

srI:
srImathE rAmAnujAya nama:



Kooraththazhvan mudhaliya AchAryargaL
aruLich seydhA
Dhati Panchakam
Vyakhyana Saram



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Avatharikai

Dhati Panchakam speaks of the victory of Ramanuja over other philosophies - both those that accept Vedas and those that don't - and his establishing the Visishtadvaita philosophy that was built by Azhvars and Purvacharyas. As the name shows it is made of five shlokas. The word dhATI means “attacking” - as this work shows the attack that Ramanuja carried over the other philosophies that were widespread at that time, it is an appropriate name for it.

There are some who believe that the entire work was written by Swami Kooraththazhvan. While others believe that it was written by several disciples of Swami Ramanuja such as Kooraththazhvan, Mudhaliyandan, Embar and others. In either case, this work has been celebrated by our acharyas and has been included as part of Srivaishnava nithyanusandhanam.

This work as well as Ramanuja Chatusshloki - which was authored by another of Ramanuja's disciples, Thirumalai Anandazhavan - describe the triumphs of Ramanuja over other philosophies.

Shloka 1

पाषण्ड दृमषण्ड दावदहनश्चावाक शैलाशनिः

बौद्धध्वान्त निरास वासरपतिर्जैनेभ कण्ठीरवः।

मायावादि भुजङ्गभङ्गरुडस्त्रैविद्य चूडामणिः

श्रीरङ्गेशजयध्वजो विजयते रामानुजोऽयं मुनिः ॥

pAShaNDa dR^imaShaNDa dAvadahanashchArvAka shailAshani:

bauddhadhvAnta nirAsa vAsarapatirjainebha kaNThIraVa: |

mAyAvAdi bhujA~Ngabha~NgagaruDastraividya chUDAMaNi:

shrIra~Ngeshajayadhvajo vijayate rAmAnujoyam muni: ||

Meaning:

pAShaNDa dR^imaShaNDa

dAva dahana:

- Like a forest fire to the forest of Pashandas,

chArvAka shaila ashani:

- like thunder to Charvakas who are like mountains,

bauddhadhvAnta nirAsa vAsarapati: - like the morning Sun to the darkness that is the

jaina ibha kaNThIrava: mAyAvAdi bhujā~Nga bha~Nga garuDa traividya chUDamaNi: ayam rAmAnuja: muni: shrIra~Ngesha vijayate jayadhvaja:	Bauddhas, - like a lion to Jainas who are like elephants, - like a Garuda to Mayavadis who are like snakes, - like an ornament worn on the crest to Vaidikas; - thus was present - Ramanuja Muni, - who placed the victory flag in Srirangam.
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Vyakhyana Saram:

pAShaNDa dR^imaShaNDa dAva dahana::

Pashandas are nAstikas - those that do not accept that there is a Supreme and reject the Vedas as authoritative. They were spread everywhere like weeds. Ramanuja removed them completely - like a wild forest fire going through a forest. He was not like a small fire that needs dry twigs to burn; he was like a forest fire that burns even green trees. This comparison also shows that he destroyed their philosophy very quickly.

This is what is shown in his vAzhi thirunAmam as “aRu samayach chedi adhanai adi aRuththAn vAzhiyE”.

Thiruvarangaththamudhanar also states in his Ramanuja Nutrandhadhi “nAttiya nIsach samayangaL mANdana” and “thaRkach samaNarum sAkkiyap pEygaLum ... nIsarum mANdanar”.

chArvAka shaila ashani::

Charvakas can be taken as an expansion of the word Pashandas; or it can be taken as Pashandas as well as Charvakas. Charvakas are those that believe that only those things that are visible to the eyes are true. Their philosophy is expressed as “pratyakshamekam chArvAka:”. They stood rooted like mountains in this world and Ramanuja fell on them like thunder falls on mountains and broke them. This is similar to Indra using the Vajrayudha (the thunderbolt weapon) on the mountains.

bauddhadhvAnta nirAsa vAsarapati::

During Ramanuja's time, a darkness had surrounded the land due to the bauddha philosophy. As the sun known as Ramanuja rose (rAmAnuja divAkara:), this darkness was dispelled automatically - Thondaradippodi Azhvar's verse “kadhiraivan guNa dhisai sigaram vandhaNaindhAn gana iruL aganRadhu” can be recalled here. This Sun did not have to reach its apex. Just as the darkness is dispelled at the advent of the early morning Sun, so too the bauddha philosophy was destroyed the moment Ramanuja was born.

jaina ibha kaNThIrava::

The Jainas were like elephants and Ramanuja became the lion that chased them away. In a forest where a lion rules, elephants would not exist and would get away - so too in the presence of Ramanuja, the Jainas had to retreat. Thiruvarangaththamudhanar called Ramanuja as a strong lion that derived its strength from Thirumangai Azhvars verses “vali mikka sIyam irAmAnusan”.

mAyAvAdi bhuja~Nga bha~Nga garuDa:

Mayavadis are those who state that everything is false or an illusion. If they are like serpents, then Ramanuja was like the Garuda whose very shadow was sufficient to destroy them.

traividya chUDamaNi::

The Lord's panchAyudhas are weapons to those who oppose Him, but are ornaments to Him in the presence of His devotees. Similarly, while Ramanuja was as described above to those who rejected the Vedas and Sriman Naranaya, he too is an ornament to those who accept the Vedas. Thus he is like the ornament worn on top of the head, to Vaidikas.

shrIra~Ngesha vijayate jayadhvaja::

Ramanuja thus established the victory flag of Srivaishnava Sampradhayam in that most divine of places - Srirangam. Ramanuja is praised as “Srirangesha Jayadvaja”. It is therefore that he is praised “thennarangar selvam muRRum thiruththi vaiththAn vAzhIyE”, “manniya thennarangApuri mAmalai maRRum uvandhidu nAL” and Srivaishnavas echo his words everyday “srIman! srirangasriyam anupadravAm anudinam samvardhaya”.

Shloka 2

पाषण्डषण्ड गिरिखण्डन वज्रदण्डाः

प्रच्छन्न बौद्ध मकरालय मन्थदण्डाः।

वेदान्तसार सुखदर्शन दीपदण्डाः

रामानुजस्य विलसन्ति मुनेस्त्रिदण्डाः ॥

pAShaNDaShaNDa girikhaNDana vajradaNDA:

prachChanna bauddha makarAlaya manthadaNDA: |

vedAntasAra sukhadarshana dIpadaNDA:

rAmAnujasya vilasanti munestridaNDA: ||

Meaning:

khaNDana vajradaNDA:

- Like the thunder stick that breaks

pAShaNDa ShaNDa giri

- the mountain ranges that are Pashandas,

mantha daNDA:

- like the churning stick

prachChanna bauddha

makarAlaya

- that churns the ocean which
is the hidden bauddhas,

dIpadaNDA:

- like a lighted torch

sukha darshana

- that shows easily

vedAnta sAra

- the inner meanings of Vedantas,

vilasanti

- thus beautifully present

mune: tridaNDA: - are the three sticks that Ramanuja
holds in his hands.

Vyakhyana Saram:

In this work, shlokas 2 & 3 talk about the greatness and beauty of the Tridandam that Swami Ramanuja holds in his hands. It is this that Embar praised as “muppuri nUrodu mun kaiyile thigazh mukKOI than azhagum”. As opposed to Advaita sanyasis who carry Ekadandam (one stick) in their hands, Srivaishnava sanyasis carry Tridandam (three sticks) in their hands. Hence they are also called Tridandi sanyasis. By praising the Tridandam in these shlokas, the greatness of Swami Ramanuja is brought out.

pAShaNda ShaNda giri khaNDana vajradaNDA::

Pashandas are like mountain ranges; a single mountain is itself difficult to attack, so what to say about a whole range of mountains. Yet Swami's one dandam fell on them like Indra's Vajrayuda falls on mountains. This is similar to what was said in shloka 1 as “chArvAka shailAshani:”.

pracChanna bauddha::

pracchanna bauddhas refers to the sampradhayins that claim to follow the Vedas but misinterpret them. They are mentioned in Swami's nAL pAttu as “sankara bhAskara yAdava, bhAtta, prabhAkara ..”. The regular bauddhas rejected the Vedas altogether; pracchanna bauddhas accept the Vedas as authority but intepret them incorrectly. So, even though they accept the Vedas, they are refered to as bauddhas. It is thus the our elders called one group as prakAsha bauddhas and the other as pracchanna (hidden) bauddhas.

makarAlaya mantha daNDA::

Such pracchanna bauddhas stood like an ocean - big and making lots of noise. Swami Ramanuja's other dandam is like the stick that churns this ocean (just like the milky ocean was churned). To churn this ocean is not just to destroy their philosophies but also to win them over (such as the victories of Ramanuja over Yagnyavalkya, Yadavaprakasha and others).

vedAntasAra sukhadarshana dIpadaNDA::

Swami's third stick is like a lighted torch that shows the great hidden truths of Vedanta comfortably to one and all. Swami's nine gems, such as Sri Bashya, Vedartha Sangraha, Vedanta Deepa, etc bring the Vedantic concepts to everyone. Unlike other sampradhayams that considered only certain portions of the Vedas (such as the bheda sruti, abheda sruti, etc), Swami expounded the visishtadvaita by including all the sruti vakhyas and in a manner that made it accesible to all.

vilasanti mune: tridaNDA::

Such a Tridandam of Ramanuja was present as the one that showed the true meanings of Vedanta. It is therefore that Thiruvarangaththamudhanar said “nAraNanaik kAttiya vEdham kaLippuRRadhu”.

Shloka 3

चारित्रोद्धारदण्डं चतुरनयपथालङ्कियाकेतुदण्डं
सद्विद्या दीपदण्डं सकलकलिकथा सम्हृतेः कालदण्डं।
त्रय्यन्थालम्बदण्डं त्रिभुवन विजयच्छत्र सौवर्णदण्डं
धत्ते रामानुजार्यः प्रतिकथक शिरो वज्रदण्डं त्रिदण्डं ॥

chAritroddhAradaNDam chaturanayapathAla~NkriyAketudaNDam
sadvidyA dIpadaNDam sakalalakikathA samhR^ite: kAladaNDam |
trayyanthAlambadaNDam tribhuvana vijayachChatra sauvarNadaNDam
dhatte rAmAnujArya: pratikathaka shiro vajradaNDam tridaNDam||

Meaning:

chAritra uddhAra daNDam - The stick that lifts up good acts,
chaturanayapatha ala~NkriyA - the bright stick that adorns the path of dharma,
ketu daNDam - the lighted stick that shows the Vedantic
sadvidyA dIpa daNDam knowledge,
sakala kalikathA samhR^ite: - the stick that destroys the activities of Kali yuga,
kAla daNDam - the stick that supports the tired Vedas,
trayyantha Alamba daNDam - the golden stick that supports the royal umbrella
tribhuvana vijayachChatra that won the three worlds,
sauvarNa daNDam
pratikathaka shiro - the thunder stick that falls on the heads of those
vajra daNDam who oppose it;
tridaNDam dhatte rAmAnujArya: - such a Tridandam is held by Swami Ramanuja in
his divine hands.

Vyakhyana Saram:

This shloka too shows the greatness of Swami Ramanuja through the act of praising the tridandam in his hands. Here the tridandam is praised in many ways by using the idea of ullekhAlankAram - that is, looking at something from many angles and expressing many opinions on it.

Ramanuja holds in his hands the tridandam that is praised by everyone in this world. In describing the beauty of Ramanuja, Embar has included the beauty of the tridandam – “mun kaiyilE thigazh mukkoI than azhagam”. In Iyalsaththu, he is praised as “vAzhiyarO thakkOr paravum thadamsUzh perumbUdhUr mukkoI pidiththa muni”.

chAritra uddhAra daNDam:

Such a tridandam in Ramanuja's hands will direct the devotees to good acts and practices

- similar to the stick held in a teacher's hands to train a student. Have we not seen that a monkey is controlled by the stick in the trainer's hands - our minds which are like monkeys in that they jump from one thing to another will come under control by the stick in Ramanuja's hands.

chaturanayapatha ala~NkriyA ketu daNDam:

There are many nyAyas in the shastras. These were destroyed through misinterpretations by other sampradhayins. Swami Ramanuja restored them by establishing their true meanings. Hence his stick is an ornament that adorns the shastras and he was called “nyAya mArga pratishtApaka”.

sadvidyA dIpa daNDam:

In the Vedanta, there are many vidyAs such as sadvidyA, akshividhyA, upakosala vidyA, etc. Ramanuja's stick is like a torch that shows these vidyas clearly. Also, the Vedantas (Upanishads) are the true knowledge and this is lighted by his stick. Finally, the most important knowledge is that of complete surrender and this prapatti mArga is lighted by his stick.

sakala kalikathA samhR^ite: kAla daNDam:

The Kali yuga causes many acts and activities that are forbidden in the shastras. Ramanuja's tridandam destroys these activities. It was by foreseeing this that Nammazhvar had sung his “poliga poliga” pasuram where he mentions “kaliyum kedum kaNdu koNmin”.

Thiruvarangaththamudhanar also sang about this as “kadal aLavAya thisai ettinuLLum kali iruLE midai tharu kAlaththu irAmAnusan mikka nAnmaRaiyin poruLAl avviraLaith thurandhu”.

trayyantha Alamba daNDam:

Due to the many pAshaNDas who reject the Vedas and the veda kudrushtis who misinterpret the Vedas, the Veda purusha was tired and in need of support. Ramanuja's tridandam acted like the stick that a tired or old man would use for standing or walking support.

tribhuvana vijayachChatra sauvarNa daNDam:

When a king conquers the three worlds, he would bring it under his white victory umbrella. Such an umbrella would have a golden stick that supports it and keeps it standing. Ramanuja's tridandam is like this golden stick as it helped him conquer the philosophies of the three worlds and show everyone the true path.

pratikathaka shira: vajra daNDam:

His tridandam is again like a thunder stick when it falls on those who come opposing.

tridaNDam dhatte rAmAnujArya::

Ramanuja holds this tridandam in his hands and shows us his beauty – not just in those times, but even today. And as long as this world exists, Ramanuja's archa thirumEni would hold the tridandam and lead everyone in the right path.

Shloka 4

त्रय्यामाङ्गल्यसूत्रं त्रियुगपदयुगारोहणालम्बसूत्रं
सद्विद्या दीपसूत्रं सकलकलिकथा सम्हतेः कालसूत्रं ।
प्रजासूत्रं बुधानां प्रशमधनमनः पद्मिनी नालसूत्रं
रक्षासूत्रं मुनीनां जयति यतिपतेर्वक्षसि ब्रह्मसूत्रं ॥

trayyAmA~NgalyasUtram triyugapadayugArohaNAlambasUtram
sadvidyA dIpasUtram sakalalakikathA samhR^ite: kAlasUtram |
pra~nAsUtram budhAnAm prashamadhanamana: padmiNI nAlasUtram
rakshAsUtram munInAm jayati yatipatervakshasi brahmasUtram ||

Meaning:

trayyA mA~NgalyasUtram	- The thread that is like the holy matrimonial thread around the neck of mother Veda;
ArohaNa AlambasUtram	- the string that helps climb to
triyuga padayuga	- the divine feet of the Lord;
sadvidyA dIpasUtram	- the thread that helps the lamp that is Upanishad, glow;
sakalalakikathA samhR^ite: kAlasUtram	- the thread (like the one Yama carries) that destroys the activities of Kali yuga;
budhAnAm pra~nAsUtram	- the thread that helps expand the minds of devotees;
prashamadhanamana: padmiNI nAlasUtram	- the thread that is like the stalk of the lotus which is the heart of the panditas whose wealth is knowledge;
munInAm rakshAsUtram	- the thread that protects such panditas;
brahmasUtram yatipate: vakshasi jayat	- such a Brahmasutram of Ramanuja shines on his divine chest.

Vyakhyana Saram:

Similar to the previous two shlokas where Ramanuja's tridandam was praised, in this shloka, the holy thread on the chest of Ramanuja is enjoyed and through it the greatness of Ramanuja is brought out.

In other sampradhayams, when a person enters the sanyasAshrama dharma, they remove their hair completely and throw away their holy thread. In Srivaishnava sampradhaya, the sanyasis keep a tuft of hair on their head and continue to wear the holy thread. Thus, in this shloka the beauty and qualities of the holy thread worn by Ramanuja is being appreciated.

trayyA mA~NgalyasUtram:

The holy thread on Ramanuja's divine chest is like the matrimonial thread worn around the necks of women to show that they are married. This description is the same that Sri Parasara Bhattar uses to describe the works of Swami Kooraththazhvan in his thaniyan (“yaduktayas trayIkaNThe yAnti mangaLasUtratAm”).

If a woman is not wearing the matrimonial thread around her neck, either she is still unmarried or she is a widow. If it is the former, many men will think of themselves as her possible husband; in the case of the latter, people would know that she has lost her husband. Similarly, prior to Ramanuja's birth, people thought of many devatas as the Supreme (as the paramapurusha of the Vedas) while there were others who claimed that there is no Supreme (as described in the Vedas). After Swami Ramanuja's birth, it was made clear to one and all that there is a Supreme and that He is Sriman Narayana - thus the matrimonial thread shone around the neck of the Veda mAta.

triyuga padayuga:

yuga means a pair. tri yuga is therefore six - this refers to the six divine qualities (knowledge, power, strength, wealth, valor and splendor) of the Lord as shown by the word Bhagavan. Therefore, triyuga refers to the Lord. pada yuga refers to the divine feet of the Lord.

ArohaNa AlambasUtram:

When climbing a mountain, one uses a rope to pull themselves up. Similar to that, Swami Ramanuja's thread helps devotees make the ultimate climb - to the divine feet of the Lord. Vedanta Desikan uses another comparison for this idea - Ramanuja is like a lion jumping between mountains (this world and the next); and the devotees are like small insects that would never get across these mountains in many lifetimes; but the insects that cling on to the lion will reach the other mountain along with the lion in one bound.

In some texts for this shloka, the phrase used is triyugayuga. In that case, the number shown is 12 (3 x 2 x 2). This numbers refers to the archirAdhi path. Then, it is shown that Swami's thread helps the souls go through this path. That is, for those who have surrendered at Swami's feet, the path of archirAdhi has become easily attainable.

sadvidyA dIpasUtram:

Without a thread (wick), a lamp would not glow. Thus, without Ramanuja's thread, the Upanishads that are lamps would not glow.

sakalakalikathA samhR^ite: kAlasUtram:

The Lord of death, Yama, carries in his hands a rope called kAlapAsha, that he uses to capture souls from their bodies. Similar to that, Ramanuja's thread destroys the uproar caused by the activites of Kali yuga.

budhAnAm pra~nAsUtram:

Ramanuja's thread brightens and expands the thoughts of those that surrender at his divine feet.

prashamadhanamana: padminI nAlasUtram:

Yogis are those that have highest qualities as their only wealth. Such yogis were Ramanuja's disciples such as Embar, Arulala Perumal Emberumanar, et al. Their hearts are like lotuses that blossom in the presence of Sun who is Ramanuja ("rAmAnuja divAkara:"). To their lotus minds, Ramanuja's thread acts as the stalk - connecting them to Ramanuja and nourishing them.

The Sun that is Ramanuja will both drive away the darkness caused by other sampradhayams ("nirAsa vAsarapati:") as well as blossom the hearts of the true devotees.

munInAm rakshAsUtram:

The thread also protects the same yogis.

vakshasi jayati:

Unlike sanyasis of other sampradhayams, Ramanuja wears the Brahmasutram. In this shloka, it is said that even the act of enjoying the beauty of that sacred thread will provide refuge and achieve liberation.

Shloka 5

पाषण्ड सागर महाबडबा मुखाग्निः

श्रीरङ्गराज चरणाम्बुज मूलदासः ।

श्रीविष्णुलोक मणिमण्डप मार्गदायी

रामानुजो विजयते यतिराजराजः ॥

pAShaNDa sAgara mahAbaDabA mukhAgni:

shrIra~NgarAja charaNambuJa mUladAsa: |

shrIviShNuloka maNimaNDapa mArgadAyI

rAmAnujo vijayate yatirAjarAja: ||

Meaning:

mahAbaDabA mukhAgni

- Like the Badaba fire in controlling

pAShaNDa sAgara

- the ocean of Pashandas;

shrIra~NgarAja charaNambuJa

- having paramabhakti at the divine lotus feet
of Sri Ranganatha;

mUladAsa:

shrIviShNuloka maNimaNDapa

- giving the path to the divine Mandapa at
Paramapadha;

mArgadAyI

Vijayate

- thus is victoriously present

rAmAnuja:

- Ramanuja,

yatirAjarAja:

- the king of Yatis.

Vyakhyana Saram:

pAShaNDa sAgara:

Pashandas were like a great ocean. It was during the time that they were active that Swami Ramanuja appeared like the Badaba fire.

mahAbaDabA mukhAgni:

Badaba is the name of a female horse. Puranas say that there is a female horse in the middle of the ocean; that it has a fire on its face that never goes out; it is this fire that absorbs the excess water coming into the ocean and prevents it from breaching its shores; and that during the praLaya, it is this fire that comes out and destroys the worlds. Similar to this, it is said that there is a fire inside our stomachs called Jataragni that absorbs all the food put into it.

Ramanuja controlled the ocean of pashandas like the Badaba fire. He exhibits the quality of fire to both create and destroy – he sheds light on the right path to the devotees while he also acts like a wild fire ("dAva dahana:") in destroying the other sampradhayams.

shrIra~NgarAja charaNambuJa mUladAsa:

As Thiruvarangaththamudhanar said "thennarangan kazhal senni vaiththu thAn adhil mannum irAmAnusan", Ramanuja has his head at the divine feet of Lord Ranganatha always. Amudhanar also said "pon arangam ennill mayalE perugum irAmAnusan".

shrIviShNuloka maNimaNDapa mArgadAyI:

Showering grace on the devotees is not just removing their obstacles (anishta nigraham), such as defeating the pashandas; it is also giving them what they seek (ishta prApti). Thus, Ramanuja also showed the path to liberation. He set the path to the divine maNDapa that is in the Lord's abode (thirumAmaNi maNDapam).

rAmAnujo vijayate yatirAjarAja:

Thua Ramanuja is present victoriously as the king of all Yatis at Srirangam. He was present, is present and will be present as long as this leela vibhUti exists.

**rAmAnujArya divyAnjnJA vardhatAm abhivardhatAm
rAmAnujArya divyAnjnJA prativAsaram ujjvalA**

Azhvar Emberumanar Jeeyar Thiruvadigale Sharanam