

# YOGAKSHEMAM *Newsletter*

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## **Sri T. Krishnamacharya's informal talks**

*What do we get ?*

The characteristic refrain which people use to justify their conduct these days is: "What am I going to get out of doing a thing in a prescribed way?" Everything is brought down to a micro level of "gain in hand" in practically every action, and unfortunately spiritual pursuit also is not exempt from such a self-centred approach.

One should not make comparisons of a base nature, but glean into the deeper truths of spiritual life. Divine grace is not offered merely because one has done a spiritual work. Rather, God is like the rain, which does not fall merely for purposes of harvesting, but occurs due to its intrinsic nature. Similarly, God's grace encompasses one and all.

It is unsullied devotion rather than ostentatious or lavish display that is pleasing to the Lord.

Excerpts from my notes, T.K. Sribhashyam

May we know that effulgent Lord who is the master of this world, who is adorable and who is the Supreme ruler of all rulers, who is the Supreme God of all gods, who is the Supreme master of all Masters, and who is beyond every other entity

Svetashvatara Upanishad: Ch. VI.7

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## Ândâl's Thiruppâvai

*Excerpts from an exclusive commentary by Sri T. Krishnamacharya*

*Thiruppâvai, in Tamil, the language of Tamil Nadu, is a poetic composition that has the power to lead to devotion. Thiruppâvai is a call for women to dedicate themselves to devotion*

**Poem 12 :** *Young buffalos yearn to feed the calves, mumbles and milk dribbles from its udders. The home is slushy and wet from the milk flowing down. Oh! younger sister of a wealthy cowherd, we are at your entrance, with our heads drenched, we pray Him (Lord Rama), the delight of our mind, He, by His wrath had wrecked the monarch of Lanka in the South. Oh! beautiful girl, arise now when we sing the glory of the Lord. With what a grand sleep you stay contented, all the households are aware of your sleep. Open your mouth and respond. All the residents are awake (and waiting for you). Listen and consider our damsel !*

Sri Andâl is continuing her tour to wake-up and invite all the girls for the holy ritual bath of the month of Margali (mid-January-mid-February). Now she is in front of a house with other girls. It is raining heavily and all are wet. The entrance of the house (olden muddy house) is slushy because of the milk coming out of the udders of the buffalos who are letting out the milk on hearing their calves. Our girl is so immersed in the thoughts of the Lord that she forgot to milk her buffalos. She is not responding to the girls because she is in her transcendental sleep. Sri Andâl requests her to wake up and join the group to go the river.

### **Sri T. Krishnamacharya's commentary:**

In the devotional path, even if the obligatory duties related to one family occupations are interrupted owing to one's absorption in contemplation, it is not considered a sin, while in other instances, it would be considered a grave error.

In the month of Margali (January-February), cows and buffalos produce more milk and their milk drips down, when they hear the calves' call. So too, when Goddess Lakshmi (the consort of Vishnu) thinks of the devotees, Her kindness and compassion drips through her breasts to fill copiously the heart of the devotees. It is this "milk" that feeds the devotee to have sufficient strength to approach the Lord.

The four udders of cows and buffalos are compared to the 4 Veda (Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda) and the milk to the essence of the 4 Veda.

Very often Sri Krishna is addressed as kannan. In Tamil language, (the language Sri Andâl uses for her poems) the word kannan means "pleasing to the eyes". Sri Krishna, with His beautiful eyes, lovely smile, peacock feather on his head and playing flute with the cows listening to Him is indeed pleasant to the eyes. Surprisingly, Sri Andâl, a devotee of Sri Krishna invokes Lord Râma in this poem. It is Râma who killed, the demon Râvana, the monarch of the south (Sri Lanka). She uses the word 'thenn' which in Tamoul means not only South but also beautiful. The south is beautiful. Andâl invokes Lord Râma as He is compassionate even towards His enemies.

Râvana, the demon king of Sri Lanka has made many a devotee suffer, even though he was a stern devotee of Lord Shiva. Hanuman, a devotee of Lord Rama and an important figure of the epic Ramayana says of Râvana: "If only the acts of adharmā (non-virtuous acts) committed by Râvana were not enormous, he would be quite eligible as a protector (king) of Heaven." Yet, Lord Râma was compassionate towards Râvana and before killing him, the Lord gives him absolution.

In our life, Râvana, symbolises ego and passions. Ego is the delusion of assuming the physical body as the Self itself, while passion is the delusion of considering wealth of creation as one's own.

When Sri Andâl addresses the girl as wealthy, she is not referring to the material wealth, but the wealth of divine experience. The spiritual masters proclaim that the company of devotees and the divine experience are the everlasting wealth, incomparable to any material wealth.

Lord Râma's brother Lakshmana says of his experience of being in Râma's presence: "In your (Râma's) absence, neither the pleasure of the heaven, nor of the experience of Liberation, nor the wealth of these worlds, I would long (miss)."

Sri Andâl calls the girl "beautiful". This girl is so absorbed in the thoughts of her Lord, that His beauty is reflected on her. Sri Andâl in this poem invokes Poigai Alwar, the first of the three Alvars (Sri Vaishnava saints). He was found in a lotus tank in a temple in Kanchipuram (South India).

Three wandering devotees were moving place village to village, singing the glory of Lord Narayana (Vishnu). One pitch dark night with heavy down rain, one devotee found refuge in a very small abandoned room. Later, another devotee entered and joined him in his songs. They had sufficient space to sit, but could not see each other. Later, a third entered. The first two stood to provide him some space. He too joined them in their devotional songs. The room had standing space for only three. It is still dark and raining. Then the three of them felt a sort of suffocation from the entrance of a fourth. In spite of the suffocation, they continued singing the praise of Lord Narayana, who revealed Himself in the light lit by the Hymns of these devotees. The three devotees were Peyal Alawar, Bhootath Alwar and Poigai Alwar, the three important Sri Vaishnava saints.

## **Destiny: Teachings of Lord Râma**

O Son of Sumitra, it is destiny one should recognize in my banishment and later in my regaining of a lost kingdom. How should Kaikeyi wish to inflict pain on me, were it not inspired by destiny ?

Verily my mothers were united in their love for me, nor, My Friend, did Kaikeyi formerly show any difference between her son and me. Further I am convinced that the cruel words she uttered to prevent my being enthroned and exact my banishment were due to destiny and nothing else.

How otherwise could a princess of so noble a nature and so virtuous ill-treat me like a common shrew in the presence of her consort ?

This mysterious force named destiny may not be set at nought even by the Bhutas themselves ; it is this unalterable and fixed decree that is evident in the change of my fortune and Kaikeyi's feelings towards me. What man can combat destiny, O Saumitri, since nought but its results are evident ? Good and evil, fear and anger, gain and loss, being and non-being and all they involve, are the work of destiny.

The Rishis of rigid mortifications are themselves swayed by destiny and, giving up their ascetic practices, yield themselves to anger and passion. That which, without their knowledge or being aware of the source, prevents people carrying through their undertakings, is it not the work of destiny ?

## **Pahogenesis (vyâdhi samprâpti) in Ayurveda** *Sri T. K. Sribhashyam and Doc. Nancy Carpentier (N° 1)*

Âyurveda (Indian Medicine) postulates that dōsha, dhātu, mala, shrota and agni are the components of the disease process each one having its definite role to play in the causation of the disease.

Dōsha meaning blemishes are of two kinds;

(a) Somatic (shâririka) – these are the tridosha: vâtha, pitha and kapha – which are material in form and intimately concerned with all physical activities.

(b) Mental (mânasika) are rajas and thamas - the two abstract guna or qualities which are intimately concerned with mental activities.

A close relationship exists between these two kinds of dōsha and whenever one undergoes change, the other too becomes deranged. Greater importance is given to the tridosha (vâtha, pitha and kapha) and they are considered as the chief causative factors for the disease. Each one of the tridosha has a certain specific quantity (pramâna), qualities (guna) and functions (karma) in the body. The condition or normalcy (sâmya) in respect of these three aspects makes for health. But this normalcy is not a stable one. Indulgence in foods and habits which are similar in nature to the dōsha bring about their increase (vridhhi) while foods and habits of dissimilar nature cause their decrease (kshaya). Both these are abnormal (vaishamyâ). Once such an abnormality occurs, the dōsha bring about ill-health of the body. Between increase and decrease (vridhhi and kshaya), it is the former which is more powerful and causes all major diseases with distressing symptoms while the latter gives rise to some symptoms which are mild. The tridosha get formed in the alimentary tract (kostha) and are transported to all the dhātu, to be present in and activate the dhātu in their function. As long as the dōsha are normal the dhâtus are also normal but once the dōsha become abnormal they bring about abnormal changes in the dhātu also; hence their name dōsha (vitiators).

Dhātu meaning supports of the body are the seven basic tissues via, rasa (plasma), rakta( blood), mâmsa (muscular tissue), medas (adipose tissue), asthi (bone or osseous tissue), majja (marrow or myeloid tissue) and shukra (reproductive tissue). There are a few secondary tissues (upa-dhātu). Dhātu and upa-dhātu together make up the physical bulk of the body, they are of the different textures and qualities and enter into the composition of all the organs of the body.

Each dhātu is composed of innumerable, minute cells (paramânu) which are the units of life and function. Each cell (paramânu) contains a number of pores or channels (sukshma shrota) through which it receives nutrient materials and expels its waste products. Dhātu are thus replete with such pores and in this respect the entire human body is shrotomaya (full of shrota ). These shrota are specific in their nature and function; the shrota of one dhātu differ from those of the other in its structure and function. Depending upon the specific structure and function of the shrota the organ or group of organs (systems) are given different names as mâmsavaha shrota (muscular system), asthivâha shrota (osseous system), annavâha shrota (digestive system) and so on.

Thus we find in Ayurveda thirteen shrota systems being enumerated.

They are as follows:-

- Prânavâha shrotas (Respiratory System)
- Annavâha shrotas (Alimentary System)
- Udakavâha shrotas (Body Fluids System)
- Rasavâha shrotas (Cardiovascular System)
- Rakthavâha shrotas (Haemopoietic System )
- Mâmsavâha shrotas (Muscular System)
- Medovâha shrotas (Lipoid System or Adipose Tissue System)
- Asthivâha shrotas (Osseous System or Skeletal System)
- Majjavâha shrotas (Myeloid System or Marrow System)
- Sukravâha shrotas (Reproductive System)
- Mûtravâha shrotas (Urinary System)
- Purîshavâha shrotas (Feces System)
- Swedavâha shrotas (Sweat System)

In the context of mental disorders (mânasika rogas), Ayurveda mentions another System (shrotas) i.e. Manovâha shrotas (mental or psychological system wherein nervous system is included).

It is interesting to note that Ayurveda has already dealt with the Endocrine System Antah Srâvi Granthis. Thus, Ayurveda enumerates 15 shrotas systems, each system consisting of a number of organs, each organ comprising of dōsha, dhātu, mala and ojas.

(to follow)

## **Upanayanam or Brahmopadesham**

*Claire Sribhashyam*

Upanayanam is the Samskâra or the ceremonial rite in which the young Hindu boy is invested with the sacred thread and initiated into the Gayatri - the Holiest of all mantras in the legacy of the Rishis.

After the Upanayanam is performed, the boy, becomes eligible to study the Veda. As this samskâra signifies a spiritual rebirth as it were, the boy also becomes a dvija or a "twice Born". Etymologically, the word upanayanam means, taking (nayanam) near (upa). In the ancient days when the scriptural modes of conduct were strictly followed, the father took his son "near" the Gâyatri Mantra, and thereafter "near" a Guru and left him under his care and tutelage soon after the Upanayanam was performed. The Guru took him "near" the Vedas (i.e., taught him in the traditional way) which in turn ultimately took him near God. Thus, the ceremony opens for the young, a succession of gates, leading to the ultimate goal of human existence - the realisation of God. In the scheme of the four âshramas prescribed for the individual, the Upanayanam ceremony signifies the boy's entry into the âshrama namely Brahmacharya. The word Brahmopadesha means teaching (upadesha) of Brahma or Veda.

### The Investiture

Ideally, this ritual is to be performed when the boy is just past seven or before the onset of adolescence.

### The Gâyatri Mantra

Literally, Gâyatri means which protects him who chants it. She is the mother of all the mantras, and when chanted with devotion and single pointed concentration and purity, takes the one who recites to the ultimate bliss - the knowledge of the Supreme Truth, called the Brahman. The Gâyatri is a mantra praying for divine guidance to inspire and illumine the intellect so that the soul (Jiva) may know his real self - the Atman. Universal in its approach, it does not seek any personal benefit. It is a prayer for universal welfare which every Hindu must perform as a sacred trust enjoined on him.

### Method to perform the Gâyatri Mantra

The Gâyatri, must be repeated in the prescribed manner, thrice a day, as a part of the religious duty called the sandhya vandanam, ordained for all. It is an excellent daily exercise in quietening the mind and rendering it fit for meditation on the highest truth epitomized by the Gâyatri. Because of its great importance as a spiritual practice, the sacred texts have proclaimed its primacy of place in unequivocal terms. Because of this the Gâyatri can only be recited in the prescribed manner. It has to be definitely performed thrice daily, throughout one's life. All the good things a Hindu may do are of no avail, if he fails to perform his sandhya vandanam and Gâyatri japa regularly. The scriptures are unanimous on this point.

### The Sacred Thread or yajnopavitha

The sacred thread with which the young boy is invested on the holy occasion of Upanayanam, is simply three thin cotton threads, each woven with three thinner cotton threads, the two ends knotted in a particular way, called "the knot of Brahma or brahma granthi". It is called yajnopavitha as it confers the right to perform Vedic rituals.

This sacred thread is worn around the trunk hanging crosswise from left shoulder to the right of the waist. The sacred thread should on no occasion be removed. In case of wear and tear, a new thread is worn first with appropriate mantra before removing the old one.

### Bhiksha

In the days to yore, the brahmachari went out into the streets to beg for alms from various houses - Bhiksha. This is being done symbolically today. While it may be very difficult to practice Bhiksha daily in today's conditions, we would do well at least keep in mind the spirit underlying the Bhiksha and try to imbibe the virtues it inculcates. The practice of Bhiksha will induce humility and quell the ego: it will root out the consequences of all social differences as also that of wealthy and poverty, as every Hindu initiated to Gâyatri, regardless of his family's standing, has to practice it. Above all, it will enable the young to overcome the craving of the tongue, and induce the restraint of the senses so very necessary for properly imbibing the Vedic Knowledge.

Gâyatri Mantra :

Om bhuhu, om bhuvaha, om suvaha, om mahaha, om janaha, om tapaha, om satyam  
Om ! We meditate on the light of the Divine Sun, the creator of the Worlds. May He protect our mind, intelligence and ego. Om Salutations to Water, Light, this World, Air and the Sky! OM.

A royal prince of Thirumala was astonished at the presence of a flower made of earth that appeared every day among his golden flowers in front of the deity. Investigations revealed that a potter, with a simple and absolute faith, gave a flower made of earth to God every morning before starting his daily work. God was pleased to receive with the golden flowers this humble offering in his sanctuary.

## Appeal for solidarity

### **Millions of South Indians need our help to reconstruct their life.**

Once the heat of the emotion subsides, we might not think of the victims of tidal waves. The help they get at present would cater to the immediate needs like food, water and sanitary arrangements. How will the villagers who lost their homes and means of lively hood come out of their adversity ?

In a country like India, a manual sewing machine, a fisherman's net, a small roadside vegetable or coffee shop etc., would be sufficient to provide a family their daily livelihood.

Thank God, these Indians do not crave for refrigerators, deep freezers, comfortable beds, wardrobe of dresses, television, mobile phones, pet animals and so on, which are the western parameters of minimum of existence.

They are contented with a plate of rice and lentils, very simple dresses, a simple mat to lie on. With these 'start-ups', which would cost them around 100 Euros, any Indian survivor would fight to improve his lot without constantly depending on external helps. But he needs these 100 Euros to start his new life!

If I write these details to you, it is mainly because we have lived through these situations.

Your entire contributions would be used to reconstruct the future of some survivors according to the amount of our collection. You will be informed of my activities through the same media. It would be of great help if your contribution repeats, every two or three months so that we can extend our help to many families.

I request you to 'pool' your collections from your friends and students and give me in cash. My family will add considerable amount to your contributions. We are already helping some villagers but it is insufficient.

In the hope of expecting generous contributions from all of you, I thank you on behalf of the survivors.

Sri T.K. Sribhashyam

**The page of Srimathi T. Namagiriammal**  
*(Wife of Sri T. Krishnamacharya)*

**Barley cream**

**Ingredients:**

Pearl barley: 100 g

Cow milk (full or half fat): 250 ml

Water: 1 liter

Candied sugar: 50 g

Cooking time: 45 minutes

- Soak overnight 100 grams of pearl barley in water. In winter, place the contents close to the heater.
- The next day, drain the water. Boil 1 liter of water and pour the barley in boiling water. Cook barley. During cooking, add water if necessary.
- When barley is cooked (take a seed, wash with cold water and squeeze it between your fingers and it should flatten out):
- Add milk and sugar and boil together over medium heat or low heat for at least 10 minutes.
- Cool, then drain.
- Drink the liquid.

**Note:**

If allergic to milk make this cream without milk.

**Benefits:**

Reduces excessive menstrual bleeding, associated with uterine or ovarian pathology.

Dose: Drink 100 ml of this cream on an empty stomach in the morning and before bed at night after dinner for 5 days since the onset of menstruation or excessive bleeding.

Relieves stomach burns (ulcer or gastritis).