ರಜನೀಮುಖಮ್ says Amara the Sanskrit dictionary. It is the time of onset of night. It is auspicious and is to be devoted exclusively for prayer and meditation. Nandhikeshvara replied saying that it is not easily available to others. If he went to Chidambaram, took bath in the Shivaganga tank, chanted the holy panchakshara mantra and also worshipped Lord Sabhapathy for one year then he can witness His dance in the following year. He should start the program from the holy month of Dhanus (9th month in the solar calendar). Sage Saunaka did exactly as advised by Nandhikeshvara and could witness the dance of Shiva in the following year in the Dhanus month on the day presided by Ardhra star. The day is celebrated in Chidambaram as Ardra Darshanam. Thousands of devotees gather at Chidambaram to witness the celebrations. The sages who had assembled in the holy place Naimisharanya heard the above story from Suta who knows and narrates the puranas. They expressed a desire to witness the dance. Suta prayed to his guru Sage Vyasa who appeared there immediately. Shri Vyasa advised them to go to Chidambaram and repeat the same program as prescribed by Nandhikeshvara to Saunaka. The sages successfully completed the program and as a result could enjoy the divine dance. They praised the Lord Nataraja with the above

hymn which contains the essence and wordings of the famous vedic hymn

Shri Rudra. The Kaivalyopanishad says that one who recites the hymn

Shri Rudra is absolved of all sins.

ಯಃ ಶತರುದ್ರೀಯಮಧೀತೇ ಸೋಽಗ್ನಿಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ, ಸುರಾಪಾನಾತ್ಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ,
ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಹತ್ಯಾತ್ಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ, ತಸ್ಮಾದವಿಮುಕ್ತಮಾಶ್ರಿತೋ ಭವತಿ।

This hymn being a condensation of Shri Rudra is bound to grant similar benefits on the reader.

SAGE PATANJALI:-

Any talk about Chidambaram will be incomplete without a mention of Sage Patanjali. He was an incarnation of the serpent king Sesha who serves Lord Vishnu. He heard about the glory of the dance of Shiva and became very eager to witness the grand spectacle. AT the same ime he was reluctant to leave the service of Lord Vishnu. The Lord could divine what was going on in Sesha's mind and granted him permission to leave His services for some time. He advised Sesha to go to earth to Chidambaram and pray to Lord Shiva. Accordingly Sesha came down to earth to Chidambaram which was covered by dense forest at that time. There he met another sage by name Vyagrapada who was worshipping Shiva. Shiva was pleased by their intense devotion. HE appeared before them and granted them their desire to witness His sacred dance. They are blessed to witness the dance every day in the evening from that time. This happened in the first yuga known as Krita Yuga. Patanjali was the first incarnation of Sesha. In the following Tretha Yuga he was born as LakShmana and served the Lord born as Rama. In the next yuga known as Dwapara Yuga he took birth as Rama (Balarama) the elder brother of Shri Krishna.

STUNNING FEATURES OF ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCY:

The place where temple located is the center point of world's magnetic equator. Three of the five Panchaboothasthala temples, those at Kalahasti, Kanchipuram and Chidambaram all stand on a straight line exactly at 79 degree 41 minutes East longitude – truly an engineering, astrological and geographical wonder. Of the other two temples, Tiruvanaikkaval is located at around 3 degrees to the south and exactly 1 degree to the west of the northern tip of this divine axis, while Tiruvannamalai is around midway (1.5 degree to the south and 0.5 degree to the west).

The 9 gateways signify the 9 orifices in the human body.

The Chitsabai or Ponnambalam, the sanctum sanctorum represents the heart which is reached by a flight of 5 stairs called the PanchakShara steps – pancha meaning 5, akShara – indestructible syllables – SI VA YA NA MA, from a raised anterior dias – the Kanakasabai. The access to the Sabhai is through the sides of the stage (and not from the front as in most temples). The Chit sabha roof is supported by four pillars symbolic of the four Vedas .

The Ponnambalam or the Sanctum sanctorum is held by 28 pillars – representing the 28 agamas or set methodologies for the worship of Shiva. The roof is held by a set of 64 beams representing the 64 forms of art and is held by several cross-beams representing the innumerable blood vessels. The roof has been laid by 21,600 golden tiles with the word SIVAYANAMA inscribed on them representing 21600 breaths one takes in a day. The golden tiles are fixed using 72,000 golden nails which represents the no. of nadis exists in human body. The

roof is topped by a set of 9 sacred pots or kalasas, representing the 9 forms of energy. The ardhmandapa (sanctum) has six pillars denoting the six shastras (holy texts). The hall next to the ardha mantapa has eighteen pillars symbolizing the eighteen Puranas. Shri Nataraj Mandir at Satara is a replica of this temple.

Now, let us end this commentary with a prayer to the Cosmic Dancer. This is a verse that gives a picture of the dancing Nataraja. It explains the significance of the pose of Nataraja in His dance.

ಲೋಕಾನಾಹೂಯ ಸರ್ವಾನ್ ಡಮರುಕನಿನದೈಃ ಘೋರಸಂಸಾರಮಗ್ನಾನ್
ದತ್ವಾಭೀತಿಂ ದಯಾಲುಃ ಪ್ರಣತಭಯಹರಂ ಕುಞ್ಜಿತಂ ವಾಮಪಾದಮ್ |
ಉದ್ಧೃತ್ಯೇದಂ ವಿಮುಕ್ತೀರಯನಮಿತಿ ಕರಾತ್ ದರ್ಶಯನ್ ಪ್ರತ್ಯಯಾರ್ಥಂ
ಬಿಭ್ರದ್ವಕ್ಷಿಂ ಸ ಪಾಯಾತ್ ಕಲಯತಿ ನಟನಂ ಚಿತ್ಸಭಾಯಾಂ ಶಿವೋ ಯಃ ||

Meaning: The Lord calls the people struggling in the violent sea of samsara by the sound of the small drum in the right upper hand. By His right lower hand He says "do not be afraid" and offers protection from fear. He indicates by His left hand His left foot that is slightly bent as the path to freedom from the frightful samsara sea. He induces the confidence of the people by holding the fire in His left upper hand.

Let such a Lord who is dancing in the chit sabha protect us.

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