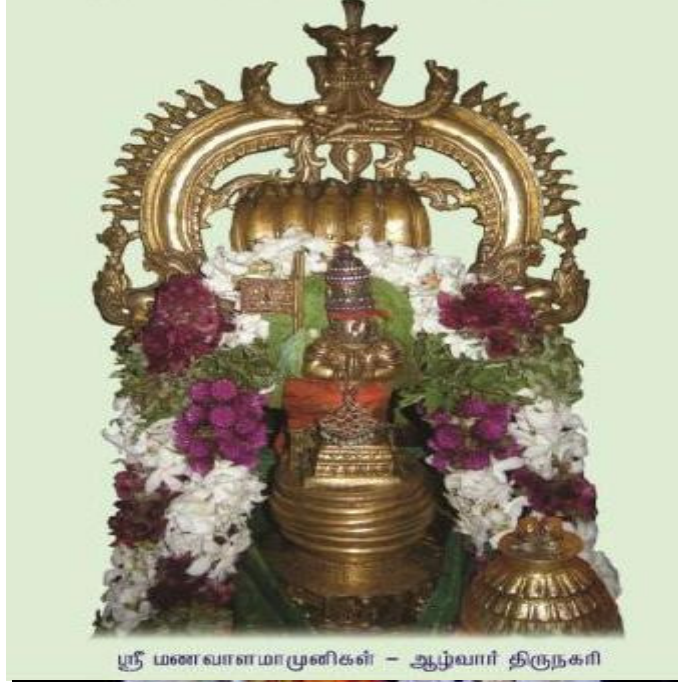


Srivaishnava lakshanam



Srivaishnava Lakshanam – A compilation based on pUrvAchArya srisUkthis



Introduction

Sriman nArAyaNan out of his causeless mercy gives body and senses to all jlvAthmAs during shrushti according to their previous karma. He also reveals sAstram to brahmA, the first created being during creation. This sAstram is revealed to brahmA for the benefit of all jlvAthmAs. With the intelligence given by emperumAn sriman nArAyaNan and the information available in sAstram, jlvAthmAs are supposed to surrender themselves to emperumAn. Since that did not happen, emperumAn came down as avathArams – varAha, nrsimha, rAma, Krishna, etc., with the aim of delivering jlvAthmAs from this samsAram. But even after coming down as avathArams, only a few understood emperumAn's glories and followed him. EmperumAn thought that just like to catch a deer we need another deer, he also needs to have some jlvAthmAs to rescue other jlvAthmAs – so he gave blemishless knowledge to AzhwArs to correct the samsAris and bring them into his fold. But AzhwArs were so immersed in bhagavadh anubhavam, they were not able to also fully deliver the jlvAthmAs. So, finally emperumAn through the AchArya paramparai (especially through emperumAnAr) established a proper channel, through which many jlvAthmAs are rescued even today from this samsAram.

Our dharisanam is named emperumAnAr dharisanam by NamperumAL (sriranganAthan himself) declares maNavALa mAmunigaL. Our purvAchAryas have understood the essence of all sAstrams (vEdham, vEdhAntham, smrithi, ithihAsa purAnAs, etc) and extracted the rahasya thrayam from those sAstrams. Rahasya thrayam includes thirumanthram, dvayam and charamasLOkam. Rahasya thrayam establishes the meanings of artha panchakam (jlvAthma svarUpam, paramAthma svarUpam, upAya svarUpam, pala/upEya svarUpam and virOdhi svarUpam).

Azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr says in AchArya hrudhayam - “*adhyayaNa jnAna aNushtAnanGgaLAIE brAhmanNyamAgiRAppOIE chaNthanGgaLAyirayamum ariyak kaRRu vallArAnAl vaishnNavathva sidhdhi*” (அத்யயந ஜ்ஞான

அநுஷ்டானங்களாலே ப்ராஹ்மண்யமாகிறாப்போலே சந்தங்களாயிரயமும் அரியக் கற்று வல்லாரானால் வைஷ்ணவத்வ ஸித்தி). It means, just like by performing vEdha adhyayanam, developing jnAnam and anushtAnam (performing nithya/naimithika karmas, etc) one becomes a qualified brAhmaNa, by learning thiruvAimozhi, understanding the meanings and practicing it properly, one becomes a qualified srivaishnava. Rahasya thrayam is very clearly explained in thiruvAimozhi by nammAzhwAr and expanded upon by our pUrvAchAryas in their commentaries.

Our pUrvAchAryas taught the rahasya thrayam and also lived by that. Every AchArya in our pUrvAchArya guru paramparai had very high standards of morality, honesty, dignity, etc. It is important for us to understand from their lives and instructions how we should conduct ourselves. It is with that intent adiyen is writing this series of articles. Adiyen have written this series of articles in English because there is a lot of non-tamil speaking srivaishnavas who do not have easy access to these valuable information in a single

document. These subject matters are already translated into various books and the information is scattered in a number of books. The essence of those is collected and given here to the best of adiyen's ability.

While adiyen is not qualified to write these matters, out of excitement adiyen is sharing this invaluable knowledge which adiyen got purely by the grace of emperumAn and AchAryan and by hearing from various kAlakshEpa adhikAris. The main intention of writing these articles is to share these valuable gems with others. It is showed in ThiruppAvai vyAkyAnam that we should not enjoy sweet things by ourselves – they should be shared. What is sweeter than our pUrvAchAryAs' lives and instructions?

Adiyen is blessed to have been born in a family which has direct connection to emperumAnAr – adiyen is born in komAndur elayavilli (who is a cousin of emperumAnAr like embAr) thiruvamsam and our forefathers surrendered to vAnamAmalai mutt jeeyar swAmy long ago.

Adiyen is blessed to have the thiruvadi sambandham of ponnadikkAl jeeyar who is a close/confidential disciple of maNavALa mAmunigaL. Adiyen is also blessed to have dhEha sambam with asmadhAchAryan Srimath paramahamsa ithyAdhi Pattarbhira rAmAnuja jeeyar swAmy , 29th pattam, vAnamAmalai mutt in his pUrvAshramam. asmadhAchAryan is well known for being parama sAtvikar and virakthar with immense interest in arulicheyal and pUrvAchArya vyAkyAnams. asmadhAchAryan's younger brother in his pUrvAshramam, Sri U.Ve. AdhinAtha iyengar swAmy - adiyen's pithAmahar (grand father) have been serving in vAnamAmalai mutt for more than 75 years (mutt thiruvArAdhanam, Jeeyar swAmy kainkaryam, adhyAbhakam, etc). Adiyen is also indebted to adiyen's kAlakshEpa AchAryas Sri U.Ve. Velukkudi KrishnamAchAryar swAmy, Sri U.Ve. Srirangam Gomatam Sampath kumarAchAryar swAmy and more for revealing the deep knowledge in our sampradhAya granthams. It is only by the sambandham with these swAmys adiyen has some ruchi in our sampradhAya.

Adiyen would also like to thank many srivaishnavas who motivated/encouraged adiyen to write this series of articles. Adiyen would also like to thank the srivaishnavas who went through this collection of articles and gave their valuable feedback.

Keeping them in mind adiyen submit this small work at the thiruvadis of Srimath paramahamsa ithyAdhi Kaliyan RAmAnuja jeeyar swAmy (30th pattam, varthamAna swAmy, vAnamAmalai mutt).

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AvaNi thirumoolam (Aug 26, 2012)

Srivaishnava lakshanam

asmadhAchAryan



Srimath paramhamsa ithyAdhi pattarbhira nAmAnuja jeyar (29th pattam, vAnamAmalai mutt)

varthmAna swAmy

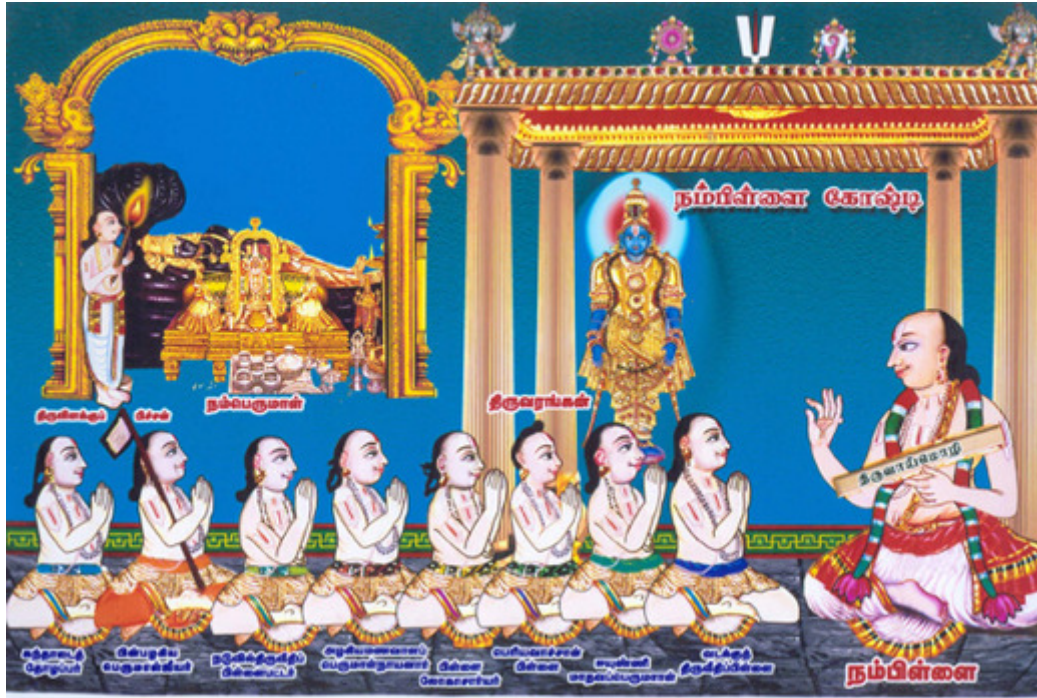


Srimath paramhamsa ithyAdhi kaliyan nAmAnuja jeyar (30th pattam, vAnamAmalai mutt)

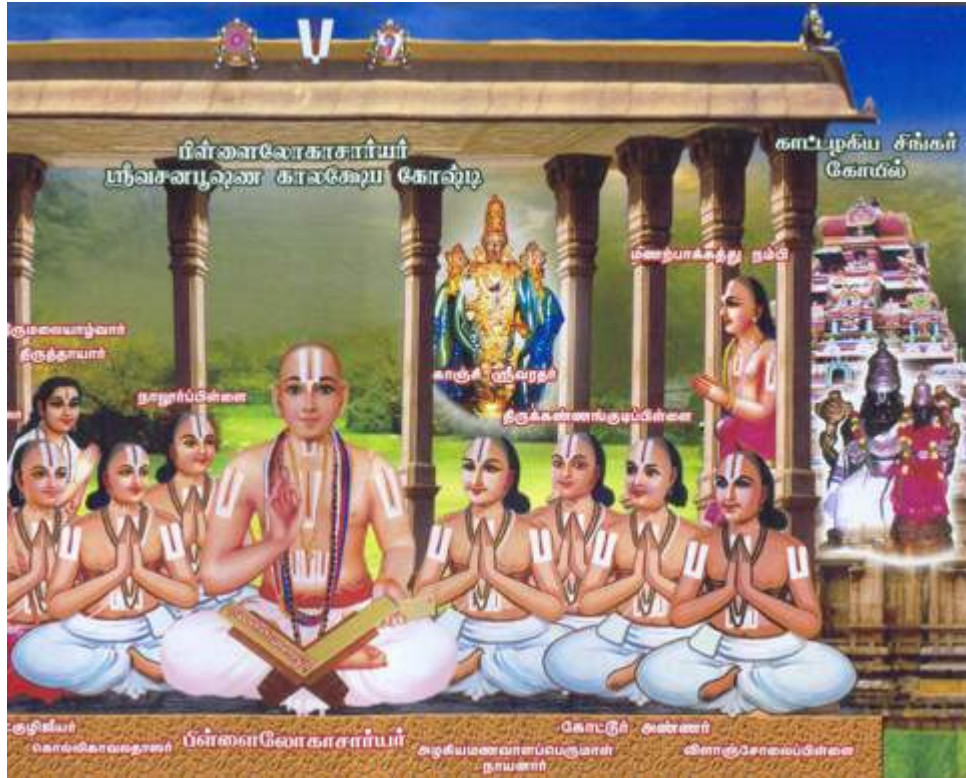
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Srivaishnava lakshanam



NampiLLai (also known as IOkAchAryar, ThirukkaliKanRi dhAsar, etc), the pioneer of aruLicheyal (specifically thiruvAimozhi) kAlakshEpaM



piLLai IOkAchAryar srivachana bhUshaNa kAlakshEpa gOshti

1. External qualities

There are several places in our purvAchArya granthas where srivaishnava lakshnam is explained. In this series, we will see many of those references from our purvAchArya works - one at a time.

Let us start with a very basic pramAnam from padma puranam which is referred by our purvAchAryas in their works.

*yE kaNTha lagna tulasi nalinAksha mAIA
yE bAhu mUla parichinnita shankha cakrA
yE vA lalAta phalake lasad Urdhva pundrA
thE vaishnavA bhuvanam Ashu pavithrayanti*

This purana slokam explains a vaishnava's physical appearance and how he purifies the place where he lives and the people living there.



A portrait of vilAnchOlai piLLai (a sishya of piLLai lOkAchAryar)

One who wears mAIAs (necklace) that is made out of Tulasi and Lotus stems (also includes pavithra mAIAi which was adorned by perumAL, thAyArs, Azhwars, AchAryas), One whose shoulders are decorated with the unique symbols of Sriman nArAyaNa - shankam and chakkaram (as part of the pancha samskAram process), One whose forehead is decorated with Urdhva pundram (an authorized symbol applied by mixing the clay that is found in holy pilgrimages and that represents the holy feet of Sriman nArAyaNa - while it talks about forehead specifically, our purvAchAryas always applied 12 urdhva pundrams at various places of the body per sAstram), that vaishnava quickly purifies the world (the place where he is present) and the people living there.

Srivaishnava lakshanam

Our purvAchAryas have always emphasised the importance of physical appearance and always ensured that they maintained their physical appearance according to the sAstram even at dire situations. After all, we are also driven by our senses - so the easiest way we can identify a vaishnava is through the sense of vision. Only advanced vaishnavas can identify another vaishnava (who may not be physically appearing so). That is why this pramAnam from padma puranam puts emphasis on physical appearance.

With this beginning we will go through pramAnams from various granthams of our purvAchAryas on srivaishnava lakshanam.

2. pancha samskAram

We have seen the physical attributes of a Srivaishnava in the first article of this series.

Some one may ask "Why is the physical appearance important? Why cannot I be a srivaishnava without the physical appearance specified in the sAstram?". It is possible for some advanced srivaishnavas in some rare cases but generally for everyone sAstram recommends certain rules and regulations and we are supposed to follow them. A loukika example is - when a policeman is properly dressed in his uniform, the law of the land gives certain powers to him. He cannot ask "Well, I am a policeman but why should I be dressed in my uniform when I am in duty?". There may be exceptions, but if he is not dressed as a policeman he would not get the same respect (except from those who can recognize him as a policeman). Also, we feel nothing indifferent if we have to dress up (uniforms, shoes, hanging ID cards) in a particular way for our work (because it provides us our livelihood) - but will question when the sAstram instruct us to do the same thing for our svarUpam - such is the state now.

Let us move on to the next aspect.

A brief description of Srivaishnavam

Srivaishnavam is the eternal philosophy which centers around the supreme God Sriman nArAyaNan. He is full of auspicious qualities with many beautiful forms. He is the owner of both nithya vibhUthi (paramapadham - spiritual world - never changing) and leelA vibhUthi (samsAram - material world - ever changing). This is a thathva thraya phiolosophy - i.e. there are three entities Isvara (God), chit (souls) and achit (matter). Isvara is the owner of both chit and achit. There are infinite number of souls in both spiritual and material worlds. This philosophy/siddhAntha is based on sAstram (vEdhas, upanishads, ithihAsas, purAnas, pAncharAtra agamam and AzhwaAr/AchArya srisookthis). The sAstram is meant specifically for chit (souls) and sAstram helps a soul for leaving the material world (which is defined Kannan emperumAn in Bhagavath glthai as asAsvatham - temporary and dhukkAlayam - place filled with sorrows) and reaching the spiritual world (vaikuntam - place where there is no sorrows - i.e., full of joy only). The process that initiates this journey of the soul from samsAram to paramapadam is called pancha samskAram which will be discussed in the next sections.

How do we become a Srivaishnava?

According to our purvAchAryas, there is a proper mechanism through which one becomes a srivaishnava. This process is called "**pancha samskAram**".

SamskAra means the process of cleansing or purifying. It is the process which transforms one from an unqualified state to a qualified state. It is by this process one first becomes a srivaishnava. Just like taking birth in a brAhmana family makes it easy for some one to become a brAhmana by going through the brahma yajna process, taking birth in a srivaishnava family makes it easy for some one to become a srivaishnava through the pancha samskAram process. The beauty here compared to the brAhmana family example is, one need not be born in a srivaishnava family to

become a srivaishnava - because srivaishnavam is associated to the soul while generally brAhmanyam is just associated with the body. **Also it is very important for a srivaishnava to completely avoid any association with dhEvathAnthrams (demi-gods like brahmA, shivan, durgai, subramaNian, indran, varuNan, etc., who are controlled by emperumAn) and those who are associated to such dhEvathAnthrams.**

pancha samskAram

pancha samskAram or samAsrayanam is the process that is explained in sAstram to prepare an individual to become a srivaishnava. The following sloka explains the parts of panch samskAram - "*thApa: pundra: tathA nAma: mantrO yAgas cha panchama:*". The five activities which happen during the pancha samskAram are:

- **thApa (austerity)** - shanka chakra lAnchanam - heated impression of shanka and chakra on our shoulders. This identifies that we are property of emperumAn - just like a vessel is marked with the symbols of the owner, we are marked with the symbols of emperumAn.
- **punDra (symbol)** - dwAdasa urdhva pundra dhAranam - wearing of Urdhva pundram (Thiruman and SriChUrnam) in twelve parts of the body.
- **nAma (name) - dAsya namam** - a new name given by the AchArya (rAmAnuja dAsan, madhurakavi dAsan, srivaishnava dAsan).
- **mantra - mantrOpadesam** - learning the secret mantra from the AchAryan; mantram means that which relieves the chanter from grief - thirumanthram, dvayam and charamasloka which releases us from samsara.
- **yAga - dEva pUja** - learning the thiruvArAdhanam process.

Goals of pancha samskAram

- As sAstram say, *thathva JnAnAn mOksha lAbha:* - by gaining knowledge about the brahmam, one gets mOksha. By getting valuable knowledge from an AchArya in artha panchakam (brahmam - God, jlva - soul, upAya - means to attain God, upEyam - the result, virOdhi - hurdles which are stopping souls from getting the result) which is part of the mantrOpadesam, we become eligible to secure the ultimate goal - performing kainkaryam in nitya vibhUthi to Sriya:pathi.
- While in the current life, performing kainkaryam to our AchAryan and Srivaishnavas (by doing in many possible ways) and ArchAvatAra emberumAn - through thiruvArAdhanam at home and divya dEsa kainkaryam.

So, as explained above, this philosophy of srivaishnavam is to leave this samsAram to go to paramapadham to perform uninterrupted kainkayam to sriya:pathi (Sriman nArAyaNan).

Who can perform pancha samskAram?

Srivaishnavam although is an eternal philosophy was rejuvenated by AzhwArs and AchAryAs. Sri RAmAnuja studied the sAstram and re-established the norms which were lost over time based on the instructions from his preceptors - Nathamuni, AlavandhAr,

etc. He established 74 simhAsanAdhipathis (AchAryas/spiritual teachers) and authorized them to perform pancha samskAram to the individuals who understands this goal of life (leaving samsAram to go to paramapadham). Anyone who comes in those lineages can perform pancha samskAram. He (as well as maNavALa MAmunigaL) established certain Mutts (Monastries) and jeeyar swAmys (sanyAsis) whose lineages are also authorized to perform pancha samskAram to individuals aspiring to become a srivaishnava. There is no distinction done based on caste, creed, nationality, sex, financial situation, family situation, etc - whoever desires to be put on the path of salvation can be included in this fold.

Is pancha samskAram the beginning or the end?

It is common misunderstanding that, this process of samAsrayanam is a simple ritual and is the end. But that is completely wrong. This is the beginning of our journey in srivaishnavam. The ultimate goal is set (to leave samsAram to go to paramapadham) and the process is given by our purvAcharyAs (which we will see in subsequent articles) - it is up to the individual to follow this process and accomplish the goal. pancha samskAram also brings in a wonderful relationship between AchArya (master) - sishya (disciple). We will see the nature of this relationship in the next article.

So far, we have seen the physical attire of a srivaishnava, what is srivaishnavam and the process of pancha samskAram.

3. AchArya-Sishya relationship

In the previous article we saw how pancha samskAram begins ones journey as a srivaishnavan. We also saw the beginning of a unique relationship named "AchArya-sishya" relationship. This is actually a small diversion from the original topic, but since this is such an important aspect in our sampradAyam, let us understand a little bit more about this relationship based on purvAchArya sri sookthis.

AchArya literally means "one who has learnt sAstram, applying it in his own life and teaching it to others". It is also said in the sAstram that "Even a sanyAsi, if he does not accept vishnu parathvam (supremacy of Lord Vishnu), he must be considered to be a chandALan only". So it is imperative that AchArya must be a vaishnava - i.e. one who accepts Sriman nArAyaNan as the supreme god and is trying to please him every moment in his every action. Our purvAchAryas have insisted that one who performs the thirumantra upadhEsam (along with dvayam and charama sLOkam) during pancha samskAram is the direct AchArya.

Sishya means one who undergoes sikshai (correction/purification). It is generally translated as disciple in English - which means one who is to be disciplined. Here the sishya gets himself/herself shaped into a proper mould under the guidance of the AchArya.



Udayavar – AzhwAn (ideal AchArya – sishya), kooram

Our purvAchAryas have discussed the qualities of achaya and sishya in a very detailed manner. To start with they have established based on the sAstram that AchArya-sishya relationship is exactly the same as father-son relationship. Just like the son is always totally subservient to the father, sishya must also be totally subservient to the AchArya.

In bhagavath glthai, Kannan emperumAn says "*tad viddhi pranipAthEna pari prasNena sEvaya, upadEkshanthi tE jnAnam jnAninas thathva darshinah*". This nicely summarises the qualities of AchArya and sishya. In the first line, he says that "a sishya should submissively approach an AchArya, do some service to him and ask him questions

submissively (about athma/bhagavadh vishayam)". In the second line "since the AchArya has seen/understood the real thathvam (emperumAn), he will instruct the sishya in that jnAnam".

Some of the qualities that are expected out of an AchArya are:

- AchAryas are generally equated to pirAtti (sri mahalakshmi) - their main job is to do purushakAram (recommendation as done by pirAtti) to emperumAn.
- Just like pirAtti, they should also accept that they are only subservient to emperumAn, they accept emperumAn as the only upAyam and their acts are for the enjoyment of emperumAn only.
- They should be full of krupai - to accept sishyas, develop their athma jnAnam and vairAgyam, and involve the sishyas in bhagavad/bhAgavatha kainkaryam. Per mAmunigaL's divya srisookthi, AchArya must only be focussed on sishya's athma rakshanam.
- piLLai IOkAchariAr says "An AchArya should have proper knowledge about self, sishya and the result".
 - He should think that he is not the AchArya but his AchArya is the AchArya.
 - He should think that his sishya is not his sishya but his AchArya's sishya.
 - He should think the result is to create a well matured sishya who will constantly perform mangalAsAsanam to emperumAn - nothing else.
- As explained in vArthA mAlai grantham and sistAchAram (as in elder's practices), AchArya should treat his sishya with great respect - since the sishya has come to AchArya (without analysing the AchArya's qualities/capabilities) for total protection purely based on injunctions in sAstram.
- It is explained by our purvAchAryas that even emperumAn likes to be an AchArya. That is why he chose to be the first AchArya in our OrAN vazhi guruparamparai. He also likes to have an AchArya for himself - that is why he chose the most perfect AchArya for himself - azhagiya maNavALa mAmunigaL.

Some of the qualities that are expected out of a sishya are:

- piLLai IOkAchariAr says
 - sishya should free himself from anything (i.e., ishvaryam and AthmAnubhavam) other than emperumAn and AchAryan
 - sishya should be ready to serve his AchArya at anytime in all the ways
 - sishya feels mental agony by looking at this material world
 - sishya should have desire in bhagavadh vishayam and AchArya kainkaryam
 - sishya should be free of jealousy when learning about bhagavad/bhAgavatha glories
- A sishya must think all his wealth belongs to his AchArya. He should only take as much is required for him for dEha dhAranam (to run the basic livelihood).
- A sishya should also think that his AchArya is everything for him as explained by AlavandhAr in "*mAtha pithA yuvathaya ...*" sIOkam.
- He should take care of his AchArya's livelihood.

- mAmunigaL also explains in upadhEsa rathina mAlai that "one should not stay away from his AchArya even for a moment when he is in this world".
- A sishya should glorify his AchArya in his presence and always have upakAra smrithi (gratitude) for the knowledge that is given by his AchArya to him.

It is also explained that it is inappropriate for the sishya to do Athma rakshanam of his AchArya (i.e., sishya should never perform svarUpa sikshai to AchArya) and inappropriate for the AchArya to do dEha rakshanam of sishya (i.e., sishya should not expect that the AchArya will take care of his livelihood).

As explained by piLLai IOKAchAryar, it is very difficult to be a sishya (and also we do not really understand to be a proper sishya no matter how much we learn about it). That is why emperumAn himself took the form of "nara" rishi and became the sishya of "nArAyaNa" rishi (who is an avathAram of emperumAn as well) to learn thirumanthram.

With this background, we can also try to understand the different categorizations of AchAryas.

anuvritthi prasannAchArya and krupA mAtra prasannAchArya

In the days before emperumAnAr , the AchAryas were testing the prospective sishyas for their level of dedication before accepting them. It was customary for a prospective sishya to go to his AchArya's residence, stay with him and serve him for a full year before being accepted.

krupA mAtra prasannAchArya

But when emperumAnAr saw the nature of kali yugam, he realized that if AchAryas are like this, only a very few will be motivated towards giving up worldly attachments and many will not be able to satisfy the demands of the AchAryas. So, out of his unbounded mercy, emperumAnAr relaxed the rules and gave this most valuable knowledge to those who had the true desire to learn bhagavadh vishayam. So the qualification was changed from "deserving" to "desiring" candidates. He also laid the guidelines for his sishyas to follow the same methodology and brought in several thousands of people into the fold of srivaishnavam out of his grace. Starting with emperumAnAr , our AchAryas are called krupA mAtra prasannAchAryas.

mAmunigaL, explains this concept wonderfully in his upadhEsa rathina mAlai pAsuram "OrAN vazhiyAi upadEsitthAr munnOr, erAr ethirAsarar innaruLAI pArulagil Asai udayOrkkellAm AriyargAL koorum enRu pEsi varambharuththAr pin" (*"ஓராண் வழியாய் உபதேசித்தார் முன்னோர், ஏரார் எதிராசர் இன்னருளால் பாருலகில் ஆசை உடையோர்க்கெல்லாம் ஆரியர்காள் கூறும் என்று பேசி வரம்பறுத்தார் பின்"*).

uththAraga AchArya and upakAraga AchArya

In charama upAya nirnayam - a work done by nAyanArAchAn piLLai, he explains these

two types of AchAryas. This grantham establishes the glories of emperumAnAr very clearly.

UththAraga AchArya

UththAraga AchArya is the one who is capable of taking some one from samsAram and placing him/her in paramapadham easily. It is explained that Sriman nArAyaNan, NammAzhwAr and emperumAnAr are the only 3 uththAraga AchAryas (Of course, maNavALa mAmunigaL who is yathi punaravathAram is also established as an uththAraga AchArya by erumbiappA in his varavaramuni sathakam).

- Sriman nArAyaNan is the prathamAchArya (first AchArya) and being sarvajnan, sarvasakthan and so on, he can easily give mOksham to anyone.



Periya perumAL - SriRangam

- NammAzhwAr who was hand picked by emperumAn to give knowledge to samsAris and correct them is also capable of giving mOksham to anyone. This is understood from his own words in thiruvAimozhi - "*ponnulagu ALirO, bhuvani muzhuthu ALIro*" - "*பொன்னுலகு ஆளிரோ, புவனி முழுது ஆளிரோ*". He is asking the birds which he is sending thUthu (as messenger) to emperumAn, that he can give both nithya vibhUthi and leela vibhUthi to them as sambhAvanai for their recommendation.



NammAzhwAr - AzhwArthirunagari

- emperumAnAr was declared as udayavar - the controller of ubhaya vibhUthi - by SriRanganathan and ThiruvEnkatamudayan. Not only he was immersed in bhagavadh anubhavam, he also lived in leela vibhUthi for a long period (120 years) and served emperumAn's mission fully. He established proper temple worship, created 1000s of sishyAs, created 74 simhAsanAdhipathis to carry forward his message, etc.



emperumAnAr - srlpeumbUdhUr

EmperumAn acts purely according to sAstram, he either gives mOksham or keeps the jlvAthmAs in the samsAram, based on the their desire and karma. So, nAyanAr AchAn piLLai concludes that UththAragathvam is complete in emperumAnAr.

nammAzhwAr, after receiving this knowledge, as he is an AzhwAr - even though he did parOpadhEsam a little bit, he got so immersed in bhagavadh anubhavam and out of his Arthi left the material world at a very young age.

EmperumAnAr with his parama krupai gave this benediction to anyone who desires and delivers them to emperumAn.

Thus, nAyanArAchAn piLLai concludes that emperumAnAr has the uththAragathva pUrthi (completeness).

upakAraga AchArya

He is the one who is capable of leading us to an uththAraga AchArya. In our sampradAyam, all AchArya paramparais coming under emperumAnAr upto our own AchArya is classified under upAkAraga AchArya. Whenever we undergo pancha samskAram, our AchArya requests emperumAnAr through his guru paramparai to hand

over that jivAthmA to emperumAn as a person with the desire of leaving samsAram and reaching paramapadham.

Both uththAraga AchArya and upakAraga AchArya are equally respectable - though emperumAnAr has a special place in our sampradAyam. mAmunigaL in his upadhEsa rathina mAlai starts with thiruvaimozhi piLLai and ends with emperumAnAr to show us the proper approach.

samAsrayana AchArya and jnAna AchArya

- **samAsrayana AchArya** is the one who is performing pancha samsakAram to us.
- **jnAna AchArya** is the one from whom we hear grantha kAlakshEpams, etc which develops our athma jnAnam.

While we are always indebted to our samAsrayana AchArya and should be totally surrendered to him, jnAna AchArya should also be respected equally. For some, both samAsrayana and jnAna AchAryas will be the same person. In fact, every srivaishnava must be respected as ones own AchArya as per srivachana bhushanam.

To summarize, a sishya must depend on his/her AchArya totally. He/She also has the responsibility to take care of the livelihood of the AchArya. One must constantly be in touch with the AchArya and also assist in his needs.

There were many wonderful incidents in our pUrvAcharyAs' lives between AchArya and sishya. We will see some of them here:

- ManakkAl nambi used to do menial services at his AchArya's (uyyakkondAr) residence.
- ManakkAl nambi took so much effort to bring AlavandhAr into srivaishnavam.
- emperumAnAr treated kooraththAzhwAn with utmost respect even though he (emperumAnAr) was the AchArya.
- once when emperumAnAr got upset with kooraththAzhwAn, AzhwAn said, "adiyen is emperumAnAr's property - he can do whatever he wants".
- embAr used to examine his AchArya's bed by lying down on it first. When asked if it is not a sin, he said he will not mind to commit such sin, as long as his AchArya's bed is ensured to be most comfortable.
- emperumAnAr says to ananthAzhwAn that parAsara bhattar is just like himself and should be treated the same.
- bhattar and nanjeeyar had excellent conversations. nanjeeyar gave up everything and became a sannyasi. He said once, "if my ashramam comes in as an interference for my service to bhattar (his AchArya), I will break my thrithandam."
- nanjeeyar encouraged nampiLLai's view points even though they were some times different from his own for some pAsurams.

- pinbazhagiya perumAL jeeyar said he wanted to stay in this leela vibhUthi just to observe/enjoy nampiLLai's (his AchArya) thirumuthugu (back shoulders,etc) while coming back from cauvery after bathing.
- koorakulOththama dasar took so much effort to bring thiruvaimozhi piLLai into srivaishnavam.
- maNavALa mAmunigaL took thiruvAimozhi piLLai's (his AchArya) orders as his only goal in life. He learnt sribhashyam once and gave lectures on it but then he focussed during the whole time in arulicheyal and rahasya granthams. SriRanganathan with sridhEvi and bhoothEvi listened to eedu kAlakshEpam in front of his sannidhi for a whole year and at the end gave his own sEsha paryankam as his AchArya sambhAvanai and a thanian to maNavALa mAmunigaL which is chanted every where both at the beginning and end of any arulicheyal gOshti even today per his orders.
- maNavALa mAmunigaL gave his own seat, thiruvAzhi and thiruchangu (chakkaram/sangu) to ponnadikkAl jeeyar and asked him to do pancha samskAram for appAchiAr aNNA.

There are many such incidents but just listed some to understand how AchAryas and sishyas dealt with each other in their real lives.

With this in mind, we will move onto a very important topic. piLLai IOKAchAryar in Mumukshupadi's dvaya prakaranam, 1st sutram, explains the attributes that a vaishnava adhikAri should develop in his life time. This sutram explains the qualities that we should aspire to have in a crystal clear way. MAmunigaL has done an excellent vyAkyAnam for this sutram and we will see it in our next article.

4. Guru paramparai

In the previous article we discussed the unique relationship between AchArya and sishya.

Some will ask - "Why do we need an AchArya between us and emperumAn? Has there not been cases where emperumAn directly acknowledging individuals like GajendrAzhwAn, Guha perumAL, Sabhari, akrUran, thrivakrA (kooni in Krishna avathAram), mAIA kAran, etc?".

For this our pUrvAchAryAs explain that, while emperumAn is svathanthran and he is pouring his mercy on jlvAthmAs, he is also bound to give results by an individual's karma. This is where an AchArya comes into the picture. EmperumAn (out of his constant sukrutham for everyone) is tirelessly creating opportunities for jlvAthmas to ultimately reach a sadAchArya who will impart the real knowledge and prepare the jlvAthma to reach him. AchArya being a recommendation authority like pirAti (who is purushakAra bhoothai) ensures to emperumAn that the jlvAthma is ready to give up worldly attachments and is purely depending on emperumAn's mercy to reach him. It is said that while emperumAn will grant samsAram or mOksham according to one's own karma, AchArya will always ensure that the surrendered jlvAthma gets mOksham. It is also explained that going directly to emperumAn is like trying to reach out to his hands to hold on and going through an AchArya is like reaching out to his lotus feet to hold on (since achayas are his thiruvadi nilai - representing his lotus feet). EmperumAn directly acknowledging jlvAthmAs are rare and him accepting jlvAthmAs through an AchAryan is the most common/appropriate process as explained by our pUrvAchAryAs.

Before going in to srivaishnava lakshanam, since we are discussing about AchAryas it is very appropriate to understand our own AchArya paramparai. This will help us fully appreciate how we got this knowledge down to us from emperumAn. Most of us will probably already know this, but still sharing this since without this AchArya paramparai - we would also be like so many other samsAris in this world today.

Srivaishnavam (also known as sanAthana dharmam) is an eternal sampradhAyam and many great personalities have propagated it throughout the history. Towards the end of dvApara yugam, AzhwArs started appearing in southern part of bhAratha varsham at the banks of various rivers. The last AzhwAr appeared in the early part of kali yugam. VyAsa rishi, in sri bhAgavatham identifies that exalted bhakthas of Sriman nArAyaNan will appear in the banks of various rivers and will enrich every one with the divine knowledge of emperumAn. AzhwArs are 10 in number - Poigai AzhwAr, bhoothathAzhwAr, peyAzhwAr, thirumazhisai AzhwAr, nammAzhwAr, kulasEkarAzhwAr, periyAzhwAr, thondaradi podi AzhwAr, thirumangai AzhwAr and thiruppAnAzhwAr. Madhurakavi AzhwAr is an AchArya nishtar and ANdAL is avathAram of Bhoomi pirAti. AzhwArs (except ANdAL) are all jlvAthmAs hand picked by emperumAn from samsAram. EmperumAn gave the AzhwArs the most perfect knowledge about thathva thrayam (chit, achit, isvara) through his own sankalpam and

Srivaishnava lakshanam

through them he re-established the bhathi/prapaththi mArgam when it was lost. He also made them realize past, present and future events fully and clearly. Azhwars sung 4000 divya prabhandham (popularly known as arulicheyal) which were direct outpourings of their bhagavadh anubhavam. The essence of arulicheyal is in the divine verses of thiruvAimozhi which was rendered by nammAzhwAr.



After the time of AzhwArs, AchAryas started appearing. Several AchAryas such as Nathamuni, UyyakkondAr, manakkAl nambi, AlavanthAr, periya nambi, periya thirumalai nambi, thirukkOshtiyur nambi, thirumAlai AndAn, AzhwAr thiruvAranga perumAL arrayar, emperumAnAr, embAr, koorathAzhwAn, mudhaliAndAn, arulAla

perumAL emperumAnAr, ananthAzhwAn, thirukkurugai pirAn pillan, engalAzhwAn, nadAthur ammAl, bhattar, nanjeeyar, nampiLLai, vadakku thiruveedhi piLLai, periyavAchAn piLLai, piLLai IOKAchAryar, azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr, koorakulOthama dAsar, thiruvAimozhi piLLai, vedhAnthAchariar and maNavALa mAmunigaL appeared and propagated our sampradhAyam. This AchArya paramparai continues through the 74 simhAsanadhipathis and jeeyar mutts (established by emperumAnAr and manvala mAmunigaL) until today. These AchAryas wrote several commentaries on arulicheyal, explaining the meanings of the pAsurams in great detail. These commentaries are the great wealth they have left behind to us - for us to read them and immerse in the bhagavadh anubhavam. The AchAryas, by the mercy of the AzhwArs were able to exactly understand the exact message in the pAsurams and explain them from different angles.

In upadhEsa rathina mAlai, mAmunigaL explains that we are able to understand these arulicheyal as it is only because of the existence of these commentaries (vyAkyAnams). If there were no commentaries, our arulicheyal would have also become like other Tamil literature (which are only learnt by a few elite group of people). Since our pUrvAchAryAs understood the message, they made arulicheyal as part of nithyAnusandhanam at both homes and temples. To see it practically, we can visit thiruvallikeNi divya dEsam - during siriya thirumadal gOshti on Fridays, we can even see 5 year olds and 6 year olds chanting out louder than the older srivaishnavas. Also, every one of us knows ThiruppAvai - every where, atleast during mArgazhi month we can see even 3 year olds and 4 year olds singing the glorious pAsurams of ANdAL nAchiAr.

This article ended up being another slight deviation from the original topic - but again a very important aspect that is to be understood and appreciated clearly. In the next article, we will continue with the original topic and move on to piLLai IOKAchAryar's presentation of the qualities of a vaishnava adhikAri.

AzhwArgaL vAzhi, aruLicheyal vAzhi, thAzhvAthumil kuravar thAm vAzhi
அழ்வார்கள் வாழி, அருளிசெயல் வாழி, தாழ்வாதுமில் குரவர் தாம் வாழி

5. Internal qualities

So far, we have seen the physical appearance of a srivaishnava, pancha samskAram which begins a srivaishnava's life and the AchArya-sishya relationship. Now, we will move on to a very important aspect - the internal qualities that a srivaishnava should aspire to develop to become a qualified srivaishnava. This is explained by our pUrvAchAryAs in various granthams. But the fundamentals are most clearly explained in the 1st sUtram of dvaya prakaranam in Mumukshupadi.

A short introduction to Mumukshupadi and its author:

As part of pancha samskAram, the AchArya explains to the sishya about rahasya thrayam - thirumanthram, dvayam and charamasLOkam. The focus of rahasya thrayam is to explain artha panchakam (5 entities) - paramAthma svarUpam, jlvAthma svarUpam, upAya svarUpam, pala svarUpam and virOdhi svarUpam. Our pUrvAchAryAs insist based on sAstram that real knowledge means artha panchaka jnAnam, everything else is ajnAnam only. This grantham has 3 prakaraNam (parts) - one each for thirumanthram, dvayam and charama sLOkam. The flow in mumukshupadi - thirumanthram gives the basic meaning of artha panchakam, dvayam in its two parts mainly explains the nama: and nArAyaNaya in detail, which is explained even further in the two parts of charama sLOkam.



piLLai IOKAchAryar – thiruvehka

piLLai IOKAchAryar who is an avathAra visEsham of dhEva perumAL, out of his boundless mercy consolidated this knowledge and explained rahasya thrayam in simple words so that every one can understand this knowledge. mAmunigaL understanding the endless glOries of this grantham, gave us a wonderful commentary for this grantham with very detailed explanations.

Qualities of a vaishnava adhikAri:

Out of the rahasya thrayam (3 rahasyas), Thirumanthram is called the manthra rahasyam, dvayam is called anusandhAna rahasyam - that which is practiced/chanted all the time and charama sLOkam is called the vidhi rahasyam (that which orders the do's and do not's). Our pUrvAchAryAs have the greatest regard for dvayam and also

explained that the whole of NammAzhwar's thiruvAimozhi is the full blown explanation of dvayam. It is in the beginning of dvaya prakaranam (sUtram 116), piLLai IOKAchAryar establishes the qualities that are expected out of a srivaishnava who can do anusandhAnam of dvayam.

Let us discuss it in detail part by part.

- *puRambunNdAna paRRukkaLaiyadaiya vAsanaiyOdE vidugaiyum*
(புறம்புண்டான பற்றுக்களையடைய வாஸனையோடே விடுகையும்)

We should give up attachments to anything but bhagavat/bhAgavata vishayam including their vAsanA/ruchi. When we develop attachment towards emperumAn, that will automatically lead to detachment towards others. mAmunigaL relates this to "sarvadharmAn parithyajya" in charama sIOkam where kannan says give up all upAyAntharams.

- *emperumAnaiyE thanchamenRu paRRugaiyum* (எம்பெருமானையே தஞ்சமென்று பற்றுகையும்)

One should accept that emperumAn is the only protector and no one else will protect us in any case. mAmunigaL relates this to "mAm" padham in charama sIOkam which identifies no other chEtanan can protect us, EvakAram in emperumAnayE relates to "Ekam" in charam sIOkam, thanjam relates to "sharanam" in charama sIOkam and paRRugaiyum relates to "vraja" in charama sIOkam.

- *pERu thappAthenRu thunNiNthirukkaiyum* (பேறு தப்பாதென்று துணிந்திருக்கையும்)

One should have full confidence in the result - that emperumAn will give us mOksham. We could get 3 doubts - a) even for brahmA, etc he is not attainable, how will we get him? b) how a small prapathi will get him? and c) being very lowly and downtrodden, how will we get the biggest benediction of mOksham? But if we have to simply think about emperumAn as the swAmy who wants to take his property (the jlvAtmA), we can be fully confident that he will ensure that he gets his property. Our pUrvAchAryAs give satisfactory explanation to all the 3 points discussed above as in a) brahmA, etc are thinking that they are svathathrargaL and attaining emperumAn out of their own efforts but prapannas accept that they are parathanthragal to emperumAn and it is emperumAn who is giving the benediction to him. b) Our prapathi is just acknowledging that emperumAn is swAmy and we are his property - it is adhikAri visEshanam (a quality of the subservient jlvAthmA) and is not the upAyam. and c) Even though we are lowly emperumAn is very merciful - if we look at our faults it will be impossible, but if we look at his krupai, everything is possible.

- *pERRukku thvarikkaiyum (பேற்றுக்கு த்வரிக்கையும்)*

On the other hand, we should also not be satisfied with the previous statement, and say "let me reach 80, have grand children, enjoy the accumulated wealth and then accept mOksham". Like nammAzhwaAr cried out several times "when are you going to take me to paramapadham? every moment is unbearable in this samsAram", we should also keep thinking about the result every moment.

- *irukkum NAL ugaNtharuLina NilanGkaLilE pravanNanAy gunNANubhava kainGkaryanGkaLE pozhudhupOkkAgugaiyum (இருக்கும் நாள் உகந்தருளின நிலங்களிலே ப்ரவணனாய் குணாநுபவ கைங்கர்யங்களே பொழுதுபோக்காகுகையும்)*

Even though we are constantly contemplating about reaching paramapadham, while we are here in this samsAram, we should focus on divyadhEsa emperumAns.

ugaNtharuLina NilanGkaL means emperumAn with so much desire comes to samsAram and stay in several temples, mutts and homes with the hope that he will get a few bhakthas whom he can bring to paramapadham. So, it is very important for us to understand emperumAn's desire, engage in gunAnubhavam of emperumAn. The result of enjoying emperumAn's qualities will lead us to doing kainkaryams for him and bhAgavathAs by mind, words and action. That is what ANdAL also mentioned in thiruppAvai 2nd pAsuram - vaiyaththu vAzhvIrGAL - even in this world we can have a wonderful life by engaging on gunAnubhavam and kainkaryam.

- *ippadi irukkum srlvaishnNavargaL ERRamaRiNthu ugaNthirukkaiyum (இப்படி இருக்கும் ஸ்ரீவைஷ்ணவர்கள் ஏற்றமறிந்து உகந்திருக்கையும்)*

Once we understand the above 5 points clearly, we will automatically look out for srivaishnavas who are like that. And when we meet them we should feel so happy - our pUrvAchAryas say, when we see a srivaishnava we should feel happy as if we saw moon (every one right from childhood has a fascination for moon), mild breeze and sandalwood paste (every one likes the soft nature, coolness and the smell). Also, mAmunigaL says that we should think that "even in this samsAram we can meet some one like this" and compares it to seeing a Lotus flourishing in a stove (which is impossible). mAmunigaL continues to say, even if we get the first 5 qualities, getting this particular quality is extremely difficult - but all of our pUrvAchAryas lived such exemplary life glorifying other srivaishnavas.

- *thirumaNthraththilum dhvayaththilum NiyathanAgaiyum (திருமந்த்ரத்திலும் த்வயத்திலும் நியதனாகையும்)*

We should understand that - whatever is to be accepted (upAdhEyam) and given up (thyAjam) are clearly explained in rahasya thrayam and have complete faith in it. The

common misunderstandings that we have and how it gets cleared by understanding thirumanthram is explained in the 4th sLOkam of ashtasLOki by parAsara bhattar:

- By looking at "makAram" in praNavam, we understand that we are not our body (dhEham), since "ma" stands for chEthanam.
- By looking at the "akAram" with the hidden "Aya" in praNavam, we understand that emperumAn is the only independent personality and we are subservient to him.
- By looking at the "ukAram" in praNavam, we understand that we are only subservient to him and no one else.
- By looking at the nama: patham, we understand that only emperumAn can protect us.
- By looking at the nArAyaNa patham, we understand that emperumAn is the only true bandhu for the jlvAthma and every one else in this samsAram is just AbhAsa bandhu. This is based on the fact nAra + ayana - the one who holds every one/thing in him.
- By looking at the Aya patham, we understand that we should give up our attachments to all material things and develop our attachment to emperumAn.

Dvaya mahAmanthram also explains this in further detail - most importantly explicitly mentions that emperumAn is sriya:pathi (which was implicit in thirumanthram). We should also never think about any other manthrams for our anusandhAnam since dvayam is the most complete manthram which is already given to us our pUrvAchAryas.

- *AchArya prEmam ganaththirukkaiyum (ஆசார்ய ப்ரேமம் கனத்திருக்கையும)*

We should consider AchAryan as none other than emperumAn because it is because of his upadhEsam (instructions) we developed faith in the above qualities. Also if we have prEmam (love) for AchArya it must be manifested towards him by doing loving services to him. It is also said in the sAstram that AchArya must be glorified in public - so we should take every opportunity to do that as well.

- *AchAryan pakkalilum emperumAn pakkalilum kruthajYanAy pOrugaiyum (ஆசார்யன் பக்கலிலும் எம்பெருமான் பக்கலிலும் க்ருதஜ்ஞனாய் போருகையும)*

We should be grateful to both AchAryan and emperumAn. AchAryan is the one who took some one like us who were nithya samsAris (engaged in material activities since time immemorial), instructed us and brought us close to emperumAn. EmperumAn is the one who keeps trying to do good to us and ultimately establishes the link between us and an AchAryan. So we should be grateful to both of them.

- *jnYAnamum virakthiyum chANthiyum udaiyanAyirukkum parama sAthvikanOdE sahavAsam panNnNugaiyum* (ஜ்ஞானமும் விரக்தியும் சாந்தியும் உடையனாயிருக்கும் பரம ஸாத்விகனோடே ஸஹவாஸம் பண்ணுகையும்)

We should also live with such srivaishnavas who have full knowledge in artha panchakam, have detachment from worldly activities and have no pride that they have such great qualities. Such srivaishnavas will ensure that a) when we get bewildered in samsAram, they will help us out in identifying what is good and what is bad and b) they will impart their qualities slowly but surely to us as well. mAmunigaL says this in the upadhEsa rathina mAlai in the end as well - if we are attached to good minded people, we will develop those qualities and like wise if we associate with evil minded people, we will develop those qualities as well.

vaishnNavAdhikArikku avachyApEkshitham (வைஷ்ணவாதிகார்க்கு அவச்யாபேக்ஷிதம்)

Finally piLLai IOkAchariAr says that these are qualities that are essentially desirable by a vaishnava adhikAri - which means we must attempt to develop these qualities.

Without the works of our pUrvAcharyAs it will be impossible to extract such detailed explanations for these matters. Every moment we think about the favours done by our pUrvAchAryas to us, we should be grateful to them and atleast for their sake, we should try to follow atleast a small percentage of their instructions and their acts.

It is essential for every one of us to understand how we should deal with other srivaishnavas and specifically how we should avoid offenses. Our pUrvAcharyAs have discussed the different types of offenses in explicit detail and we will discuss that in the next article.

6. Glorifying Srivaishnavas with such jnAnam/anushtAnam

In the previous article we observed the qualities expected out of a vaishnava adhikAri (qualified vaishnava). Before moving on to the next topic, adiyen would like to discuss the following point in detail.

- *ippadi irukkum srlvaishnNavargAL ERRamaRiNthu ugaNthirukkaiyum* (இப்படி இருக்கும் ஸ்ரீவைஷ்ணவர்கள் ஏற்றமறிந்து உகந்திருக்கையும)



NamperumAL understood the greatness of mAmunigaL, accepted him as his AchAryan and glorified him.

Once we understand the first 5 points in this sUtram (116) clearly, we will automatically look out for srivaishnavas who are like that. And when we meet them we should feel so happy - our pUrvAchAryas say, when we see a srivaishnava we should feel happy as if we saw moon (every one right from childhood has a fascination for moon), mild breeze and sandalwood paste (everyone likes the soft nature, coolness and the smell). Also, mAmunigaL says that we should think that "even in this samsAram we can meet some one like this" and compares it to seeing a Lotus flourishing in a stove (which is impossible). **mAmunigaL continues to say,**

even if we get the first 5 qualities, getting this particular quality is extremely difficult - but all of our pUrvAchAryas lived such exemplary life glorifying other srivaishnavas.

The reason it is very difficult to develop this abhimAnam is because of our own ahankAram. We have this "*sajAthIya budhi*" on srivaishnavas, i.e., we look at another srivaishnava and say, "He is also bathing, He is also wearing clothes like me, He is also eating, He is also working. Why should I treat him higher than me?". The point we miss is that, according to pUrvAchAryAs "srivaishnavas are AchArya thulyars and higher than self and Isvaran". Kannan emperumAn says in bhagavath glthai - "*matchitthA: matgadha: prAna: bodhayantha: parasparam ...*" - those who think about me, have me as their life breath, discuss about me together all the time and enjoy those moments together". In the samsAram (which is full of miseries) - to find a person who shares bhagavadh vishayam is like finding oasis in a desert. So, we should make sure that we take the opportunity to the fullest potential and discuss bhagavadh vishayam with such srivaishnavas. NammAzhwAr also praises srivaishnavas of this world as "*vinnuLArilum sriyar*" (better than nithyas and mukthas since these srivaishnavas think about emperumAn all the time being in samsAram itself), nilath dhEvargAL (nithya sUris of this world), etc. But once we give up the ahankAram and start following naichya anusandhAnam (identifying oneself as very lowly) we will start developing this appreciation towards other srivaishnavas.

This sUtram (116 in Mumukshupadi) can be related to sutram 447 in Srivachana bhUshanam - "*AchArya abhimAnamE uththAragam*".

While most of us will think that the sishyan having the abhimAnam towards our AchAryan will give the sishyan the ultimate result of mOksham, mAmunigAL being an expert commentator coming in the line of our pUrvAchAryAs, says that "if the AchAryan (who out of his boundless/causeless mercy provided the ultimate knowledge to the sishyan) has the abhimAnam that 'this is my sishyan', that will relieve the sishyan from the clutches of samsAram very easily". Actually this is the essence of our sampradhAyam. **By following what is said in the Mumukshupadi sUtram 116, we will appreciate the relationship with a srivaishnava more than anything else and the result is we will become the sath pAthram to have the abhimAnam of such srivaishnavas/AchAryas as mentioned in Srivachana bhUshanam sutram 447.**

We can see this in pUrvAchArya's lives many such incidents.

- ManakkAl nambi took so much effort to bring AlavandhAr back to sampradhAyam (since that was nAthamuni's wish).
- emperumAnAr walked from Srirangam to Thirukoshtiyur 18 times to meet Thirukoshtiyur nambi and ThirukOshtiyur nambi in the end gave swAmy the name "emperumAnAr" for his actions.
- emperumAnAr and periya nambi had a wonderful relationship of mutual respect and affection to each other.

Srivaishnava lakshanam

- koorathAzhwAn gave up all his wealth and surrendered to emperumAnAr and emperumAnAr had so much respect and affection for azhwAn.
- When piLLai piLLai AzhwAn (a sishya of koorathAzhwAn) was continuously committing apachArams to srivaishnavas, on one punya kAlam (month beginning), koorathAzhwAn went to him and asked to give all the pApams arising out of those apachArams as an offering to him. Looking at the kArunyam (mercy) of his AchArya, from that time onwards piLLai piLLai AzhwAn never committed any apachArams towards any one.
- EmbAr instructs to bhattar while leaving to paramapadham that "do not think that you are a big scholar, son of koorathAzhwAn, etc. always remember that emperumAnAr thiruvadigalE thanjam".
- emperumAnAr was very attached to parAsara bhattar and once mentioned to anathAzhwAn that bhattar should be treated just like himself.
- bhattar and nanjeeyar were very attached to each other. bhattar also instructs nanjeeyar while leaving to paramapadham that "do not think you are a vedhAnthi, you offered so much wealth to bhattar, etc. always remember that emperumAnAr thiruvadigalE thanjam".
- nanjeeyar and nampiLLai were very attached to each other. When nampiLLai asks nanjeeyar, what should be the utmost quality of srivaishnava, nanjeeyar says that "when we find that some srivaishnava is having issues with us, we have to think the problem is with us not with the other person" - this is in line with "nAnE thAn Ayiduga" in thiruppAvai 15th pAsuram.
- nampiLLai went to kandhAdai thOzhappar to ask for forgiveness, even though it was thOzhappar who committed offense to him.
- KoorakulOthama dhAsar took so much effort to bring ThiruvAimozhipiLLai back to sampradhAyam (since that was piLLai IOKAchAryar's wish).
- ThiruvAimozhipiLLai and mAmunigaL were very attached to each other.

Our pUrvAchAryas had their full focus on bhagavad/bhAgavatha kainkaryam and nothing else. For them, their bodily comforts are of least importance. If we understand this and engage in bhAgavatha kainkaryam, that will fit our svarUpam perfectly per our pUrvAchArya's definition of a srivaishnava adhikAri.

So, we should think that we committed the biggest crime when we find faults in another srivaishnava. Even worse is propagating another srivaishnava's faults (as perceived by us) to others. We have to think about slthA piratti's behaviour constantly - she did not tell perumAL anything about the tortures committed by rAkshasigal to her.

With this in mind, we will discuss the offenses (apachArams) that should be avoided by a srivaishnava in the next article.

7. apachArams to avoid

In the previous articles we have seen the internal qualities that a srivaishnava should aspire to develop. We also saw in the end, how important it is to aspire for the association of such srivaishnavas. In this article we will understand the different types of apachArams (offenses) that srivaishnavas should avoid.

For srivaishnavas, sAstram is the foundation - we depend on sAstram for every action we do. SAstram means that which instructs us on what to do (vidhi) and what not to do (nishEdham). Primarily sAstram instructs us to perform our nithya/namithika karmas and restrain from theft, attachment towards other's properties, violence, etc. Our pUrvAchAryas take the essence from the sAstram and consolidated them for us.

In srivachana bhushana divya sAstram, in sUtrams 300 to 307, piLLai IOKAchAryar explains that a srivaishnava must be asakthan (incapable to do) in the following 4 matters:

- akruthya karaNam - not indulging in what is rejected in sAstram
- bhagavadh apachAram - apachArams in emperumAn's vishayam
- bhAgavatha apachAram - apachArams in bhAgavatha vishyam
- asahya apachAram - apachArams in bhagavadh/bhAgavatha vishayam that happens without any reason

Let us see one by one in detail:

akruthya karaNam

sAstram in general asks us to refrain from the following items:

- para himsai - giving trouble to any living being. even hurting a plant or small ant unnecessarily is not accepted in sAstram.
- para stOtram - our speech ability is provided by emperumAn to praise him and his adiyArs. It should never be used to praise avaishnavas.
- para dhAra parigraham - we should never think about another woman who is not married to us with any wrong intentions.
- para dhravya apachAram - we should never take some one else's property directly or indirectly unless the owner gives it to us willingly.
- asathya kathanam - speaking what is opposite to reality/truth and what is not helping any living being.
- apakshya pakshaNam - eating food stuffs which has jAathi, Asraya or nimitha dOsham - see AhAra niyamam (http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/07/srivaishnava-AhAra-niyamam_28.html) for detailed discussion on this topic.
- many other such restrictions given by manu smriti, etc.

It is important for a srivaishnava to first follow the sAmAnyA sAstra vidhi and avoid the nishEdha vishayams.

bhagavadh apachAram

piLLai IOKAchAryar continues to explain the next nishEdha vishayam - bhagavadh apachAram. He explains this in great detail and mAmunigaL gives wonderful commentary for these. The following are listed as bhagavadh apachAram:

- To consider emperumAn at the same level as dhEvathAntharams - for a srivaishnava it is paramount to understand that emperumAn is sarvEshvaran, one who is the lord of every one (including brahma, shivan, indran, varuNan, agni, etc) and he is the antharyAmi (one being inside everyone to control their acts). There is no one equal to him or higher to him. With that understanding, we should fully abstain from indulging in any relationship with dhEvathAntharams.
- To consider avathArams such as rAma, krishna, etc as normal or (even super) humans. One should understand that emperumAn appears in this samsAram with all his qualities as in paramapadham. As part of his leelai, he enters in to garbham of a woman, being born on a particular day, goes through difficulties like vana vAsam, etc - but he is not bound by karma at all - instead all of these happen out of his iccha (desire) to help jlvAthmAs who are suffering in samsAram. So, just because of these difficulties he takes up on himself, we should never think that he is also like other humans.
- To disrespect the varnAshrama limits - One should strictly follow varna and Ashrama rules and regulations. Because emperumAn says "*sruthi smriti mama Eva AijnA ... AijnA chEthi mama dhrOhi, madh bhaktOpi na vaishnava.*" - sruthi and smriti are his orders and who does not follow them are his drOhis and even if he is a bhaktha he will not be considered a vaishnava. In this particular case, mAmunigaL explains, fourth varna srivaishnavas using vaidhIha manthrams during thiruvArAdhanam, sanyAsis eating beetle nuts are some of the acts which are not allowed by sAstram.
- To value the archA vigraham (deity) based on the raw materials that are used to make it - We should understand that emperumAn out of the pure love for his bhakthAs, takes up the form which they desire. If we say that because this is a gold vigraham it is great and this is a stone vigraham or just a picture it is not so good. That is explained in sAstram as questioning the purity of ones own mother.
- To consider the jlvAthmA as independent - our svAthanthriya budhi is the main cause for all kinds of sins and this is explained as the biggest theft in sAstram. We should understand that jlvAthmA is only subservient to emperumAn and act according to that.
- To steal bhagvadh dhavam (things that belong to emperumAn). This includes stealing emperumAn's properties like his bhOgam, thiruvAbharanam, vastram, etc. Also stealing immovable properties like his land, etc., can be included here which are quite common these days.
- To help those who do the above acts of stealing.
- To accept those stolen properties from those who steal or help others to steal emperumAn's properties. Even accepting with the thought of "well, we did not

want those, but they are giving it, so why not accept it" is not favourable to emperumAn.

- many other such behaviours that are condemned in sAstram.

bhAgavatha apachAram

Primarily, it is explained that just considering another srivaishnava equal to us itself is a bhAgavatha apachAram - we should always consider ourselves lower than other srivaishnavas. In this section, piLLai IOKAchAryar very briefly explains that "bhAgavatha apachAram is that enmity which is developed in us against srivaishnavas, out of desire towards wealth and lust". But detailed explanation of bhAgavatha apachAram is discussed in sUtrams 190 to 207. Let us see the essence of those sUtrams.

First we need to have some context on bhAgavatha apachAram:

- Those who have srivaishnava vEsham (dress, Urdhva pundram, etc) but engage in bhAgavatha apachAram are like clothes which are folded nicely but burnt internally. When a strong wind blows, they will fly into pieces.
- We also have to understand that emperumAn's avathArams like varaha, naraismha, rAma, krishna, etc and his acts in those avathArams are mainly due to the apachArams done by hiraNya, rAvana, etc to emperumAn's bhakthas. It is because of his anguish in seeing the suffering of his bhakthAs, he takes up these avathArams in samsAram. We can easily understand this from his own words on his avathAra rahasyam in the fourth chapter of bhagavath glthai in the sLOkams – “yadhA yadhA...”, “parithrAnAya sAdhuanam...”, “bhahUni mE vyathlthAni...”, “ajO api sann...” and “janma karma ca mE divyam...”. In their gitA bhAshyam and thAthparya chandrikai, emperumAnAr and vedhAnthAchAriar has explained these sLOkams in great detail.

There are also several types of bhAgavatha apachAram - discriminating/disrespecting a srivaishnava based on his/her birth, knowledge, acts, food, relatives, place of living, etc.

Out of these, discriminating/disrespecting based on a srivaishnava's birth is the cruelest one. This is considered to be even worse than valuing the archa vigraham of emperumAn based on the raw material it is made of (it is already explained that this is similar to questioning the purity of ones own mother).

The fact that we disrespect another srivaishnava based on any of the above is in itself sufficient to cause bhAgavatha apachAram. Our pUrvAchAryas have maintained such strict standards while dealing with other srivaishnavas. They were cautious all the time. For example, even an AchArya will treat his sishya with utmost respect - that is the level of dignity they were maintaining. What we see today to some extent is total degradation - even the sishya is not giving respect to his/her own AchArya and saying things like "well, he is not so knowledgeable.", "but he is also after money, how can I respect him", etc.

The results of bhAgavatha apachAram are also explained in detail here.

- Thrisangu's example is explained here - He insisted to his AchArya (vasishta maharishi) and subsequently vasishta's sons to make him go to svargam with the existing body. Since they refused to do that he got angry and seeing that vasishta's sons cursed him to become a chandALan. The same yajnOpavItham which establishes his brahma jnAnam, became the belt which chandALas wear. Likewise if srivaishnavas commit apachArams, being in a such high position (being a srivaishnava) any pApams/mistakes that they do will have the most severe punishment according to sAstram - since they are expected to be very pure. Just like if the Prime Minister of the country is involved in some corruption - every one thinks so low of him, but if a common man is involved in corruption no one will care about that.
- Thondaradi podi AzhwAr said "*thamargaLil thalaivarAya chAthi aNthanNargaLElum*" ("*தமர்களில் தலைவராய சாதி அந்தணர்களேலும்*") - even if a person is born in brAhmana family, had brahmOpadhEsam and fully qualified himself in vedhas, if he commits an apachAram to a srivaishnava (who just understands the sambandham between emperumAn and himself but may not have any other jnAnam and anushtAnam), this brAhmana will become like a chandALA immediately. **We should not think that even after doing so many apachArams to srivaishnavas we do not see anyone change their forms - the change need not be physical.**
- Even when Garudan thought about chAndili (who is emperumAn's bhakthai) that, why she is living in a secluded place instead of divyadhEsam, he immediately lost his wings.
- When piLLai piLLai AzhwAn continuously commits bhAgavatha apachAram, koorathAzhwan corrects him in many ways highlighting the importance of avoiding such apachArams.

Finally, we should understand a very important point. As we understand/believe that, "we get mOksham purely by our relationship to our AchArya irrespective of our jnAnam and anushtAnam", the same way "we will fall down to the bottom of samsAram purely by our apachAram to a srivaishnava irrespective of our jnAnam and anushtAnam".

asahya apachAram

asahya means without any reason. These are the apachArams we commit towards emperumAn, AchArya or srivaishnavas without any specific reason.

- In bhagavadh vishyam - hiranyakasipu just did not want to hear about emperumAn - even though emperumAn did not do anything particular to him.
- In AchArya vishayam - not following his instructions, explaining the knowledge he taught to unqualified persons in expectation of wealth, fame, etc
- In bhAgavatha vishayam - having jealousy towards other srivaishnavas, etc.

It is explained that each of these apachArams (in order) are crueller than the one before. That is, bhagavadh apachAram is crueller than akruthya karanam, bhAgavatha apachAram is crueller than bhagavadh apachAram and asahya apachAram is crueller than bhAgavatha apachAram.

Our pUrvAchAryas were very respectful to sAstram and were very fearful of committing any apachAram. Every AchArya in our guruparamparai (as we can see from their history), towards the end of their life in this samsAram, will gather all their sishyAs and other srivaishnavas and ask for their forgiveness even though they did not commit any apachAram at all. Such was their humility.

For us also, it is important to understand this clearly, and try to apply in our lives. JnAnam exemplifies when it leads to anushtAnam - if that does not happen that jnAnam can simply be the called ajnAnam.

We should also understand clearly that this does not mean that srivaishnavas did not share their knowledge in sAstram to other srivaishnavas fearing that it will cause bhAgavatha apachAram. If that was the case, we would not have so many granthams by our pUrvAchAryas and even contemporary AchAryas in our sampradhAyam explaining how we should live. The goal of these granthams is to educate us to develop these good qualities by reading them.

In the next article adiyen would like to discuss another important aspect - what is uthkrushta janmam (high birth) and apakrushta janmam (low birth) according to our pUrvAchAryas.

8. Understanding the greatness of Srivaishnavas (part 1)

In the previous article (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-7.html>), we discussed the different types of apachArams that should be completely avoided by srivaishnavas. In that, our pUrvAchAryas have emphasised the cruelty of discrimination amongst srivaishnavas based on their birth. One word of caution though - while we should not discriminate srivaishnavas based on birth, we should also ensure that varnAsrama dharmam is respected. It is like walking on a thin rope. An example would help understand this principle. In a big organization, there is a General Manager and a Mechanic. Both are humans and must be equally respected per the rule book. But, when the mechanic goes and sits in the General Manager's chair in the GM's office, it will not be accepted by the same management which allows equality among employees. Similar concept is described as bhagavadh apachAram - varnAsrama vibhareethamAna upachArams - a srivaishnava must respect varnAsrama dharmam and is very well bound by that.

The core principle of our pUrvAchAryas on this topic is established clearly based on sAstram by piLLai IOKAchAryar and Azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr in their granthams srivachana bhUshaNam and AchArya hrudhayam respectively. They simply documented the thoughts of AzhwArs and their pUrvAchAryas (not that they created a new sampradhAyam). They consolidated and extracted the essence of the teachings of AzhwArs and their pUrvAchAryas and documented them clearly.

It is a common (mis)understanding that, of the four varnas (brAhmaNa, kshathriya, vaisya, shUdra) - brAhmaNa is high birth and shUdra is low birth. But our pUrvAchAryas clearly have other ideas. Let us see them in detail:

Our purvAchAryas clearly establishes that vaidhlha (one who accepts vEdhas as pramANam) means one who accepts Vishnu parathvam (sidhAntham may be different - adhvaitham, dvaitham, vishishtAdvaitham, etc). But if that sAstram (which establishes vishnu parathvam and nourishes that in the person who follows the sAstram) is learnt and chanted without understanding this fundamental principle, then that sAstram is not used properly by that learner. Such persons who learn sAstram but do not accept vishnu parathvam are equated to a) donkeys carrying expensive saffron (as they do not understand the real value) b) decorations on a dead body (since there is no AthmA there is no use) c) decorations on a widow.

For a srivaishnava, his bodily birth does not count even a miniscule quantity to get the ultimate benediction of mOksham. It is the emperumAnAr sambandham that gets us the mOksham. piLLai IOKAchAryar establishes two terms "*uthkrushtamAga bramiththa janmam*" (what is misunderstood to be high birth) and "*apakrushtamAga bramiththa janmam*" (what is misunderstood to be low birth). He explains that brAhmaNa/kshathriya/vaishya janmam (which are considered to be high births) are actually dangerous since those births give qualification to indulge in upAyAntharam like

karma, jnAna, bhakthi yOgams. The second pitfall is, these (misunderstood) high births also give us ahankAram which does not allow us to practice naichiya anusandhAnam. But these two defects are not seen in the (misunderstood) low birth. So, it is concluded that - the birth which completely eliminates these two defects (upAyAnthara sambandham, ahankAram) is considered the best.

Even for those who are born in the (misunderstood) high births, their defects (upAyAnthara sambandham and ahankAram) get removed by having sambandham to qualified adhikAris only. This is established by periya perumAL making IOkasAranga muni carry thiruppAnazhwAr on his shoulders.

This greatness of srivaishnavas who purify us is explained by AzhwArs in:

- *payilum chudaroLi* (thiruvAimozhi 2.7)
- *nedumArkku adimai* (thiruvAimozhi 8.10)
- *naNNatha vaLavunar* (thirumozhi 2.6)
- *kaNsOra venguruthi* (thirumozhi 7.4)
- *thEttarum thiral thEn* (perumAL thirumozhi 2)
- *thirumAlai* (pAsurams - 39 to 43)

Many historical evidences are given by piLLai IOKAchAryar to establish the importance of not considering one's birth and just looking at their bhakthi towards emperumAn.



rAman-vibhIshanan, rAman-jatAyu, rAman-sabharI, rAman-hanumAn

- rAvaNa considered vibhIshana to be a kula dhrOhi but perumAL considered him as part of the ikshvAku vamsam (since he considered vibhIshana as his brother).
- perumAL did charama kainkaryams for periya udayAr (jatAyu).
- dharmaputhran (yudhistran) did charama kainkaryams for sri vidhurar.
- many rishis used to regularly visit and wait for dharmavyAthan (who was a butcher) to clarify his doubts in sAstram since he was very well learned.
- Kannan emperumAn went to Sri vidhurar's (qualified by his bhakthi) house instead of bhIshma (qualified by age/knowledge), dhrOna (qualified by birth/knowledge) and dhuryOdhana (qualified by power).

- perumAL ate fruits from sabhari's (who was born in hunter's family) hands. She was explained by our pUrvAchAryas as a person in complete AchArya nishtai.
- periya nambi did charama kainkaryams for mArAnEri nambi who was a great srivaishnava and a disciple of ALavandhAr. When questioned by emperumAnAr (who questioned his AchArya to ensure that the message is conveyed directly by his AchArya), nambi shows many pramANams (like those quoted above) and establishes that his acts were indeed correct and in line with sAstram.

Also in many cases, AzhwArs/AchAryas also desired to take the births/forms at places that were preferred/enjoyed by emperumAn, as in:

- Vyasa and Suka desired to be the dust of vrindhAvan which were touched by the feet of kannan emperumAn and gOpis.
- kulasEkara Azhwar who was a king desired to become some thing (a fish, bird, flower, the road, the door steps in the sanctum, etc) on the thirumalai.
- periyAzhwAr and ANdAL desired to take birth in cowherd families of vrindhAvan.
- Alavandhar says he prefers to be born as a worm in a srivaishnava's home instead of being born as brahmA.

In AchArya hrudhayam, Azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr also explains the same concept in an excellent chUrnikai - we will see that in the next article. It is one of the most important chUrnikais in AchArya hrudhayam and helps us understand the real high birth, according to our pUrvAchAryas.

9. Understanding the greatness of Srivaishnavas (part 2)

In the previous article (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-8.html>) we observed from piLLai IOkAchArya's works (that were based on the AzhwArs/purvAchAryas thiruvullam), a srivaishnava is not considered to be great or not based on his birth. But it is purely his jnAnam and bhakthi towards emperumAn which was respected by our AchAryas.



piLLai IOKAchAryar, Azhagiya manvALa perumAL nAyanAr - srirangam

Azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr, younger brother of piLLai IOkAchAryar is one of the greatest AchAryas our sampradhAyam has seen. piLLai IOkAchAryar and Azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr are the children of Vadakku thiruveedhi piLLai (who is one of the prime disciples of NampiLLai). Both were walking in the streets of srirangam right from their childhood like perumAL and iLaya perumAL (in ayOdhya) and balarAman and kannan emperumAn (in gOkulam). While piLLai IOkAchAryar was born out of the mercy of NampiLLai, nAyanAr was born out of the mercy of NamperumAL. Both the brothers took the vow of naishtika brahmAchAryam (not marrying anyone ever) - committing themselves for the sampradhAyam fully. While piLLai IOkAchAryar mainly wrote ashtAdhasa rahasyams (18 rahasya granthams), nAyanAr wrote excellent and detailed commentaries for ThiruppAvai, kanninun chiruthAmbu, amalan Adhi pirAn, etc. He also wrote AchArya hrudhayam (supporting work for srivachana bhUshanam) and aruLicheyal rahasyam (excellent composition of rahasya thraya meanings fully using AzhwAr pAsurams).

The history of the advent of AchArya hrudhayam (AchArya = nammAzhwAr, hrudhayam = heart/thiruvullam) is to be understood properly as explained in yathIndra pravaNa prabhAvam (a document going back more than 500 years ago - giving the life history of AchAryas after NampiLLai to maNavALa mAmunigaL). While piLLai IOkAchAryar completed and started teaching srivachana bhUshana dhivya sAstram which gives the essence of thiruvAimozhi, some people in srirangam who could not tolerate such glories for piLLai IOkAchAryar, went and complained to namperumAL. Hearing that namperumAL sends his representatives to bring piLLai IOkAchAryar to his sannidhi -

since piLLai IOkAchAryar had gone for his bathing, nAyanAr arrives on behalf of him at the temple. When namperumAL enquires about the issue to nAyanAr, nAyanAr starts reciting AchArya hrudhayam (just like thondaradipodi AzhwAr recited thirumAlai in front of periya perumAL) - which further consolidates the meanings that were in srivachana bhUshanam. Hearing this emperumAn became so ecstatic and ordered nAyanAr to be carried in brahma ratham to his thirumALigai. piLLai IOkAchAryar hearing what happened at the temple also feels very happy that emperumAn not only enjoyed the meanings directly and also acknowledged the absolute validity of the granthams. When NamperumAL acknowledges the validity of something who else can change that?

In this wonderful grantham AchArya hrudhayam, in the 85th chUrnikai, nAyanAr explains who will properly understand the greatness of srivaishnavas. The chUrnikai is framed in such a way that several incidents are highlighted and nAyanAr says that those who understand the essence of those incidents will understand the real greatness of srivaishnavas (i.e., what is uthkrushta/high janma/birth or apakrushta/low janma/birth).



Thirukachi nambi-udayavar, thiruppANaZhwAr-IOkasAranga muni

The following incidents are explained:

- EmperumAn says that eight qualities are expected in his real bhakthas and if we see even a mIEchan (one who is not part of varnAshrama dharmam) who has those eight qualities we should accept him and treat him at least equal to emperumAn himself (infact we should respect/treat them higher than emperumAn) - i.e., worship him, accept his sri pAdha thlrtham and sESha prasAdham. The eight qualities are: 1) unconditional love for bhakthas of emperumAn, 2) enjoying (others) worship of emperumAn, 3) worshipping emperumAn him/herself, 4) being without any pride, 5) having attachment in listening about emperumAn, 6) having bodily changes (like goose bumps, etc) when hearing/thinking/speaking about emperumAn, 7) always thinking about emperumAn, 8) not asking material benefits in return for worshipping

emperumAn. Those who understand these properly will know what is high/low birth.

- NampAduvAn (who sung kaisika rAgam for malai nambi in thirukkurungudi and so compared to thondaradipodi AzhwAr and periyAzhwAr who both sung thiruppaliyezhuchi for emperumAn) who is not born in high birth, removed the curse of the brahma rakshas (a brAhmana due to his improper chanting of mantrams during a yAgam became a rAkshas) by the fruits of his songs. Those who understand this properly will know what is high/low birth.
- Guhan who was born in hunter family but very attached to perumAL (rAma) doubted ilaya perumAL (lakshmana) when perumAL was sleeping in the night. So guha kept awake and watched lakshmana all night. Also, when bharatha (who is well aware of rAma's and lakshmana's qualities) come to meet guha, guha explains the greatness of lakshmana to bharatha as if he does not know about it - but bharatha hearing this feels so happy to hear this from guha and just like rAma, he also accepts guha as one of his brother. Those who understand this properly will know what is high/low birth.
- perumAL accepting and eating fruits from sabhari (who is born in a hunter's family) but very attached to rAma and an AchArya nishtai; kannan emperumAn eating at sri vidhurar's home instead of bhlshma, dhrOna, etc; perumAL embracing hanumAn (who is an animal) after hearing his meeting with pirAti. Those who understands this properly will know what is high/low birth.
- dharmaputhran giving the first mariyAdhai to kannan emperumAn (who is not born in a brAhmana family), perumbuliUr adigal giving the first mariyAdhai to thirumazhisai AzhwAr who was raised by a wood cutter. Those who understand this properly will know what is high/low birth.
- dharmaputhran doing charama kainkaryam for sri vidhurar; perumAL doing charama kainkaryam for jatAyu; periya nambi doing charama kainkaryam for mArAnEri nambi. Those who understand this properly will know what is high/low birth.
- In pushpa mandapam (thirumalai) thiruvEnkatmuduyAn accepted clay flowers from kurumbaruththa nambi who was worshipped by thondaimAn chakkaravarthi; In thyAga mandapam (kanchipuram) pEraruLaLan accepted fan kainkaryam from thirukkachi nambi who was worshipped by emperumAnAr; In bhOga mandapam (srirangam) periya perumAL accepted veenai kainkaryam from thiruppAnAzhwAr who was worshipped by lOkasAranga munivar. Those who understand this properly will know what is high/low birth.
- emperumAnAr touches piLLai urangAvilli dhAsar during thiruvArAdhanam to have purity; NampiLLai asks piLLai yEru thiruvudaiyAr dhAsar to touch the prasAdham before consuming that; Naduvil thiruveedhi piLLai bhattar asked piLLai vAnamAmalai dhAsar to walk around his newly constructed home to purify that. Those who understand this properly will know what is high/low birth.

Based on the above examples, nAyanAr establishes that when one has jnAnam, pure bhakthi and anushtAnam, then that person should be respected/treated highly

irrespective of their birth. While we can translate the words of nAyanAr to English, the chUrnikai in Tamil is an absolute delight for us to read and understand.

When we look at the history of our pUrvAchAryas (even going back to 150-200 years ago) - we can see that the standards were very high. And it is not just theoretical - all of these were put in practice by them as we can clearly see from the several examples/incidents that were discussed in their granthams. If we have the desire, we can also follow atleast these principles to some extent. Also, It is always a two-way street. It is not that one group of people (varna) dominated the other varna or anything like that. There was no such incidents recorded anywhere in our pUrvAchArya granthams. Every one knew their place and they were mutually respected by each other. And if only we can also develop the same etiquette amongst srivaishnavas we will have a better future together definitely. All we can do is to cry and pray at the feet of sriya:pathi, AzhwArs and AchAryas for that to happen.

Now that we have seen various aspects we will move on to another important aspect - srivaishnava dhinacharya. How does a srivaishnava conduct his/her life everyday? That will be discussed in the next article.

10. Srivaishnava dhinacharya (part 1)

We have so far seen the external and internal qualities that should manifest in a srivaishnava. We have also seen the apachAras that a srivaishnava should avoid. And finally in the previous 2 articles (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-8.html> and <http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-9.html>) we have seen how a srivaishnava should be respected irrespective of their birth.

Once we understand all of these, we have to start looking at how srivaishnavas should spend their time when in samsaram. Our emperumAn, AzhwArs and AchAryas have explained this very nicely in their works. Let us see some of those gems from our pUrvAchArya works in this regard.

Kannan emperumAn in bhagavadh glthai slokam 10.9 says:

*mac-cittha mad-gata-prAnA bodhayantha parasparam
kathayantas ca mAm nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca*

My devotees think about me all the time, have me as their life breath, in discussing about me together both the speakers and the listeners enjoy great bliss.

In vEdhAntham (brihathAranyaka upanishad), it is said that:

“AthmA vA arE drashTavya: srOthavya: manthavya: nidhidhyAsithavya.”

By constantly listening about paramAthmA, contemplating on what was heard, meditating on paramAthmA, jlvAthma will finally get to see paramAthmA.

In Sri bhAgavatham prahlAdhAzhwAn instructs every one to engage in 9 activities:

*sravanam klrthanam visnOh smaranam pAdha-sEvanam
archanam vandhanam sakyam dhAsyam Athma-nivEdhanam*

Hearing about emperumAn, singing about him, thinking/meditating about him, serving at the lotus feet of him, worshipping him, praising him, being a friend to him, being a servant to him and surrendering oneself to him are the main activities of a bhaktha.

NammAzhwar, who is praised as srivaishnava kulapathi by AlavandhAr, in the 86th pAsuram of periyA thiruvanthAthi, says:

*kArkalanthamEniyAn kaikalantha AzhiyAn (கார்கலந்தமேனியான் கைகலந்த ஆழியான்)
pArkalantha valvayiRRAn pAmbanNaiyAn (பார்கலந்த வல்வயிற்றான் பாம்பணையான்)
chIrkantha chol NinaiNthupOkkArEl choozhvinaiyin Azhthuyarai (சீர்கலந்த சொல்
நினைந்துபோக்காரேல் சூழ்வினையின் ஆழ்துயரை)*

enninaiNthu pOkkuvarippOthu (என்னினைந்து போக்குவரிப்போது)

How can we spend the time in this samsaram which is full of miseries without thinking about emperumAn who has a beautiful blackish thirumEni, who carries the pAnjachanyam in his hand, one who protects everyone/everything during pralayam by keeping them in his stomach, one who is lying down (thinking about protecting everyone) on AdhisEshan? Such is the state of AzhwAr, that he cannot stop thinking about emperumAn even for a moment and he is wondering what else we can do. On the

other hand, samsAris will say, we can do so many things but do not know how some one can think about emperumAn even for a moment.

Thirumazhisai AzhwAr, in the 63rd pAsuram of nAnmugan thiruvanthathi, says:
theriththu ezhuthi vAchiththu vanNanGgi vazhipattum pUchiththum pOkkinEn pOthu
(தெரித்து எழுதி வாசித்து வணங்கி வழிபடும் பூசித்தும் போக்கினேன் போது)

He says he spends his time by thinking/meditating on emperumAn, writing about him, reading about him, hearing about him from others, worshipping him without any pride, and doing thiruvArAdhanam to him.



vasthavyam AchArya sannidhi - Bhattar and nanjeeyar. Nanjeeyar gave up everything, took sannyasam and lived with his AchAryan in srirangam.

piLLai IOKAchAryar in srivachana bhUshanam sutram 274 says, identifies several aspects for a sath sishya (true sishya) who is utterly dependant on his AchAryan. They are:

- *vasthavyam AchArya sannidhiyum bhagavadh sannidhiyum* (வஸ்தவ்யம் ஆசார்ய ஸன்னிதியும் பகவத் ஸன்னிதியும்) - living place is where his AchAryan resides and (if that is not possible) where emperumAn resides
- *vakthavyam AchArya vaibhavamum sva Nikarshamum* (வக்தவ்யம் ஆசார்ய வைபவமும் ஸ்வ நிகர்ஷமும்) - topic of speech is his AchArya's glories and his own faults
- *japthavyam guru paramparaiyum dhvayamum* (ஜப்தவ்யம் குரு பரம்பரையும் த்வயமும்) - chanting/anusandhAnam is vAkya guru paramparai and dhvaya mahA mantram
- *parigrAhyam pUrvAchArya vachanamum anushtAnamum* (பரிக்ராஹ்யம் பூர்வாசார்ய வசனமும் அனுஷ்டானமும்) - accept the instructions and history of the pUrvAchAryas

- *parithyAjjam avaishtNava sahavAsamum abhimAnamum* (பரித்யாஜ்யம் அவைஷ்ணவ ஸஹவாஸமும் அபிமானமும்) - give up any relationship with avaishtnavas and give up being inspired by them (no matter how good they are in their material strengths)
- *karththavyam AchArya kainGkaryamum bhagavath kainGkaryamum* (கர்த்தவ்யம் ஆசார்ய கைங்கர்யமும் பகவத் கைங்கர்யமும்) - to serve the AchAryan, emperumAn and his adiyArs

maNavALa mAmunigaL in his Arthi prabhandham (divine crying out to emperumAnAr to relieve him immediately of his miseries in this samsAram), in the 28th pAsuram describes his activities. mAmunigaL even though he is punaravathAram of emperumAnAr himself, he is always in the mode of praising emperumAnAr to show us how to do that. Just like how perumAL (rAman) worshipped periyA perumAL in thrEtha yugam to show us how to do thiruvArAdhanam, mAmunigaL also worships emperumAnAr to show us how to fully depend on emperumAnAr.

*panNdu pala Ariyarum pArulagOr uyyap parivudanE cheydhu aruLum palkalaigAL
thammaik kanNdathellAm ezhudhi* (பண்டு பல ஆரியரும் பாருலகோர் உய்யப்
பரிவுடனே செய்து அருளும் பல்கலைகள் தம்மைக் கண்ட தெல்லாம் எழுதி)
avai kaRRu iruNthum piRarkkuk kAthaludan kaRpiththum kAlaththaik kazhiththEn
(அவை கற்று இருந்தும் பிறர்க்குக் காதலுடன் கற்பித்தும் காலத்தைக் கழித்தேன்)
punNdarigai kELvan uRai ponnulagu thannil pOga Ninaivu onRuminRip poruNthi inGgE
iruNthEn (புண்டரிகை கேள்வன் உறை பொன்னுலகு தன்னில் போக நினைவு
ஒன்றுமின்றிப் பொருந்தி இங்கே இருந்தேன்)
enNdichaiyum Eththum ethirAchan aruLAIE ezhilvichumbE anRi ippOthu enmanam
enNnNATHEn (எண்டிசையும் ஏத்தும் எதிராசன் அருளாலே எழில்விசும்பே அன்றி இப்போது
என்மனம் எண்ணாதே)

In the first 2 lines (as split above), mAmunigaL explains that he searched and collected all the pUrvAchArya granthams which were lost/distributed during muslim invasion. These granthams were written by the apAra kArunyam of pUrvAchAryas towards the hitham of all the future generations. Whatever granthams he found, he wrote them personally in palm leaves, he learnt them from his AchAryans (thiruvAimozhi piLLai, etc), lived according to the instructions in those granthams, and taught those to all his disciples.

In the next 2 lines (as split above), mAmunigaL says before getting the katAksham (krupai) of emperumAnAr through his AchAryan thiruvaimozhi piLLai, he did not have any desire to go to paramapadham, but once he got that katAksham he could not stop thinking about going to paramapadham for even a single moment.

From the above we can see how we should live our life. While these are mostly general principles, in the next article we will a specific sUtram from srivachana bhUshanam

Srivaishnava lakshanam

where piLLai lOkAchAryar gives an excellent sketch of how srivaishnavas should conduct themselves here.

11. Srivaishnava dhinacharyaA (part 2)

In the previous article (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-10.html>), we observed the general instructions on how to conduct our daily routine. Now, we will understand in clear, crisp and specific explanation from piLLai IOKAchAryar on our dhinacharyaA in srivachana bhUshana divya sAstram.

piLLai IOKAchAryar in srivachana bhUshanam explains the greatness of bhAgvathas (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-8.html>) and cruelty of bhAgavatha apachAram (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-7.html>). After explaining this, at the end of the second prakaraNam in sUtram 243, he explains through his masterful words (which are nothing but collection of AzhwArs/AchAryas srisUkthis), how a srivaishnava will conduct his/her daily routine. Let us see the gist of that lively sUtram which carries the essence of our pUrvAchAryas' message.

- First we have to understand that since we are in this samsAram, we should think about
 - ourselves (our body mainly) as the AthmA's main enemy - since this is the cause of our ahankAram (sva svAthanthriyam) and interest in materialistic aspirations
 - samsAris (materialistic people) as snakes that we should fear - since they will develop our materialistic aspirations and keep us in the samsAram longer
 - srivaishnavas as real relatives - since they will help us to come out of materialistic aspirations and have spiritual aspirations/interest in bhagavadh vishayam
 - emperumAn as father - since he is always thinking/doing hitham for the AthmA
 - AchAryan as how a hungry person will think about food - since we are starved of spiritual food (knowledge) and AchAryan is the provider of that
 - sishyan as some one whom we love very much - since with sishyan we can share bhagavadh anubhavam and he will relish it, enjoy it and make us enjoy bhagavadh vishayam as well
- With this mind set, we should think that:
 - ahankAram will lead to detachment towards our real well wishers (srivaishnavas) - well wishers of the AthmA.
 - artham (material wealth) will lead to attachment towards avaishnavas - the moment we start going behind wealth, we will have to start saluting everyone and start looking for favours from avaishnavas. In such cases, we will develop admiration towards such avaishnavas (who may be good

in whatever they are doing) - but this admiration is very dangerous since it is not about bhagavadh vishayam and it will lead us also towards such deeds.

- kAmam (lust) will lead to attachment towards opposite sex (even when they ignore us) - Kannan emperumAn says in glthai - from attachment we get lust, from lust we get desires, from that we become mad and our intelligence diminishes, by that we will fall down to the bottom of samsAram.
- With this in mind, we should develop full confidence that Athma guNams (samam, dhamam, sathvam, etc) cannot be created by ones own efforts but we get them by the grace/mercy of emperumAn through our own AchAryan and so we should:
 - give up attachment towards materialistic aspirations
 - develop attachment towards bhagavadh vishayam
 - start understanding that worldly/materialistic things are not truly enjoyable
 - consume prasAdham as much to sustain our body or to consider that we consume prasAdham since it is the final part of thiruvArAdhanam (once we prepare food and offer to emperumAn it becomes prasAdham and we as the offerer needs to also consume some part of it).
 - think that if we get sorrows/difficulties in our life we should accept that with pleasure thinking it is
 - our karma palam - since we have done so many punya/pApam so far and we have to bear the outcome of that, and by bearing them we are only reducing our own karma
 - emperumAn's krupA palam - because we have surrendered to emperumAn, he has already forgiven all our sanchitha karma (the big baggage of karma) and he is only giving us a little bit of sorrow so that we will dislike this samsAram and crave to reach paramapadham - if we just get a good life here, we may become too attached to samsAram. So emperumAn out of his causeless mercy makes us suffer a little bit according to our karma and develops attachment to paramapadham.
 - give up the thinking that our anushtAnam is the upAyam to attain emperumAn. We should understand the favours done by emperumAn and do everything as kainkaryam to him.
 - have attachment towards the jnAnam and anushtAnam of pUrvAchAryas and great srivaishnavas
 - have great attachment towards divyadhEsams - since they were occupied by emperumAn out of boundless love towards jlvAthmAs
 - do mangalAsAsanam - praying that nothing happens to emperumAn in this dangerous samsAram - as we can relate these days many archA vigrahams are stolen, attacked/malformed, etc., - and we should always

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pray that emperumAn is safe. This is the highest level of bhakthi towards emperumAn as shown by periyAzhwAr, ANdAL, emperumAnAr, etc.

- have detachment in material things
- have real desire to reach paramapadham - everyday we should be crying like nammAzhwAr asking emperumAn when he is going to give us mOksham and kainkaryam in paramapadham for eternity
- ensure that we practice humility in front of srivaishnavas and avoiding any service to avaishnavas
- follow AhAra niyathi - regulated food habits
(http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/07/srivaishnava-AhAra-niyamam_28.html)
- aspire for association with srivaishnavas
- avoiding association with avaishnavas

It is said in the end of this sUtram that this is something every srivaishnava should try to practice in their life - i.e., it is not optional. If we have our daily routine based on this, it is guaranteed by our pUrvAchAryas that we will develop the adhikAri pUrNathvam (full qualification to be a srivaishnava) eventually. Looking at this we may think it is very very difficult to follow most of these in the current situation. Yes, it is very very difficult to follow all of these principles - that is why we have to constantly remind ourselves how our purvAchAryas lived and the high standards they have set for us based on their own lives. But there has to be some start in everyone's life, we can start taking small steps and emperumAn will make that work for us. As said above it is emperumAn who makes this happen - so as soon as he sees little attachment towards him in us, he will develop the other qualities in us.

While this may all seem theoretical to us, our pUrvAchAryas fully put this in practice in their and we can see one of our pUrvAchAryas who was/is a role model for these principles and how emperumAn loved and rewarded him in our next article.

12. Ororuvar (ஓரொருவர்)

In the previous article (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-11.html>) we observed the dhinacharya of a srivaishnava.

Erumbiappa (who is one of the 8 main disciples of maNavALa mAmunigaL) explains to his sishyas how a srivaishnava should live his life. This conversation is recorded in a grantham called "vilakshana mOksha adhikAri nirNayam". This is a classic grantham built on the essence of srivachana bhUshanam and other pUrvAchArya srisUkthis. In this, he explains that all our pUrvAchAryas were indeed fully qualified vaishnava adhikAris with proper jnAnam, bhakthi, vairAghyam and Arthi. This can be understood easily by the fact that:

- they were fully focussed on bhagavadh vishayam - no where in their lives it is recorded that they were after money, fame, etc. Even if there are some seemingly conflicting episodes, those are there to really highlight the greatness of a particular AchArya or srivaishnava in the end. In fact as soon as they gained this valuable knowledge from their AchAryas, they immediately gave up every comfort they had and simply served their AchAryas.
- even though most of them were married, they did it only for IOka kshEmam - i.e., to create sath santhAnam to protect and nourish our sampradhAyam.
- also, they only had one or two children and their physical relationship with their wives was only to produce good children, not for their self enjoyment

Though all of our pUrvAchAryas were like that a few like koorathAzhwaN, EmbAr, piLLai IOkAchAryar, azhagiya maNavALa perumAL nAyanAr, PonnadikkAl jeeyar (prime disciple of maNavALa mAmunigaL), etc visibly stand out due to their total detachment from any vihiitha bhOgam at all. On the other hand, this does not mean that other AchAryas were attached to vihiitha bhOgam. This is to be understood as nahi nindhA nyAyam (glorifying one at the cost of others). This concept is explained in a detailed manner by erumbiappa in vilakshaNa mOksha adhikAri nirNayam.

But even beyond all of that, there was maNavALa mAmunigaL who manifested all the qualities that were identified in srivachana bhUshana divya sAstram. Let us see how we can make such a bold statement that mAmunigaL fully manifested the vaishnava adhikArithva pUrthi. We will understand that by going through the meaning of the following pAsuram and by going through mAmunigaL's life history.

Srivaishnava lakshanam



maNavALa mAmunigaL - srlrangam

maNavALa mAmunigaL writes upadhEsa rathina mAlai to reveal the glories of piLLai IOkAchAryar and his srivachana bhUshana divya sAstram. In the 55th pAsuram, the real glories of srivachana bhUshanam are revealed. Let us enjoy the pAsuram here:

Ar vachanabhUdanaththin Azh poruL ellAm aRivAr (ஆர் வசனபூடனத்தின் ஆழ் பொருள் எல்லாம் அறிவார்)

Ar athu chol NEril anuttippAr (ஆர் அது சொல் நேரில் அனுட்டிப்பார்)

Ororuvar undAgil aththanai kAnN uLLamE (ஓரொருவர் உன்டாகில் அத்தனை காண் உள்ளமே)

ellArkkum anNdAthathanRO athu (எல்லார்க்கும் அண்டாததன்றோ அது)

mAmunigaL says "Who will understand the inner/deep meanings in srivachana bhUshanam? Who will live by those meanings? Even to find one such person is difficult because these are very difficult principles to follow for any one". Even though he says we cannot find even one person, we have to understand that there are only few persons (a very small percentage of the total srivaishnava population) who will be able to do this.

Just going by the commentary of piLLai IOkam jeeyar for this pAsura vyAkyAnam, he clearly says that "Only maNavALa mAmunigaL who was clearly blessed by piLLai IOkAchAryar can understand and follow these principles stated in srivachana bhUshanam".

Kanchi PrathivAdhi Bayankaram AnnangarAchAryar swAmy (who lived amongst us a few decades ago) who has written many books on srivaishnava sampradhAyam, in his commentary for this pAsuram says that it is difficult to lead our life as stated in srivachana bhUshanam because it has principles like:

- *sUtram 455 - vihitha bhOgam Nishidhdha bhOgam pOIE IOka viruththamumanRu, Naraka hEthuvumanRu; AyirukkachcheythE svarUpa viruththamumAy, vEdhANtha viruththamumAy, chishtakarhithamumAy, prApya*

prathipaNthakamumAy irukkaiaIE thyAjjam (விஹித போகம் நிஷித்த போகம் போலே லோக விருத்தமுமன்று, நரக ஹேதுவுமன்று; ஆயிருக்கச்செய்தே ஸ்வரூப விருத்தமுமாய், வேதாந்த விருத்தமுமாய், சிஷ்ட கர்ஹிதமுமாய், ப்ராப்ய ப்ரதிபந்தகமுமாய் இருக்கையாலே த்யாஜ்யம்).

Simple translation: Even though sense enjoyment coming out of married life (as defined by sAstram - even for this there are many rules on how/when this should be done) is accepted by sAstram and it is not going to lead one to narakam, etc., but since it is said to be Athma svarUpa virOdham (any bodily enjoyment is to be given up) and since our pUrvAchAryas never focussed on that and since it is a virOdhi for the ultimate goal, it is to be given up.

- *sUtram 365 - kuRRam cheythavargaL pakkal poRaiyum, krupaiyum, chirippum, ugappum, upakAra smruthiyum Natakka vEnNum* (குற்றம் செய்தவர்கள் பக்கல் பொறையும், க்ருபையும், சிரிப்பும், உகப்பும், உபகார ஸ்ம்ருதியும் நடக்க வேணும்).

Simple translation: When one commits an offense to us, we should have:

- patience - not do tit for tat immediately
- mercy - worry for emperumAn's reaction since emperumAn will give apt punishment for bhAgavatha apachAram, i.e., pray to emperumAn for the offender's pardon
- humour - since they can only stop our material benefits or trouble the body, which is no way going to bother us who are focussed in our Athma, so we should laugh off at the offender's intelligence
- joy - that the offender is only troubling our body which we anyway consider as our enemy, so we should be happy that they are only doing a favour to us
- gratitude - for reminding us our dOshams and reminding us that we should be detached to this material world anyway

Based on his life history, we can see how maNavALa mAmunigaL was an epitome of these qualities. Let us see this from some of the salient points from his life.

- mAmunigaL being an avathAram of emperumAnAr himself, showed us how we should totally be surrendered to emperumAnAr by constantly thinking about emperumAnAr, worshipping him at the bhavishyadhAchAryan sannidhi in AzhwAr thirunagari, writing yathirAja vimsathi, Arthi prabhandham, etc.
- maNavALa mAmunigaL accepted ThiruvAimozhi piLLai as his AchArya and stood by his AchArya's orders throughout his life. He learnt srl bhAshyam once but spent his whole life on arulicheyal and its meanings. He was an unparallel scholar in samskritham and vedhAntham but he always explained vedhAntham through arulicheyal only.

- In his dhinacharya done by Erumbiappa, it is said that "mAmunigaL's lips were always chanting dvaya mahAmantram and his heart is always thinking about thiruvAimozhi".
- Once when his mutt was set fire by some miscreants in AzhwArthirunagari, he asked the king to forgive the miscreants and showed his mercy towards even those who saw him as enemies.
- When Uththama nambi committed an offense to mAmunigaL, he silently walked out - he did not say a word to uththama nambi. But periya perumAL then shows to uththama nambi that he was none other than Adhi sEshan himself.
- When he heard that some of his sishyas are not respecting other AchAryas in srirangam, he stopped his kAlakshEpam and asked his sishyas to first respect other AchAryas before listening from him.
- When once some farmers submitted some raw materials, mAmunigaL finding out that those farmers are not vaishnavas, promptly returned the food. He was so carefully avoiding vaishnava relationship.
- When once an old lady wanted to stay in his mutt for a night, mAmunigaL strictly says that it will not be acceptable. Such was his standards when it comes vairAgyam.
- PrathivAdhi bhayankaram annan who was a great scholar when came to meet mAmunigaL, mAmunigaL was giving a lecture on ThiruvAimozhi. Looking at mAmunigaL's total command in vedhAntham and arulicheyal and pUrvAchArya vyAkyAnams, annan was spell bound and he immediately became mAmunigaL's sishya.
- Many AchArya purushas from srirangam accepted mAmunigaL as their AchArya even though they were already born in AchArya purusha families.
- mAmunigaL spent his whole life searching for all pUrvAchArya vyAkyAnams, documenting them, memorizing them and teaching them to all his sishyas. Even at a very old age he use to write in palm leaves for the benefit of others.
- His honesty was unparalleled which got him the title - **poy illAdha manNavALa mAmuni** (பொய் இல்லாத மணவாள மாமுனி).
- His command over sAstram and language were unparalleled which got him the title **visadha vAk sigAmaNi**. His commentaries to rahasya granthams are of extraordinary quality - without those commentaries it will be impossible to understand the inner meanings.
- Without his prachAram (propagation) of thiruvAimozhi it would have been impossible to understand the essence of thiruvAimozhi.
- He never criticises any pUrvAchAryas - even if there are contradictory statements in any grantham - he simply states them as is, instead of putting down any one.
- He was so humble that he did not approve of any festivities for his archa vighram in both srirangam and AzhwArthirunagari (avathAra sthalam) to keep the focus on namperumAL and nammAzhwAr respectively. He allowed very small archA thirumEni to be made and ensured that there is hardly any purappAdu (procession) for his thirumEnis.

Amidst all of these, emperumAn (namperumAL) who was not satisfied with his previous AchAryas (vasishta/vishwAmithra in ramAvathAram, sAndIpani in krishnAvathAram, etc) found mAmunigaL to be the perfect teacher. It was his divine wish/plan to even have the same name as his AchAryan (both named Azhagiya maNavALan). So he ordered mAmunigaL to give a lecture on Eedu vyAkyAnam of NampiLLai for a whole year in front of his AsthAnam (sannidhi) in thiruvarangam. NamperumAL ordered all the utsavams to be stopped and he along with his divine consorts (sridhEvi and bhUdhEvi) heard mAmunigaL's lecture for the whole year every day.

On Ani Thirumoolam day, on the occassion of sAtrumurai (final day) of the upanyAsam series, NamperumAL took the form of a small boy named aranganAyakam, came in front of mAmunigaL and presented the following thanian (as a sishya would do for an AchArya).

*srlsailEsa dhayApAtram dhlbhaktyAdhi guNArnavam
yathIndra pravaNam vandhE ramya jAmAtaram munim*

Here, emperumAn says "I worship azhagiya maNavALa mAmuni who a) is the holder of the mercy of ThiruvAimozhipiLLai, b) is an ocean of jnAnam, bhakthi, vairAgyam,etc and c) has boundless love for emperumAnAr".

He ordered that this thanian is chanted in all divyadhEsam temples, other divya kshethrams, mutts and thirumAligais during the beginning and ending of arulicheyal anusandhAnam. This can be observed even today, wherever we go, we hear the glories of mAmunigaL during arulicheyal anusandhAnam.

Thus NamperumAL showed his love towards mAmunigaL who can be said as the most appropriate meaning for "Ororuvar" in mAmunigaL's own pAsuram which is why

- he chose mAmunigaL as his AchArya
- he kept his AchArya's name as it is the duty of the sishya to keep his AchArya's name
- he learnt bhagavadh vishayam from his AchArya stopping everything else
- he wrote a thanian and offered that to mAmunigaL in public and he ordered that his thanian should be chanted everywher (it is said that a sishya should glorify his AchArya in public)
- he offered his own sEsha paryankam to mAmunigaL as AchArya sambhAvanai (even today we can practically see only mAmunigaL as the only AchArya having sEsha paryankam in his archA vighrams).
- he (until today) continues to perform mAmunigaL's thiruvadhyayana mahOtsavam (since it is the sishya's duty to perform the thIrtha utsavam for his AchAryan) in thiruvarangam. On this day (mAsi krishna paksha dvAdhasi), periya perumAL's archakas, paricharakas, etc will come with periya perumAL's paraphernalia (kudai, chAmaram, vattil, etc) and perform the utsavam at srirangam maNavALa mAmunigaL sannidhi. EmperumAn also does not consume bhOgya vasthus like surulamuthu (beetle leaves/nuts), etc on that day showing respect to his AchArya.

So, we can understand that from our pUrvAchArya's lives none of these principles are theoretical. We can see for ourselves that they have lived their lives with great dignity, honesty and maturity. They have also documented these for the benefits of the future generation to understand and follow. It is purely emperumAn's causeless mercy that we are some how born as humans, that too in a srivaishnava family, that too with some intelligence to understand and appreciate this wealth of knowledge from our pUrvAchAryas. We should be ever grateful to emperumAn to have presented such opportunity to us and we should immediately take up to his desires and engage ourselves in serving him and his adiyArs.

This series is coming to a conclusion now. In the next (concluding) article adiyen will summarize what was discussed so far and end the series.

13. Conclusion

In the previous article (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-12.html>) we observed how maNavALa mAmunigaL manifested all the qualities expected out of a srivaishnava. We will continue to enjoy some more of his glories and will end this series with that. It is said that "madhurEna samApayEth:" - "end it sweet". What could be sweeter than discussing mAmunigaL's glories? It is emperumAn's divine plan that this srivaishnava lakshanam series completes with mAmunigaL anubhavam.

In srivachana bhUshana divya sAstram, sUtram 221 - *it is said that vEthakap pon pOIE ivarkaLOttai sambaNtham (வேதகப் பொன் போலே இவர்களோட டை ஸம்பந்தம்)* - in the commentary mAmunigaL explains that sambandham with srivaishnavas will make us pure - just like alchemy - the process by which a chemical combination touches iron and changes that iron piece into gold. In periya thirumozhi, kaliyan says "*thammaiyE NALum vanNanGgith thozhuvArkku, thammaiyEyokka aruLcheyva*" (தம்மையே நாளும் வணங்கித் தொழுவார்க்கு, தம்மையேயொக்க அருள்செய்வர்) - One who constantly worships emperumAn becomes like emperumAn (i.e., gets apahathapApmA, vijira:, etc - eight qualities as mentioned in sAstram) by his grace. But the difference between emperumAn and srivaishnavas is quite clear just by these two pramAnams - to become a pure vaishnava we only need to establish the relationship with another pure vaishnava, but the same with emperumAn will happen only when we constantly (24 hrs, 360 days, forever) engage in worshipping emperumAn.

This we can see from our pUrvAchAryas lives - just like emperumAnAr transformed the lives of so many. His sishyas were quite comparable to him, koorathAzhwAn, mudhaliAndAn, embar, arulAla perumAL emperumAnAr, etc are all equally great but always considered themselves subservient to emperumAnAr.

The same way mAmunigaL sishyas also - PonnadikkAl jeeyar, koyil kandhAdai annan, Pattarbhira jeeyar, thiruvEnkata jeeyar, PrathivAdhi bayankaram annan, Erumbiappa, appullAr, appiLLai, etc are all equally glorious, but they all considered themselves subservient to mAmunigaL. This we can understand from upadhEsa rathina mAlai 55th pAsura vyAkyAnam (discussed in previous article) - piLLai IOkam jeeyar, the commentator, while initially says "periya jeeyar is the only one who can be said as Ororuvar", continues to say how prathivAdhi bayankaram annan, pattarbhira jeeyar, madhrakavi dhAsar are all qualified to be said "*Ororuvar*". How aptly this relates to the sUtram we have discussed here?

Let us see a quick summary of what is discussed so far in this series:

- We observed the physical appearances that are expected in a srivaishnava (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/07/srivaishnava-lakshanam-1.html>).
- We observed the pancha-samskAram process which begins our journey as a srivaishnava towards paramapadham (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/07/srivaishnava-lakshanam-2.html>).
- We observed the AchArya-sishya relationship that came out of the panchasamskAram (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/07/srivaishnava-lakshanam-3.html>).
- We observed briefly about our own guru paramparai (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/07/srivaishnava-lakshanam-4.html>).
- We observed the internal qualities that should be developed by a srivaishnava (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-5.html>).
- We observed the importance of appreciating/glorifying other srivaishnavas (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-6.html>).
- We observed the apachArams that are to be avoided by srivaishnavas (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-7.html>).
- We observed about understanding the greatness of srivaishnavas irrespective of their birth, etc (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-8.html> and <http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-9.html>).
- We observed the srivaishnava dhinacharyA - daily routine (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-10.html> and <http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-11.html>).
- We observed how maNavALa mAmunigaL lived by that dhinacharyA (<http://ponnadi.blogspot.in/2012/08/srivaishnava-lakshanam-12.html>).

Thus, with these in mind, if we simply try to adhere to the following principles, we will also slowly but surely develop the srivaishnava lakshanam that is explained by our pUrvAchAryas.

- Have unstinted faith only in pUrvAchAryas vAzhvum (lives) and vAkkum (instructions).
- Always exhibit upakAra smrithi (gratitude) towards emperumAn and AchAryan for the favours they have done to us.
- Revere and regard bhagavad, bhAgavatha vishayam as much as possible and have none others.
- Have no regards for dhEvathAnthara bhajanam.
- Live with proper naichyAnusandhAnam before aforementioned bhAgavathAs – being subservient to them.
- Observe proper AhAra niyamam.

With this adiyen would like to end this series of articles.

While adiyen collected very valuable information on our pUrvAchArya's jnAnam and anushtAnam from various works of pUrvAchAryas, adiyen requests every one to hear these matters as kAlakshEpam under a proper AchAryan. Without hearing from vidhwAns and just by reading books on our own, these matters cannot be understood properly.

adiyen would like to first thank sriya:pathi, AzhwArs and AchAryas for inspiring adiyen to write these articles. adiyen would also like to thank all the swAmys from whom adiyen heard kAlakshEpams without which adiyen would not have understood any of these. If there is anything good in these articles it belongs to our AchArya paramparai and these swAmys. Also, adiyen requests all srivaishnavas to ignore any of adiyen's mistakes in these articles and just accept the essence of these articles.

*srimathE ramya jAmAthru munIndhrAya mahAtmanE
srirangavAsinE bhUyAth nithyasri: nithya mangalam*

*AzhwAr emperumAnAr Jeeyar thiruvadigaLE sharaNam
Jeeyar thiruvadigaLE sharaNam
AchAryan thiruvadigaLE sharaNam*