SRĪVACANA BHŪṢĀNA

of

PILLAI LOKĀCĀRYA

Edition with English Translation by
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The Kuppuswamy Sastri Research Institute
Madras-4
1979
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http://acharya.org
The Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇa of Śrī Pillai Lokācārya is a unique sacred scripture of Śrīvaishnavaism, containing his thoughts connected with God, Soul and Matter and their mutual relation and means to salvation. Śrīvaishnava Śaṅkarācāryaś who came immediately after Rāmānuja, centralised their thoughts on theological ideas on the basis of Śrī Rāmānuja’s metaphysical thoughts. Pillai Lokācārya, on the basis of such earlier sayings, brought out this book. As he has strung a garland out of the gems of his predecessors’ sayings it is aptly called the ‘Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam’.

To understand the post-Rāmānuja period of Śrīvaishnavism, this book is immensely helpful. In all it comprises 463 sayings. Tradition divided it into four ‘prakāraṇas’, and six topics viz, (i) Puruṣakāravaibhava (greatness of intercessor), (ii) Śādhanasya Gaurava (Greatness of ‘means’), (iii) Adhikāri Kritya (Duties of Prapūrṇa), (iv) Satgurupasevana (Dependence on the eminent Guru), (v) Ahetuki Haridaya (spontaneous grace of the Supreme Lord) (vi) and Guror upāyata (the role of Preceptor). The importance of this book is enhanced on account of a great commentary on the scripture by Maṇavāla Māmuni, who through eight disciples propagated Śrīvaishnavism.

The quintessence of the scripture is that God moves Himself in rescuing souls from the bondage of samsāra and helps them to reach Him; hence it is not necessary to follow any means to get salvation.

The unique feature of the writings of Śrīvaishnava Ācāryas of the post - Rāmānuja period is the adoption of a peculiar language, namely the ‘Maṇipravāla’. It is a blend of Tamil and Sanskrit with the interchange of terminologies of both. After Rāmānuja, particularly, books connected with secret doctrines of Śrīvaishnavism, the Rahasyaagranthas, were written in Maṇipravāla.

The emergence of the importance of ‘Rahasyatraya mantras, (Aṣṭākṣara, Dvaya and Caraṇa-loka) is another noteworthy feature in the post - Rāmānuja period. In fact, Aṣṭākṣara and Dvaya could be traced from the Vedas (Atharva Śiras and Kṣaṇavalli). The Caraṇa-loka is taken from the Bhagavad Gītā (Chapter 18). These
mantras are taken as the essence of the Vedic teachings about Tattvatraśa (God, Soul and Matter). As the meanings of these mantras are based on esoteric principles, there arose the necessity to write detailed commentaries, quoting profusely from ārūtis, smṛtis, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, etc. to demonstrate that like ideas have scriptural support. In the case of Caramaśloka, ācāryas of post-Śrīrāmacarṇa period never hesitated to deviate from Śrī Rāmānuja’s commentary on the Caramaśloka. In fact the Caramaśloka gained so much of importance that it was given an independent status. Tanicaramam is a work written by Pillai Lokācārya for specially treating the Caramaśloka. As the later ācāryas’ teachings became mokṣā-oriented, they gave more importance to the Rahasya mantras than to the Vedic mantras.

In the Śrīvaconabhasana great religious principles are summarised in a nutshell for example, “By the two qualities, namely tranquility and self-restraint, the ācārya comes within one’s reach; from having reached the holy mantra, the Lord comes within one’s reach; from having reached the Lord the land of attainment comes within one’s reach” (Śrīvaconabhasana, 97). A great luxurious Vedic religion with enormous complicated rituals and upāsanās is now reduced to a small field. The special feature of Śrīvaconabhasana is the importance of ācārya-śiṣyabhāva, based on getting secret mantras. To institutionalise religion, Lokācārya codified the conduct of śiṣya and ācārya, and accepted that the ācārya-abhimāna (favour of ācārya) itself would lead to mokṣa, without the help of Bhakti or Prapatti (461 to 463). This is an important contribution by Lokācārya to Śrīvaishnavism.

Ācāryas of post-Śrīrāmacarṇa period accept God himself as Upāya but an accomplished one, Siddha Upāya. Ācārya is in one respect, a Siddhapāya. In this respect Pillai Lokācārya quotes the idea of Vaduga Nambi that Upāya bhāva of Ācārya is not fully realised even by Kurthalvān and Mudaliāndān, disciples of Rāmānuja. They are called ‘Irukarayar’ (double-faced) (411).

As the God is omnipotent and omniscient, there is no necessity for either Bhakti or Prapatti. By extreme thinking the ācāryas rejected the theory of both Bhakti and Prapatti as becoming means to salvation. They are taken as a pretext only! (Vāja mātram) no
real means. The question raised by Lokācārya is, why the Śastraś prescribe Upāsanās? On this matter he says: "As the god gets connected in Upāya Daśā and Upēya Daśā, He only stands as a real Upāya" (121-128). Bhakti is mixed with ahaṅkāra and therefore it is rejected. Prapatti is also interpreted as accepting God as an Upāya. No human effort is included. But it is interesting to note that the Bhakti of Rāmānuja is not an ordinary one (popular Bhakti); but it is in the form of Upāsanās of the Upaniṣads. It is also possible for the three classes only (Traivarnākādhipāra) (See Śribhāṣya I-3-33). Śrī Rāmānuja also stresses Varṇāśrama-dharma as a helping hand in the development of Bhakti, which is accepted as a Mokṣa Śādha (Śrībhāṣya IV. 4 22.) Rāmānuja, as is evident in Śrivacanabhūṣana (234) objected to Periyanambi's actions which violated the tradition of Varṇāśrama-dharma. But ācāryas of post-Rāmānuja period felt that Mokṣa should be within the reach of every one. Some of the episodes connected with Rāmānuja clearly demonstrate this point.

Rāmānuja identified the Brahman of the Upaniṣads with Nārāyaṇa of Subalopanīṣad (vii) (eṣa sarvabrutāntarāmā apahatapāpmā-dvivo deva eko Nārāyaṇah). So in the Godhood of Śrī Rāmānuja, personal and impersonal characters get fused. The post-Rāmānuja ācāryas give importance to the personal aspects on the analogy of human life, but without its defects. Though Prapatti is accepted by ācāryas as a means to Mokṣa, it differs in definition and prescription. As God Himself moves and takes the initiative, he fulfills His ambition by getting the soul to Him. Acceptance of God's movement or non-rejection is itself taken as Prapatti. In the post-Rāmānuja period, Śrīvaiśnavism divided on account of Prapatti's nature and functions.

To understand Pillai Lokācārya's doctrines, a study a Śrivacanabhūṣana becomes absolutely necessary. Dr. Robert Lester, University of Colorado, after fully studying the works of Śrī Rāmānuja and of ācāryas in post-Rāmānuja period has translated Śrivacanabhūṣana into English, which will certainly be of help to students of Viśiṣṭādvita philosophy, Indian and Foreign.

2nd July 1979
Agnihotram Ramanuja Tatacharya
Madras.
Pillai Lokācārya has the credit of being the first teacher to write 'Rahasya' texts, that is, books dealing with the meanings of the three esoteric mantras and allied secret instructions of the great teachers before himself. Of the eighteen Rahasya texts written by him, the Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇa is easily the grandest. Its name implies that it is intended to be an Ornament strung of the gem-like sayings of the great teachers of yore. This self-luminous 'Ornament of sayings' written in a mixed language of Sanskrit and Tamil is made more resplendent by the magnificent commentary on it by another great teacher, Maṇavāla Māmuni.

It is no wonder that the Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇa with its gloss by Maṇavāla Māmuni attracted the attention of Dr. Robert C. Lester, who is teaching major Philosophy and Religions of India at the University of Colorado. He had been to Madras twice to study the Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy and the Tamil psalms of the Vaiṣṇava Āḻvārs. On Rāmānuja, Śrīvaiṣṇavism and the doctrine of Prapattin Dr. Lester has contributed a paper in the History of Religions, University of Chicago, (V. ii. 1966 pp. 266-82) U. S. A more recent and solid contribution in the same field is Dr. Lester's Yoga in Rāmānuja (Adyar Library, 1975).

During his visits to Madras Dr. Lester was closely associated with Dr. V. Raghavan and the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute in his studies on Viśiṣṭādvaita. The Institute is therefore happy to publish Dr. Lester's edition of Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇa in Roman Script with English translation and annotation.

Dr. V. Raghavan, Honorary Director/Editor, Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, was mainly responsible for this publication.
and was also going through its proofs. He suddenly passed away on 5th April, when a major part of the work was printed. The Institute regretts that he is not alive to see the completion of the work.

Thanks are due to Sri Agnihotram Ramanuja Tatachariar for contributing the Foreword, and to Prof. A. Tiruvengadathan for assistance in reading the proofs; Dr. Lester was associated with both of them at Madras. I also thank the Chimala Trust for the donation of Rs. 500 towards the publication, and the Srinivasa Gandhi Nilayam Press for undertaking to print the work.

K.S.R. Institute
Madras-4
July 1, 1979

S. S. JANAKI
Curator
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This translation was prepared in Madras under the skillful and patient guidance of Sri Agnihotram Ramanuja Tatacharya of Kumbhakonam and Professor A. Thiruvengadathan. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of these learned scholars. I wish to thank the Fulbright-Hays Program and the University of Colorado for the grants which made it possible for me to undertake research in India. I am indebted to my wife, Donna H. Lester, for her patient and competent assistance in typing and editing the final draft.

Robert C. Lester
SRIVACAHA-BHUSANA
OF
PILLAI LOKACARYA

INTRODUCTION

Salutations to the teacher, Lokācārya, son of the respectable Kṛṣṇa, giver of life to the jīva bitten by the serpent of saṃsāra!

Pillai Lokācārya (c. 1213 - 1323 A.D.) is a key figure in the definition of what comes to be known as Teṉkalai (Southern school) Śrīvaśnavism. According to traditional accounts, he stands seventh in the line of teachers from the Bhāsyakāra, Rāmānuja:

Rāmānuja (c. 1017-1137)

Kurattālvān

Embar

Bhaṭṭar

Naṉjiyar

Namppilai

Vadakku Tiruvithipillai

Pillai Lokācārya

Alagiyā Maṉavāḷa Perumāl Nāyanār

What can be said of his life is embodied in the Yatīndra Pravaṇa Pralhāvam, which, as the title indicates, was written to laud the

1 Anonymous taniyan or laudatory verse to Lokācārya.

2 “The Greatness of the One Devoted to Yatīndra (Rāmānuja): the one devoted to Rāmānuja is Maṉavāḷa Māmuni. The work is composed by Pillai Lokam Jiya.
greatness of Maṇavaḷa Māmuni, chief commentator of Lokācārya’s works. Lokācārya’s father, Vaṇḍakku Tiruvirithipillai, a brahmin, wrote the Muppattārāyirappadi or 36,000 commentary on Nammāḻvār’s Tiruvāimoli, at the dictation of his teacher, Nampillai (also known as ‘Lokācārya’). Pillai Lokācārya was born out of extraordinary circumstances. Vaṇḍakku Tiruvirithipillai, although married, lived the life of a brahmacārīṅ. His mother complained to his teacher Nampillai that her son would have nothing to do with his wife. As a consequence, Nampillai had the girl sent to him and stroking her stomach, he blessed her. At the same time, he informed Vaṇḍakku Tiruvirithipillai not to give up his renunciation but to keep company with his wife lest people should speak unkindly of him. In due course, Vaṇḍakku Tiruvirithipillai’s wife bore a son who was called Lokācārya Pillai, Son of Lokācārya”.1 A second son, Alagiyā Maṇavaḷa Perumāl Nāyanār, was born to this woman at the specific request of Nam Perumāl, the Lord of the Śrīraṅgam temple. This son died at an early age but not before producing an important treatise on the teachings of Nammāḻvār, the Ācāryaḥdydayam.

Neither Lokācārya nor his brother married, both living life-long as brahmacāritis (and, indeed, the Śrivacanabhusana strongly favours such a life). Teaching at Śrīraṅgam, Lokācārya gathered numerous disciples, both male and female. Late in life, due to a Muslim invasion, he was forced to flee Śrīraṅgam, bearing the utsava-mūrti (processional image) of Śrīraṅgaṉaṅtha. A short time later, exhausted from travel, he died at the village of Jyotiśküḍī.

Lokācārya produced eighteen treatises, collectively known as the Aṣṭādaśa-rahasya or “Eighteen Esoteric (or Secret) Teachings”. Of these, three are considered most important: (1) the Tattvātrayam

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1 The name is later transposed.

* Tanitirumantiram, Tanidvayam, Taniçaramāslokaṁ, Tattvātrayam, Tattvaśekharam, Parandaṇaṁ, Śriyakṣatipadi, Yadēchikapadi, Mumukṣupadi, Sarasaṅgraham, Saracatusṭaya, Prameyaśekharam, Prapanna-paritrāṇam, Arcirādi, Arthapaṭicchaka, Śrivacanabhusana, Navavidhasambandham and Navaratnamalā.
a summary of the nature of the three realities, sentient beings (cit), non-sentient matter (acit) and the Lord (Iśvāra), from the perspective of the Viṣistādvaita Vedānta; (2) the Mumukṣupadī, “manual for those desirous of mokṣa”, elaborating three fundamental truths of the Śrīvaishnava-sampradāya; the Tirumantram or Aṣṭākṣara, om namo nārāyaṇāya, the mantra embodying the essence of the teaching of the Veda; the Dvayamantram, Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa caranau saraṇam prayāve, śrīmate Nārāyaṇāya namah, the mantra of prapāti; and the Caramālālokam or “Last Word” of Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavadgītā 18.66, clarifying that the Lord alone is the mokṣopāya: ¹ and (3) the Śrivacanabhūsānam or “Ornament of Sayings”. These three works together with the Ācāryahṛdayam and the commentaries on all four by Maṇavāla Māmuni comprise the authoritative corpus of Tengalai Śrīvaishnnavism.

Lokācārya is today referred to as an Udbhaya-Vedāntin, one who teaches the essence of both (ubhaya) the Sanskrit and the Tamil traditions. Actually, he synthesizes elements of three traditions: the Vedānta of Rāmānuja, the mystical, devotional outpourings of the Āḻvārs and the teachings of the Pāṇcarātra Āgamas. The style and the content of his writings show him to be especially concerned to communicate Vaiṣṇavism to the uninitiated masses of South India. He writes in what is called the maṇipravāla style, mixed Sanskrit and Tamil—essentially Tamil in which the Sanskrit words are committed to Tamil grammatical forms. Some of the teachings expounded by Lokācārya were also held by the elders of his time, such as Nampīḷḷai, Periyāvācchāṇpīḷḷai and Vaḻakkku Tiruvithipīḷḷai, but they gave expression to these ideas only in commentaries. Lokācārya was the first to write independent treatises, presenting the Vedānta in the vernacular language. Given this fact and his views on caste (discussed below), he can be considered something of a social revolutionary.

¹ Tattvārāyam and Mumukṣupadī have been translated into English by M. B. Narasimha Iyengar and published by the Educational Review Book Depot, Madras, 1966 and 1962.
There are two incidents which strongly suggest that he was significantly innovative. The first of these is recorded by Mañavāla Māmuni in his Introduction to the Śrivacanabhaṣya, as he relates how Lokācārya came to write this work. Mañavāla speaks of a certain man of Māñḍarākkam, near Kāñcīpuram (no personal name is given), who had a dream in which he was instructed in certain secret teachings by Varadarāja, the god of Kāñcīpuram, and then told to go to Śrīraṅgam. At Śrīraṅgam the man happened to overhear Pillai Lokācārya, who to his surprise was teaching his disciples the very truths that Varadarāja had revealed in the dream. A short time later the man had another dream in which Varadarāja instructed him to request that Lokācārya commit these teachings to writing since they had not been given before. The second incident is recorded in the Yatindrapravaṇaprabhāvam. Here we are told that after the appearance of the Śrivacanabhaṣya, some prominent members of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community publicly objected to Lokācārya’s teachings concerning the Bhāgavatas (those who stand in right relationship to the Lord). Lokācārya argues that the Bhāgavata transcends caste and even though he or she may be of the lowest caste, such a one is to be given the highest honor and service. The story goes that the complaint was taken up by Aṅgiya Mañavāla Perumāl Nāyaṇār, in the presence of the Lord of Śrīraṅgam temple and the Lord Himself, through the priest, vindicated Lokācārya before the Vaiṣṇava community.

The central teaching of the Śrivacanabhaṣya is that the Lord, Himself and only, through the mediation of the ācārya, is the means to the ultimate well-being of the soul; that, to this end, nothing is required of the soul except recognition of its essential nature and non-refusal of grace, and even these are the result of grace.

The authoritative texts for this teaching are the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata—these itihāsas clarify the meaning of the Vedānta. Lokācārya also quotes liberally from the songs of Ālvārs, especially those of Nammāḻvār’s Tiruvāimoli, Ālavandār’s Siṭṭhāṭṭaiṭṭuṭṭa and the Jitante Siṭṭṭra are referred to at several points, but there are no specific references or allusions to the teachings of Rāmānuja.

According to Lokācārya, the principal function of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata is to reveal the Lord as Himself
the upāya (the means) as well as upeya (the goal) for the soul and to reveal the Goddess as puruṣakāra (mediatrix) between the soul and the Lord. In numerous instances, the Lord as Rāma and as Kṛṣṇa shows Himself as upāya. Sītā reveals in herself the qualities necessary to puruṣakāra-hood, namely mercy, dependence upon the Lord and not being subservient to any one other than the Lord.

The problem of human life is set by the fact that the jīvatman (embodied soul), on the one hand, has accumulated numerous defects from which it cannot get free, and the Lord, on the other hand, is committed by His own will to reward and punish karma. The Lord desires communion with the soul, but cannot accomplish it. His concern for the welfare of the soul knows no bounds. Though surrounded with splendor in Vaikuṇṭha, the Lord is without pleasure as His mind is always with those in bondage. Unable to bear the divorce between Himself and souls, He gives them bodies and organs of understanding and communication; He goes and dwells within them, embracing them like a mother embracing her sleeping child. To the soul, He may seem indifferent, but in actuality, He is trying every means of rescue, searching for one defect that can be exaggerated into a virtue, taking any opportunity to even imagine some small goodness which may be an excuse for His grace (381). Forgetting His perfection and independence, He comes tangibly into the midst of souls through His arca-vatāra (His presence in the icon) (38). In His para, vyaha and untaṁyāmi forms He is inaccessible like distant waters, beyond or beneath the earth; His avatāras as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa have come and gone; only as arca-vatāra in the temples is He easily accessible like water in deep pools (39). Even so, He cannot penetrate the ahamkāra surrounding the soul.

The soul desires communion with the Lord, but cannot rise above its karma. Without realising it, even the efforts which it makes toward reaching the Lord, those which scripture says are the means (upāya), stand against this attainment. By essential nature, the soul is śeṣa to the Lord, slave (dāsa) or servant (adīyān) existing only for the Lord's enjoyment:

Knowledge and bliss are also (qualities) of the self, but its distinguishing quality is dāsyam. (73)

When the bonds caused by ahamkāra are broken, the eternal name of the soul is adīyān. (77)
The Lord is the master. One to serve whose purposes everything else exists. Thus, the soul's supreme well-being lies in surrendering everything to the Lord; but this essential relationship is disallowed by karma. As long as the soul acts as if its well-being depends upon its own efforts, the Lord can do nothing but respond as a judge to its karma. And, no karma is great enough to warrant attainment of the Lord. In fact, it is not a matter of greatness—the attainment of the Lord depends simply on the soul's recognition of its own nature and this nature is denied by every self-assertion.

The situation requires mediation, an agent or go-between (purusakāra). Thus the Goddess steps between the judging father and the errant child to expose the karma-relationship for what it truly is, to assist the soul to relax, to surrender pride and self-effort and to call forth the Lord's tenderness. Scripture offers examples of the Goddess' mediating power, for instance, Śī, although she had the power to destroy them, mediated on behalf of the demoneses who held her captive at th request of Rāvana, telling Hanumā, not to harm them; again, she mediates for Vibhīṣa by suggesting that he surrender himself to Rāma, requesting protection. Her power to mediate is passive, by her mercy she attracts the Lord.

The Goddess is the great model of mediation. In practical application, it is the ācārya or teacher who mediates on behalf of the soul and the Lord. The Lord Himself took this role as Kṛṣṇa, mediating between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, and mediating between Himself and Arjuna to whom as ācārya, He gave the great teaching, the “Last Word” (caramāslokam), to the effect that He alone is the means.

“—there is no way except the affection of the ācārya (ācāryābhimāna) for him whose self-conceit blocks the affection of the Lord.” (443)

The ācāryā is not himself the means; he is only the instrument or channel of the Lord's grace.

“—the soul's essential attributes arise not from ourselves nor from others but by the grace of the Lord which comes by means of the grace of the true ācārya.” (243)
The ācārya holds the key to self-knowledge (atmajñāna) as he transmits the holy mantra (tirumantiram), the Asṭāksara, om namo Narayanāya:

"The direct meaning of 'ācārya' is 'one who teaches the great holy mantra, which removes samsāra.' (315)
"...from having reached the ācārya, the holy mantra comes within one's reach; from having reached the holy mantra, the Lord comes within one's reach and from having reached the Lord, the land of attainment (Vaikuṇṭha) comes within reach..." (97)

A mediator or ācārya is not absolutely necessary, as is evidenced by the fact that among the Ālvars only Madhurakavi had an ācārya (namely, Nammālvār). However, the Ālvars were exceptional individuals; most embodied souls are incapable of surrendering themselves without assistance. Even seeking out an ācārya can be a source of pride and self-effort; it is better that the ācārya himself takes the initiative, showering his affection (abhimāna) on the soul.

Surrender, throwing oneself down at the feet of the Lord (prapattī), is the natural disposition of the soul. It is essentially self-knowledge (atmajñāna) and submission to being protected (raksyatva-anumati) and these are natural to the soul rather than added thereto by effort. Prapattī is thus not a means, and in as far as the embodied soul takes it as a means, the act is one of the defects which the Lord accepts or overlooks in taking the soul to Himself. There is no possibility of meriting grace; on the contrary, it is the very demerit of the soul which commends it to grace. The problem of other means than the Lord, such as bhakti or upāsana facilitated by karma and jñāna, is that they encourage reliance on some kind of merit and are thus opposed to essential nature. Scripture (the Vedānta-texts) prescribes such means only in order to get the attention of wayward souls—like offering sugar-coated pills to the diseased.

That prapatti is the appropriate posture of the embodied soul and is effective for all persons irrespective of their ignorance, knowledge, devotion or station in life, is shown by numerous
examples in scripture; Draupadi, Vibhīṣaṇa, the gopi Chintayanti, the bird Jātāyus, the elephant Gajendra, Laksmana, etc. Prapatti is easy:

Being as it is, the effect of the soul's nature and suitable to the essential nature, it is easy, since it is accomplished by renunciation alone...(135)

Prapatti is easy because there are no limitations upon it as to time place or circumstances under which it is performed. Anyone is qualified. and, in fact, those who have the least to commend them, those humbled by the circumstances of their birth and their lack of learning, are far more likely to attain the Lord than those of high birth and great learning. Prapatti is easy, because the same Lord who is the goal of the soul, is also the means.

The Lord Himself turns the soul around, away from worldly pleasures and toward Himself. He accomplishes this at a particular time and place for each soul because He waits for an excuse, an opportunity to magnify some small, unintended goodness (yādṛechika-sukṛta) as the basis of His rescue. Perchance a woman going to market happens to pass the temple, or a farmer chasing his cow, accidentally goes around His shrine, a gardener watering flowers unintentionally drops water on a tulasi plant. The proceeds of grace begin to show like sprouts in a field where no one planted seeds. The embodied soul becomes restless in samsāra, begins to ask questions about its origin and destiny and turns however slightly toward the Lord. Seeing the Lord (which is easy in His arcāvātāra) the soul begins to reflect on its ignorance and imperfection and the qualities of tranquillity (sama) and self-restraint (dama) begin to develop. From all this, the soul is attracted to the ācārya, the facilitator of prapatti.

The essential posture of the prapanna toward the ācārya, as toward the Lord and the Lord's people (the Bhāgavatas), is unflagging affectionate service (kaiśkarya). The true ācārya is full of compassion and empty of pride as he looks to his own teacher and the Lord rather than himself as the source of goodness. The prapanna, responding to his favour sees him as mother, father, wife.

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sons, wealth, the mantra, the god, the fruit and the means. All of the duties, disciplines and rituals which others perform as necessary to mokșa, the prapanna undertakes, not as a means, but as service in grateful response to the favour of the ācārya and the Lord. The nature of this service is dictated by varṇāsrama-dharma and the instructions of the ācārya. It is natural and uplifting rather than demeaning as the prapanna is gradually released from striving after reward and fearing punishment or failure.

Service of the ācārya grows into service of the Lord and service of the Lord blossoms into service of the Bhāgavatas. The Bhāgavata is any person who lives and serves in the grace of Lord. His status is determined not by name, caste, family or village, but solely by his relationship to the Lord. There are many who go about wearing the outward markings of the Bhāgavata, but like burnt-cloth they will be blown apart by the first winds of aversion of the Lord. A true Bhāgavata should be honored and served as equal to the ācārya and even superior to the Lord, in as much as his influence upon others is liberating. The greatest obstacles to surrender are pride and sensuality, casteism and offence to Bhāgavatas. The latter two derive from the former and are often closely related. Caste has nothing to do with one's status in the eyes of the Lord. Those of high birth who cast aspersions on Bhāgavatas who happen to be of low birth commit an intolerable offence. Scripture is full of examples of persons of low caste or even non-humans being graced by the Lord - witness Vidura, Dharma-vyādha, Šabarī, Cintayanī and Jaṭāyus. The Lord Himself has more than once manifested Himself in a low-caste form (Lokācārya does not explicitly say so, but as his brother Aḷāgiya Maṇḍavāla Perumāl Nāyaṅār points out obvious examples are Kṛṣṇa, a cowherd and Nammāḻvar, a Śudra). Living in grace does not promote frivolity or immorality. On the contrary, the Bhāgavata not only refrains from what scripture prohibits but refrains as well from the pleasures scripture permits; for instance, the Bhāgavata refrains not only from illicit sexual relations but also from those which dharma permits. The grace of the Lord, mediated through the ācārya inculcates in the disciple, non-violence, non-stealing, non-lying and the non-grasping of others' wives. A true disciple renounces all worldliness and association with those who are oriented toward the world.
The Śrivacanabhiṣaṇa is not a systematic treatise; it is more a collection of discussions on various topics. Sometimes the logic of the relationship between one topic and another is set forth and sometimes it is not; for instance, the transition from the Goddess as puruṣakāra to the ācārya as puruṣakāra is never explicitly stated. Nonetheless, there is a basic consistency in Lokācārya's theological position.

It may appear problematic that certain things are required of embodied souls, such as self-knowledge, surrender and the taking of an ācārya, and yet that no human effort conditions the Lord's grace. This kind of question is raised in a number of different contexts. The answer consistently is that all that which appears to require self-effort, self-assertion, is in actuality the action of the Lord—the entire drama of bondage and liberation is the Lord's own doing and enjoyment. The Āḻvārs pose a problem in this regard as they appear to strive toward attaining the Lord. Lokācārya argues that this is only the Lord moving them to greater heights of devotion and service.

A more difficult issue arises when one asks, "If salvation is by grace alone, why is it only for certain souls at certain times? Why not for all souls at one instant?" One answer to this query is simply that the salvation of the soul is the Lord's enjoyment and the Lord enjoys as He wills. The response that Lokācārya seems to prefer that the Lord waits for an excuse—He moves on the basis of unintended good deeds (yādṛcchika sukrta). This may amount to saying that the matter is beyond our understanding. Indeed, Lokācārya argues, one should look to what is before him (water in the hand), namely the arcavatāra and the ācārya, rather than that which is far removed (water in the clouds or rivers), namely the Lord Himself.

The Āḻvārs pose other problems for Lokācārya. First, they, on numerous occasions, bless the Lord or seek to protect Him with maṅgalasasana (protective benediction), an action which would seem inappropriate for a seṣa. But he points out that there are numerous examples of such protectiveness, such as Guha and Laksmaṇa attempting to protect Rāma, and, it is no more than the natural spontaneous outpouring of one who seeks the continued welfare of the Lord upon whom his life so crucially depends. Another difficulty posed by the experiences of the Āḻvārs is the fact
that these prapannas speak of moments of mutual love between the soul and the Lord—equality in embrace, even loss of essential identity as Śeṣas, in the ecstasy of divine experience. Lokācārya's conclusion is that, indeed, at a certain stage, even seṣatva becomes restrictive, like the ornaments of a lady when her lover would embrace her. Śeṣa-seṣi is transformed into fully mutual enjoyment and this is not to be considered as perverse or detrimental to the well-being of the soul. Once the way is opened by the surrender of the soul, the Lord takes the soul, body and all—lovers embracing do not mind sweat and dirt on the body.

It may be useful in estimating the extent of Pillai Lokācārya's contribution to Vaiśṇava thought, to briefly compare the main feature of his theology with the theology of Rāmānuja, one hundred and fifty years earlier. Rāmānuja's chief aim is to establish that the Vedānta teaches the highest Brahman as saguṇa, Supreme Person (paramapuruṣa), and the individual soul and the non-sentient universe as the body of the Supreme (sarīra-sarīri-bhāva), distinct yet not separate, the soul existing as seṣa to the Lord who is seṣi. Following the Upaniṣad-s and the Bhagavadgītā, he teaches that the goal of the soul is enjoyment of the Lord (bhagavadanubhava) and the means (upāya) to this enjoyment is knowledge which has reached the form of bhakti (bhaktirūpāpannamjñānām). This bhakti has the form of meditation (upāsana or dhyāna) and is assisted and supported by the performance of certain karmas:

And the only means to obtain Brahman has been stated to be intense devotion which has the form of continuous meditation which has reached the state of vivid perception immeasurably and overwhelmingly dear, accomplished by firm adherence to bhakti supported by one's own karma, based on knowledge of the real obtained from scripture.¹

This bhakti is not the direct means to the attainment of Brahman. The soul must be chosen by the Lord (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2. 23); but the Lord chooses only those who are extremely dear to Him by the tact of their devotion. Rāmānuja expounds a doctrine of co-operative grace. The Lord is ultimately in control, but He

¹ Rāmānuja, Vedicārthasaṅgraha
controls as the One who permits or consents (*anumantṛ*). He permits those who are well disposed toward Him to increase in bhakti and He permits those who are ill disposed to fall away even further. We may say that Rāmānuja holds human effort and divine grace in tension with each other. As bhakti requires a knowledge of the Vedas and the performance of Karmas peculiar to the twice-born castes, the Śudra and others are excluded from the possibility of attaining to Brahman.

Lokācārya builds on Rāmānuja’s doctrines of the Supreme Person and *sesa-sesi-bhāva*, but immensely enhances the status of the Lord. Śeṣa is now defined as *dāśya* (slave), primacy is given to the Lord’s enjoyment of the soul rather than the soul’s enjoyment of the Lord, and the Lord Himself is the sole and entire means by which He is to be obtained. The goal of the soul is service of the Lord (*bhagavatkañkārya*) rather than enjoyment of the Lord (*bhagavadanubhava*). The posture of the soul toward the Lord is surrender rather than energetic effort in the performance of karma and meditation. Vivid mental perception of the Lord in yoga gives way to the actual and full presence of the Lord in the *arcavatāra*. Rāmānuja envisages the role of the ācārya as that of one who gives instruction in the Vedas and the modes of meditation therein prescribed. For Lokācārya, the ācārya is a much more powerful figure, a mediator (*puruṣakāra*) between the soul and the Lord, one whose primary task is to instruct in the secrets (*rahasya*) carried by the Holy mantra (*tirumantram*). Rāmānuja speaks of neither the Goddess nor the ācārya as *puruṣakāra* and his prescriptions for the well-being of the soul do not include mantric rahasyas. Lokācārya opens the way to salvation for all persons, whereas Rāmānuja’s *upāya* was intended only for the twice-born.

This summary comparison of Rāmānuja and Lokācārya is brief and no doubt leaves loose ends, but may serve to point out that Lokācārya’s theology represents a significant development beyond that of Rāmānuja. The key differences appear to derive from the scriptural sources upon which each of them relies. Rāmānuja is a Vedāntin, in the strict sense of the term, and a Bhaktiyogin—he relies almost exclusively upon the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Lokācārya is a Bhāgavata and a prapanna—his primary sources are the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the hymns of
the Ālvārs, and, standing in the background, the Pāñcarātra Āgamas. Even his use of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata is inspired by the hymns and the Āgamas.

Lokācārya does not subdivide the Śrīvacanabhūṣana by topics or chapters. The reader may find the following topical outline of use in overviewing the work. I have given only the major sub-topics under each primary heading.

1-14: The Importance of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata.

6-13: Puruṣakāra

14: Upāya.


23-33: No Special Conditions for Prapatti.

24: Except One, the Ultimate Object.

34-40: Arcavatāra, the Appropriate Object.

41-54: The Three Persons Fit to Perform Prapatti.

47-54: The Bhakti of the Ālvārs.

55-150: Prapatti is Not a Means

60-69: Only ātmajñāna and non-denial are necessary.

73-79: These are of the essential nature of the soul.

80-19: No self-exertion is necessary.

115-133: The Danger of Other Means.

134-150: Prapatti is easy.

151-159: The Need for Mediation.

160-176: The Love-Relationship Between Soul and Lord.

177-191: There is no Goodness Except the Lord’s.

192-243: The Bhāgavata.

192-204: Offence against Bhāgavatas.

205-223: No caste-requirement for receipt of grace.

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221-226: Bhāgavatas to be treated with great respect.

226-242: Bhāgavata-status transcends caste.

243: Advice to those who would be Bhāgavatas.

244-258: Mangalāsāsanam—Appropriate to and Compatible with Essential Nature.

249-256: Āḻvārs are prominent examples.

259-274: Developing the Ātmaguna-s.

259-262: Association with Bhāgavatas is beneficial.

263-274: The orientation and fate of those who are ill disposed.

275-287: Kaiṅkarya to the Lord and the Ācārya.

288-294: The Stages Leading up to Kaiṅkarya.

295-367: The Ācārya, the Śiṣya and their Relationship.

295-307: The attributes of a prapanna.

308-320: The attributes of the ācārya.

321-367: The ācārya-Śiṣya relationship.

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1. Vedārta maṟutiyituvatu smruti-itihāsa-purāṇaṅkaḷāle.

1. The meaning of the Veda-s is brought to completion by means of the Smṛti-s, Itiḥāsa-s and Purāṇa-s.

2. Smrutiyāle purvapākattilattam aṟutiyiṭakkaṭavatu; maṟṟai yiraṅṭālum uttara pākattilattam aṟutiyiṭakka-ṭavatu.

2 The meaning of the earlier portion (of the Veda-s) is established by Smṛti; the meaning of the later portion is established by the other two (Itiḥāsa-s and Purāṇa-s).

The earlier portion is the Karma-Kāṇḍa or that dealing with rituals; the latter portion is the Jñāna-kāṇḍa or Vedānta, dealing with knowledge. Lokācārya addresses himself to the meaning of the latter.

3. Iva yiraṅṭilum vaiṭṭukkoṇdu itiḥāsaṁ prabalam.

3. Of these two (Itiḥāsa-s and Purāṇa-s), Itiḥāsa-s are more important.

4. Attāle atu muṟṟpaṭṭatu.

4. On account of this, they are placed first (in the compound).

5. Itiḥāsasaṅreṣṭhamāna śṛṅgāmāyaṇattāl ciraṭiyiruntavalėr-ṛañ collukikṛatu; mahābhārattatāl tutuponavaṇērṛañ collukikṛatu.

5. In the most excellent Itiḥāsa, the Rāmāyana, is stated the greatness of the one-who was imprisoned; in the Mahābhārata is stated the greatness of the one who went as messenger.
The central focus of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the Goddess Sītā who was imprisoned by Rāvana. The central focus of the *Mahābhārata* is Krishna who went as messenger to Duryodhana on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas.

6. *Ivaiyirandalum puruṣakāravaibhatvamum upāyavai-
   bhavamum colliṟṟāyirṟu.*

6. These two (Itihāsa-s) establish the greatness of the
   puruṣakāra and the greatness of *upāya.*

   *Puruṣakāra,* ‘the maker of the puruṣa’, signifies
   the mediator between the soul and the Lord;
   *upāya,* ‘the means’ to *mokṣa.*

7. *Puruṣakāṟamāmpotu krupaiyum pāratantryamum
   ananyārhatvamum veṟṟum.*

7. (The qualities) essential to the puruṣakāra are mercy, dependence (upon the Lord) and not being subservient to another (other than the Lord).

8. *Pirāṭṭi muṟpaṭṭappirintatu taṅṇuṭaiya krupaiyai
   veliyitukaikkāka. Naṭuvir pirintatu pāratantryattai
   veliyitukaikkāka. Anantaram pirintatu ananyārhatvattai
   veliyitukaikkāka,*

8. The Goddess’ first separation revealed her mercy. Her dependence (on the Lord) is revealed in the middle separation. The final separation revealed her not being subservient to another.

   Sītā is separated from Rāma three times;
   (1) when abducted by Rāvana and taken to Śrī Lāṅkā; (2) when Rāma sent her to the forest to undergo the fire-ordeal; and (3) when she left the earth at the end of the *avatāra.* She shows mercy by not exercising her power over the demons who have imprisoned her. She shows
dependence on her Lord by being obedient to Him without question when He suggests that she might be impure by reason of her imprisonment. Finally, she shows herself as not being subservient to anyone other than her Lord when she desires to leave the earth and Rāma at the time the avatāra is finished.

9. **Samśleṣa viśleṣaṇākālaṁ irtaṇṭilum puruṣakārataṁ toṛgam.**

9. Puruṣakāra-hood is manifested in both union and separation.

10. **Samśleṣa taçaiyil lāvargaṁ iṟtuttum; viśleṣatacaiyil cetan gī t iṟtuttum.**

10. In the state of union (of the Goddess and the Lord), there is rectification of the Lord; in the state of separation, there is rectification of sentient beings.

While in union with Her Lord, the Goddess influences the Lord on behalf of the soul; while separate from the Lord, She influences the soul to move toward the Lord.

11. **Iruvariyum tiruttuvatum upadeśattāle.**

11. The rectification of both (the Lord and the soul) is by means of counsel.

The Goddess influences only by counsel, not by command.

12. **Upadeśattāle iruvuṟuṣaiyavum karmapāratantryaṁ kulaiyum.**

12. By counsel, the dependence on karma of both (the Lord and the soul) is removed.

Apart from the mediation of the Goddess, the embodied soul (jīva-ṛman) believes its welfare to depend upon good and bad deeds (karma-s) and the Lord stands committed to reward and punish such karma. The good counsel of the Goddess assists the soul and the Lord in laying aside this karma-relationship.
13. If not rectified by counsel, the soul is rectified by grace; the Lord is rectified by (the Goddess') beguiling charms.

14. The greatness of upāya is demonstrated in the Mahābhārata by Kṛṣṇa's taking upon Himself the duty of acārya, making known completely the meanings which were unknown and (showing Himself) as puruṣakāra and upāya.

As acārya, Kṛṣṇa is teacher, mediator and means for Arjuna, instructing him, mediating between Himself and Arjuna and showing Himself to be the only means to ultimate well-being.

15. The greatness of puruṣakāra and upāya lies in not merely disregarding (the soul's) defects and lack of merit, but also in making these the very basis for the acceptance (of the soul).

16. If it be said that it is necessary to remove both of these (the defects and lack of merit), then both become (the Lord's).

If the Lord refuses to accept the soul with its defects and lack of merit, then the Lord Himself suffers defect and lack of merit.
17. *Iraṇṭu* kulaintatetirukkil ittalaikkirāntum upṭāyig-gatām.

17. If the soul thinks that the two (defects and lack of merit) are removed (before acceptance) then these (defects and lack of merit) are the soul’s, indeed!

It is a positive defect for the soul to think that its acceptance by the Lord is through the removal of its defects; it is a lack of merit for the soul to fail to consider its own lowliness and the greatness of the Lord.

18. Rākṣasikal doṣam prasittam.

18. The defects of the demonesses are well-known. Sītā, imprisoned in the Aśoka garden by Rāvaṇa was cruelly treated by the Rākṣasīs. Yet, she pleaded with Hanumān not to harm them, thus mediating for them on the very basis of their defects.


19. The defects of Arjuna, the sustainer of Kṛṣṇa, the “intimate friend of Keśava”, foremost of believers, Lord of conquerors of the senses, were, for example, compassion for and attachment to relatives and fear of killing them.

Even Arjuna had his defects, and these very defects became the basis for Kṛṣṇa’s acceptance of him.

20. Draupariparipaveṇkāntiruntatu kruṣṇāviprayattalo pratāna doṣam.

20. In the opinion of Kṛṣṇa, the main defect of Arjuna was the fact that he was indifferent to the insult of Draupadi. Arjuna and his brothers stood by while Draupadi was insulted by Duṣṣāsana, who tried to pull her clothes off in front of all assembled.

21. Even though the Pāṇḍavas deserved to be destroyed, they were permitted to live because of the sacred cord around the neck of Draupadī.

The sacred cord (tāli) sanctifies Draupadī's marriage to the Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa refrains from killing the Pāṇḍavas as He does not want to see Draupadī become a widow.

22. Arjunāṅkku tūtyaśarātyankāḷ pāṇīrṛum prapatty-upadeśāṁ pāṇīrṛum ivajukkāka.

22. It was only for the sake of her that (Kṛṣṇa) acted as messenger, drove the chariot for Arjuna and gave instruction on prapatti.

23. Prapattikku deśāṇiyamamum kālaniyamamum prakāraniyamamum atikāriniyamamum palaniyamumītal

23. There is no condition of place, time, manner, fitness or fruit for prapatti.

24. Viṣaya niyamame yuḷḷitu.

24. There is only the condition as to ultimate object.

The Lord only is to be the object of prapatti.


25. For the rituals a place which is holy, a time like spring, modes prescribed in the different scriptures, persons of the three varṇas (Ṛṣhṭha, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas), these would have been prescribed.

26. “Sa eṣa deśaḥ kālaḥ” eṣaṭaiyāle itukku deśikāla niyama-millai.

26. There is no condition of time and place for this (prapatti), as it is said, “This is the place”, “This is the time.”

The quotation is from the Rāmāyaṇa with reference to Vibhīṣaṇa’s prapatti to Rāma. The
import is that the place and time for prapatti are whenever and wherever one is moved to undertake it.

27. Ivrarttam mantraratnattil prathamapadattile suspaṣṭam

27. The meaning of this is clear in the first word of the jewel of mantras.

The reference is to the Dvaya Mantra, the mantra of prapatti: “Śrīnan nārāyaṇacaranau, garaṇam prapadvē; Śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namah”. The first word, “śrimat”, refers to both the Lord (the upaya) and the Goddess (the puruṣakara), in eternal relationship, and thus there is no condition as to the time and place appropriate for prapatti.

28. Prakāra niyatiyillaiyen =centerum ca’cuna-kāṇalam.

28. It could seem everywhere that there is no condition regarding the mode of performing (prapatti).

29. Traupadi snātaiyā nre prapatti paṇīṛṛu; arjuna nīcir nātuvēyṛṛg ivvartan kettātu.

29. It was in an impure state that Draupadi performed prapatti; Arjuna listened to the meaning of this (prapatti) while in the midst of vile persons.

Draupadi took refuge in Kṛṣṇa as Dussāsana insulted her by trying to remove her clothes at the court of Duryodhana. At this time, Draupadi was impure by reason of menstruation. Kṛṣṇa gave Arjuna the instruction on prapatti, i.e. Bhagavadgītā 18.66, on the battle-field, surrounded by impure persons.

30. Akaiyal suttyaṣuttikaḷiraṇṭum teṣaṃṇṭa, iruntapaṭiya adhikāriyānmitaḷai.

30. Therefore, it is not necessary to look to either purity or impurity: whatever the state, in that state there is fitness.
31. One is reminded of the word of (Nam) Pillai to Veḻvetṭi-pillai in this matter.

Nampillai is the teacher of Pillai Lokācārya’s father. He is reported to have said, “For a pure person, impurity is not necessary; for an impure person purity is not necessary.”

32. That the condition of fitness is not required has these examples:

Dharmaputra and his brothers (the Pāṇḍavas); Draupadī, the crow (kākāsura), Kāliyān (the serpent), Gajendra Āḷvāg (the elephant), the Lord (Rāma), the younger Lord (Lakṣmaṇa), and others; as these had entered upon refuge, there is no prerequisite fitness for it.

All of the above-mentioned undertook prapatti.

33. The absence of condition pertaining to fruit is illustrated by the following: kingdom as the fruit for Dharmaputra and his brothers; clothing as the fruit for Draupadī; life-breath as the fruit for the crow and Kāliyān; service as the fruit for Gajendra; the obtainment of Rāma as the fruit for Vipīṣaṇa; the crossing of the ocean as the fruit for the Lord and constant attendance on Rāma as the fruit for the younger Lord.
Each of the above sought different fruits as the result of their *prapatti*. The Pāṇḍavas sought the aid of Kṛṣṇa in retrieving their kingdom. The asura, who desiring to make love to Sītā took the form of a crow, although he pecked at Sītā and caused bleeding, was spared by Rāma when he took refuge with Him. Rāma Himself performed *prapatti* to Varuṇa, king of the ocean, seeking assistance in crossing the ocean to Śī Śiṅkā.

34. Viṣayaniyamamāvatu kuṇapurttiyullaviṭam viṣayamākai; purttiyullatam arcāvatārattile.

34. As there is the condition regarding ultimate object, the object should be one having fullness of qualities; there is such fullness in the *arcāvatāra* (the presence of the Lord in icons).

35. Āḻvārkaḻ palaviṭaṅkaḷiḷum prapatti paṇṇīṟṟum arcāvatārattile.

35. The Āḻvars, in many places, performed *prapatti* to the *arcāvatāra*.

36. “Pūrṇam” eṉkaiyāle yellakuṇaṅkaḷum puṣkalanḵkal.

36. (As the Upaniṣads speak of) “pūrṇam” (perfection), this means all qualities in a copious measure.

The Upaniṣads say that the ultimate object should be *pūrṇam*.

37. Prapattikkapekṣīṅkaḷaṅga saulapyāṭikaḷ iruṭṭaṛaiyio viḷakkuppole prakācippadiṅke.

37. (The qualities of) accessibility (saulabhya) and others (such as excellence of disposition and tenderness), requirements for *prapatti*, shine here (in the *arcāvatāra*) like a light shining in a dark room.

38. Purttiyațiyum svātantryaṭṭaiyum kulaittukkoṭu toṇṇai anātarikkavarkaḷaiṭ tāṉṭarittu nirkiraviṭam.

38. Unmindful of both (His) fullness and (His) independence, He (the Lord) appears here (in *arcāvatāra*), Himself caring even for those who are indifferent to Him.
39. Pukatajalam pole antaryāmitvam; āvaraṇajalam pole paratvam; pārkaṭatalpole vyukum; perukkāru pole vipaviṅka; aule tūkkiṃmatukkal pole arccāvatāram.

39. The antaryāmitva (the Lord dwelling within the heart) is like waters deep in the earth (not easily accessible); the paratva (the transcendent Lord) is inaccessible like the oceans surrounding the earth; vīṣha (fourfold manifestation as Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha) is (inaccessible) like the milk-ocean; the vibāva (avatāra) is like rivers only periodically in flood (but now dry), arccāvatāra is like the deep pools in such rivers, easily available for use at all times.

These five forms of the supreme reality are set forth and elaborated in the Pāncarātra Āgamas.

40. Ituṭaṅ gāstrāṅkalal tiruttavomppante, viṣayāntarasāṅkalile mānti vimukārāpporom cēṭauarkku vaimukyattai mārī ruciayai viḷaikkakkaṭavatāy, ruci piṟantarai upāya-may, upāyaparigraham paṇṇīṅkal pokyamumay irukkum.

40. To the soul uncorrected by the scriptures, distracted by other objects, and continuing in aversion, this (arccāvatāra) indeed, produces a taste which converts his aversion; having produced a taste it becomes a means (upāya) and after the means has been grasped, it stands as an enjoyment.

Prapatti is well served by the Lord's presence in an easily accessible tangible object and arccāvatāra provides such an object.

41. Itil prapattipānum atikārikaḥ muvar.

41. Three (kinds of) persons are fit to perform prapatti to the Arcā.

42. Ajñārum, jñānaṭikarum, paktiparāvaṣarum.

42. The ignorant, the one having superior knowledge and the one who loses himself in devotion.

43. Ajñānattale prapannar asmatattakal; jñānaṭikyattale prapannar purvācāryarkal; paktiparāvaṣyattale prapannar ālvārkal.
43. People like us are *prapannas* on account of ignorance; the former ācāryas are *prapannas* on account of superior knowledge; the Āḻvārs are *prapannas* by the ecstasy of devotion.

There are those who surrender to the Lord because they lack understanding of any means to mokṣa. There are those such as Nāṭhamuni, Yāmunācārya and Rāmānuja who surrender either because they understand and what they understand is that the Lord is the only means or because they realize that there is no salvation through mere knowledge. And there are those whose extreme devotion moves them to surrender.

44. *Ippati* collukifatumūtattaiappattat.

44. It is said thus by reference to the primary characteristic (of each).

All the three characteristics are present in *prapannas*, but one is primary for each individual.

45. Immunfum munputatvattaiyum paṭrivarum.

45. These three (kinds of *prapannas*) are related to three *tattva-s* (realities).

The three *tattva-s* are *acit* (non-sentient matter), *cit* (sentient beings) and *īśvara* (the Lord). Ignorance is the quality of *acit*; knowledge is the quality of *cit* and devotion is related to *īśvara*.

46. "Eṉñāṉ ceykēn" enkipavattil immunrumuntu.

46. All these are included in, "What can I do?"
The reference is to Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvaimoli* 5. 8. 3: "What can I do? Who is going to protect me? What are you doing to me? I don't have
any desire for anyone except you, O Lord reclining in Kumbhakonam surrounded by a compound-wall full of artistry! Whatever days there are in my life-time, let them be spent at (your) feet. Please see that these days are spent grasping at your feet!

Here the Ālvār at first expresses ignorance; he recognises that the Lord has given him the knowledge that He only is the means; and finally he indicates his consuming devotion toward the Lord.

47. Āṇku onraippakkiyirukkanum.

47. There (in that passage) it concerns one (characteristic) in particular (i.e. devotion).

48. Mukkyam atuve.

48. That is primary.

49. “Avidyātāḥ” tūṅkē sēlokattile immūṟṟēm colliṟṟu.

49. These three are mentioned in the verse beginning, “By ignorance......”

From a casual composition of Bhaṭṭar:

“The blessed sage Śaunaka explained the inner meaning of the mantra called Jitanta as: ‘Either by ignorance of the god, by complete knowledge of the god, or by the abundance of one’s own devotion in the case of those who do not know any other means, for them Hari is both the means and the end.’

50. “Idam saraṇamajñānāṁ”.

50. “This is the refuge of the ignorant”

There is also this verse in the Lakṣmi Tantra (17, 100): “This is the refuge for the ignorant, for the wise, for those who desire to cross (the ocean of samsāra) and for those who desire immortality.”
51. Bhaktiṭṭṭiṇīle avastāpedam piṟantavāṟe itutān kulaiyak kaṭavatāyirukkum.

51. When devotion reaches a certain stage, it (prapatti) may indeed collapse.

52. Tāṇṇaip peṉavum paṇṇum tarikkavum paṇṇum.

52. And it may also induce one to attempt to nourish and sustain himself.

Out of extreme devotion, one may, like the Āḻvārs, do things which are not compatible with prapatti; such as straining to get the Lord or turning away from Him when He delays his appearance. Examples of this are Periyāḻvār Tirumoli 3.7.8 and Tiruvāiymoḷi 6.2.2. In the former, Periyāḻvār portrays a young woman who has lavishly beautified herself in the hope of attracting the Lord. In the latter, Nammāḻvār speaks as a lady hurt by her lover’s delay in coming. When the lover (the Lord) does arrive she tells Him to go away, to go to his other ladies, so charming and enjoyable.

53. Inta svapāva viśeṉkaḷ kalyāṇa guṇaṅkaḷilum tiruccaraṅkaḷilum tirunāmaṅkaḷilum tirukkuḻalocaiyilum kāṇalām.

53. These natural dispositions may be seen with regard to the impact of the auspicious attributes, the divine weapons, the divine names and the sound of the divine flute.

It is only natural that such reactions should occur among devotees enraptured by the divine attributes, etc., however.

54. Itutāṇṇaippārttāl pitāvukkup putraṅḷuttuvāṅkumā-polē yiruppattāṟu.

54. When one looks at this, it appears to be like a son asking his father for a written undertaking of protection.
The basic relationship of soul and Lord guarantees the Lord's protection to the soul; thus, seeking assurances of protection, is like a son asking his father for an insurance policy. Such a reaction is inappropriate but understandable in the light of the Āḻvārs' devotion.

55. Itu taṇṇakku svarūpam taṇṇaip poṟātoḷikai.

55. The essence of this (prapatti) is in not tolerating itself. Prapatti is not to be taken as a means.

56. Aṅkam taṇṇaiyōlintavaṛṛaip poṟātoḷikai.

56. Its ancillary is not tolerating anything other than itself. 

Prapatti, unlike a means, such as bhaktiyoga, does not have any assisting factors (aṅga).

57. Upāyam taṇṇaip poṟukkum.

57. The upāya tolerates itself.

The Lord as upāya needs no assistance.

58. Upāyāntaram iraṇṭaiyum poṟukkum.

58. The other upāya-s tolerate both (a means and an end).

59. Itu iraṇṭaiyum poṟātu.

59. This one tolerates neither (a means or an end).

The lord being the means, the means and the end are the same.

60. Palattukku ātmajñānamum apratiṣetamum venṭuvatu.

60. Only knowledge of self and non-denial are needful to the fruit.

These are the only requirements for prapatti.

61. Allātapatu pantattikkum pūrṭikkum kōṭṭaiyām.

61. If this is not so, it will be a defect to the relationship (of the soul and the Lord) and (the Lord's) perfection.
Knowledge of the self is knowledge of one’s being śeṣa to the Lord. A śeṣa is one who exists solely to serve the purposes of another. The Lord, Śeṣī, is one to serve whose purposes all else exists. Thus, the only requirement for salvation is that the soul assumes its natural disposition toward the Lord; any other requirement would be a fault.

62. Āpattaip pōkkikkolūkipiromaṇṭu pramittu attai vilaitukkolla tolikaiyē veṇṭuvatu.

62. Under the erroneous impression of warding off one’s calamity (through self-effort), one should not cause calamity by trying to avoid it.

63. Rakṣanattukapekṣitam rakṣyatvānumatiye.

63. What is needful for protection is just submission to being protected.

64. Ella vupāyattukkum potuvākaiyālum, caitanyakārya- mākaiyālum, prāpti tacaiyilum anuvartikkaiyālum, svarūpātirekiyallāmaiyaḷum acitvyāvrutta vēṣattai sātanamākkavaṇṇātu.

64. This activity (submission to protection), which is an act of that which is different from the non-sentient, cannot be considered a means since 1) it is common to all upāyas; 2) only sentient beings can undertake it; 3) it is present even in attainment; and 4) it is not against the essential nature (of the soul).

65. Acitvyāvruttikku prāyojanam, upāyattilupakārasmrutiyum upeyattilukappum.

65. The reason why sentient being is different from the non-sentient is that (in the sentient) there may be constant remembrance of the assistance given by the upāya (the Lord), and enjoyment of the attainment (of the Lord).
66. "Ugmaqattal ennai nauntiruntay" enkipat during praptikkup upayam avan nigaivu.

66. In the text, "What are you thinking in your mind?.....", His (the Lord's) thinking is the means of attainment.

The reference is to Tirumangai Alvar's Periya Tirumoli 2.7.1, wherein the Alvar, playing the role of a mother, is pondering the helpless condition of her daughter, who is enraptured by the Lord:

"A girl whose face is like the shining, brilliant moon, she who was born of the nectar of the lilies, a charming girl of the Kolli hills, even though she knew that this Goddess is seated on your chest, she was still having an attachment (for you); tell me, O Lord, what have you been thinking in your mind, about this girl who has made supplication at Your feet?"

67. Atutaneppatumupu.

67. That, indeed, is at all times.

The Lord is thinking of the soul at all times and it is this thought that is the Lord's grace to salvation.

68. Atu palippatu ivagninaivu mariin.

68. When one's thought is changed, it (the Lord's thought) has fruition.

When the sentient being gives up the thought that it is able to protect itself, then the Lord's grace floods in upon it.


69. Nañjiyar has said, "The refuge at the time of death is to give up the thought, 'What is our refuge?'".

One of Nañjiyar's disciples, about to die, asked him, "What is our refuge?" Toward the Lord, sentient beings should be passively dependent like the non-sentient.
70. Praśāvum pṛapakaṇum pṛātkukulakappānumavāge.

70. He (the Lord) is the one who attains, the one who effects the attainment and the one who gets joy upon attainment.

71. Svayatna nivṛtti pāratantrya palam; svaprayojana nivṛtti ṣeṣatva palam.

71. The fruit of dependence (on the Lord) is the cessation of self-exertion; the fruit of ṣeṣa-hood is the cessation of self-aim.

72. Paraprayojana pravṛutti prayatnapalam; taṭvīṣayaprīti Caitanya palam.

72. The fruit of (the soul’s) continued exertion is the working of the Supreme one’s purpose; the fruit of sentience is That One’s enjoyment.

73. Ahamarttattukku jñānānandaṅkal taṭastameṇḍumpati dāṣyamiṅe antarāṅka nirupakam.

73. Knowledge and bliss are also (qualities) of the self, but its distinguishing quality is dāṣyam (servanthood, slavery).

Knowledge and bliss are qualities common to the soul and the Lord; servanthood distinguishes the soul as Lordship distinguishes the Lord.

74. Itutāṅ vaneriyangru.

74. This, indeed, is not imposed (upon the soul) from the outside.

That is, it is natural to the soul.

75. Svātantryamum anyaṣeṣatvamum vantegi.

75. Independence and all allegiance (ṣeṣatva) to another (other than the Lord) are foreign (to the soul).
76. śeṣatvavirodhi svātantryam; tacceṣatvavirodhi tatītara-śeṣatvam.

76. Independence obstructs allegiance (to the Lord); allegiance to another obstructs allegiance to That One (the Lord).

77. ahaṅkāramākīrña ārppaittuṣaitīttāl ātmāvukkaḷiyātaper aṭiyāṇagīre.

77. When the bonds caused by pride (ahaṅkāra) are broken, the eternal name of the soul is ‘servant’ (aṭiyāṇ).

78. Grāmakulātikāḷal varum per anarttaḥetu.

78. Reference to the name of village, family and the like is cause for calamity.

Naming oneself with reference to village, family or caste is a mark of ahaṅkāra and veils that which is essential, e.g. servanthood.

79. “Ekāntī vyapadesṭāvyah”.

79. “Ekāntī (He who is one-minded) should be defined”.

From the Pāṅcarātra Āgama-s: “Ekāntī is not to be defined with reference to village and family; it is rather that every thing belonging to this one is to be defined with reference to Viṣṇu.”

80. Upāyattukku, pirāṭtiyaiyum traupatyiyum tirukkanmaṇkaiyāṇṭāiyum pōle yirukkaveṇum; upeyattukku, iḷaiyaperumāḷaiyum periyaṉvaiyāṟaiyum pIllaitirunaṟaiyur-araiaiyum cintayantiyaiyum pole yirukkaveṇum.

80. As to upāya, one should be like the Goddess (Sītā) Draupadī, and Tirukkanmaṅgai Āṇḏān; as to upēya (attainment), one should be like the younger Lord (Lakṣmaṇa), Periyavuṭṭiyār (Jāṭāyus), PIlḷai Tirunaṟaiyur Araiyar and Cintayantī.
81. The difference between the Goddess and Draupadi (was that) one had power and the other was powerless.
Sītā, imprisoned, had the power to be free, but did not use it; Draupadi, insulted by Duśāsana, was powerless to protect herself.

82. The Goddess renounced her power, Draupadi renounced her shame; Tirukkaṇṇamaṅgai Āṇḍāṅ renounced his self-exertion.

Āṇḍāṅ one day observed two dogs fighting. One dog became hurt and its owner killed the other dog. Āṇḍāṅ concluded that if an owner of a dog will go to that extent to protect his dog, there is no limit to what the Lord will do to protect the soul. Thus, Āṇḍāṅ renounced all effort toward salvation.

83. Just as a hungry person would eat up all food, both that which is ready and that which is being prepared, so the Younger Lord (Lakṣmaṇa), being unable to bear separation as Rāma was preparing to leave for the forest, wanted to do service, every service (for Rāma), employing himself without independence. After reaching the capital (upon return from the forest), since he had swollen his stomach
by self-cooking in the seclusion of the forest and was incapable of eating with others (i.e. since he had given all of his time and effort to service of Rāma, he was now unable to do otherwise), he did service by taking up the divine white umbrella in one blest hand and the divine white fly-whisk in the other.

Lakṣmaṇa's service to the Lord was total service, an example to be emulated.

84. Periyavuṭaiyarum pilļaitirunaṭaiyun-araiyarum uṭampai yupeksittārkaḷ; cintayantikku uṭampu tanṭaiye pōyīṟu.

84. Periyavuṭaiyar and Pilḷai Tirunaṭaiyar Araiyar disregarded their bodies; the body of Cintayantī perished of itself.

Periyavuṭaiyar (the great bird, Jatāyus) gave up its life trying to stop Rāvaṇa from abducting Sītā; Pilḷai lost his life trying to save the image of the Lord from being consumed by fire; Cintayantī, a Gōpī, simply expired upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute and being unable to go to him.

85. Upāyattukku saktiyum lajjaiyum yatnamum kulaiya vēṟum; upēyattukku prēmamum tanṭai pēnāmaiyum tariyāmaiyum vēṟum.

85. As to upāya, shame and effort must be renounced; as to upēya, love, not nourishing oneself and restlessness (in the event of separation) are necessary.

Sītā renounced her power; Draupadī, her shame, Tirukkaṇṭamaṅglai Āptān, his effort; Jatāyus shows love: Pilḷai Tirunaraiyūr Araiyar, the lack of concern to nourish himself; and Cintayantī reveals restlessness.

86. Ivāŋukku vaitamāy varumatiye tyajikkalāvatu, rākaprāptamāy varumatu tyajikkavonṭaitē.

86. If something is enjoined upon the soul (by scripture), it can be left aside; if something results from love (of the Lord), it is impossible to leave it aside.
87. Upāyatvānusantānam nivarttakam; upēyatvānu-santānam pravarttakam.

87. (So, it may be concluded that) considering (renunciation of the body) as a means, there should be action; considering (renunciation of the body) as the goal, there should be action.

One should not renounce the body as means to salvation. Renouncing the body in loving service of the Lord is quite appropriate.

88. Aprāpta viṣayaṅkalilē saktaṅavānātum lapikkavēnum eṇrīrā nīrāl, prāptaviṣayapraṅavaṅukc collavēṅtāvīrē.

88. If a man who clings to improper objects wants to reach them, what is to be said of him who is devoted to worthy objects?

89. Anuṣṭānamum ananuṣṭānamum upāya koṭiyil anvayiyātu.

89. Doing (renouncing the body) or not doing (not renouncing the body), there is no connection with upāya.

90. Ananyopāyatvamum ananyopēyatvamum. ananyatai-vatvamum kulaiyumpaṭiyāṇa pravṛtti kāṅāṅigro-mīrye.

90. Is it not seen that exertion (motivated by love of the Lord) goes on to the extent of disregarding the stipulations as to no other means, no other goal and no other god?

The Āḻvārs made efforts to attain the Lord, apparently in contradiction to the spirit of prapatti; however, these efforts are not in contradiction since they are motivated by extreme love of the Lord.
91. Jñānavipāka kāryamāṇa ajñānattālē varumavaiyellam aṭikkaḷaṅcu peṟum.

91. Everything which comes from the (blissful) ignorance which is caused by the maturing of knowledge (of the Lord) is to be highly valued.

92. Upāya palamāy upēyāntarpputamāy irukkumatu upāya pratipantakamākātu.

92. That which exists as the consequence of upāya and is within the upāya cannot be an obstacle to upāya.

93. Sātya samānam vilampaśahamepīrē sātanattuk-kēṟṟam; sātyaprāvanyā maṭiyākavīrē sātanattili-liṅkaratu.

93. The superiority of (the Lord as) means consists in the means being identical to the end and being impatient of delay; one gets involved with the means on account of deep attachment to the end (the Lord).

94. Ivaṅgukkup piṅakkum ātmakuṇaṅkaḷḷāvārṛukkum pratānabetti inta prāvaṇyam.

94. This deep attachment is the most important root of all the soul-qualities which are natural to this one (the soul).

95. “Māṟpāḷ māṉāṉ culippa,” “paramāṁtmani yō raktah,” “kaṉṭu kēṟṟumōntu.”

96. “Centering your thoughts on the Lord......”
“Whoever is impassioned toward the Supreme Soul......”
“Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling......”

1) Tiru Antādi 3. 14:

“Centering your thoughts on the Lord, leaving off all contact with women, directing the mind toward the sacred text after humbling (yourself) at the feet touched by the heads of the celestials, those of the Lord of the hills, who is the Lord of the four Veda-s, it is indeed easy.”

http://acharya.org
2) Source unknown:
“Whoever is impassioned toward the Supreme Soul and detached from things other than the Supreme soul”

3) Thiruvāimolī 4. 9. 10:
“I avoid desiring pleasure through the five sense-organs which wander about seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and eating; and I avoid the pleasure of that rare knowledge, difficult to measure (the negligible pleasure of kaivalya); seeing You standing in the happy company of Your consort who has charming bangles, I have now obtained Your sacred feet.”

96. Ātmakunākaḷil pratanam sāmanum tamamum.

96. Among the soul-quallities, tranquility and self-restraint are the most important.

97. I vai yiraṇṭumuṇṭañāl ācāryaṇ kaipukurum; ācāryaṇ kaipukuntavārē tirumantram kaipukurum; tirumantram kaipukuntavārē īśvaran kaipukurum; īśvaran kaipukuntavārē, “Vaikuṇṭamānakar māra-tukaiyatuve” enkīrṇa paṭiyē prāpya pumi kaipukurum.

97. By these two (qualities) the ācārya comes within one’s reach; from having reached the ācārya, the holy mantra comes within one’s reach; from having reached the holy mantra, the Lord comes within one’s reach; from having reached the Lord, the land of attainment comes within one’s reach as stated in “......have in their hand the other Great City, Vaikuṇṭha,”

The holy mantra is the Āṣṭākṣara (eight-syllabled) “Om Namo Nārāyaṇaya”. The quotation is from Thiruvāimolī 4.10.11:

“Those capable of reciting this ten of the one thousand songs spoken of desire by Mārāṇ Śaṭhakōpan, who is dependent upon the Lord of the discus, whose village is the fertile Kuruhuf
and who is wearing on his chest a garland of Vakula emitting fresh fragrance, (those ones) have in their hand the other Great City, Vaikūṇṭha, without return.”

98. Prāpyalāpam prāpakattālē; prāpakalāpam tiru-mantrattālē; tirumantralāpam ācāryaṇālē; ācāryalāpam ātmakuṇattālē.

98. From the means is obtained the end; from the holy mantra is obtained the means; from the ācārya is obtained the holy mantra; from the soul-qualities is obtained the ācārya.

99. Itutān aisvaryakāmarkkum upāsakarkkum prapannarkkum vēṇum.

99. This, indeed, is necessary for those who seek worldly prosperity (aisvarya), those who are worshippers (upāsaka) and those who are prapannas.

100. Mūvarilum vaittukkorentu mikavum vēṇṭuvatu prapannagukku.

100. That which is enjoined for the three, is very much necessary for the prapanna.

101. Mār̥raiyiruvarkkum nīśittaviṣaya nivruttīyē yamaiyum; prapannarukku vihitaviṣaya nivrutti tanṇēṟram.

101. For these others it is appropriate to abstain from that which is prohibited (by scripture); for the prapanna, his superiority lies in abstaining from even that which is prescribed.

The prapanna abstains from even the pleasures which scripture permits.
102. Itutāṅ cilarkk-ālakālē pīrakkum; cilarkkaraḻalē pīrakkum; cilarkku ācārattalē pīrakkum.

102. This (abstaining) is, for some, born of beauty (the beauty of the Lord); for some it is born of established practice (practising what was adopted by the early ācārya-s).

103. Pīrakkum kramameṅ en-nil; alaku ajñāṇattai vilāikkum; arul aruciyai vilāikkum; ācāram accattai vilāikkum.

103. As to the mode of this birth it is as follows: beauty produces ignorance; grace produces aversion; established practice produces fear.

Those caught up in the beauty of the Lord are ignorant as to anything else; those who receive grace become disgusted with everything other than the Lord; and those who attempt to follow established practice become fearful that there may be a flaw in their practice.

104. Ivaiyum urṟattaippaṟrac collukiṟatu.

104. This is said with reference to the respective attachments of these (three).

105. Aruci pīrakkumpotaikku tōṣatarśanam apēkṣitamāyiṟukkum.

105. When aversion arises, awareness of defects is to be expected.

Becoming aware of the beauty and grace of Lord or their inability to perform according to prescription, there is also awareness of their own defects.

106. Atu pratāṅa hētuvaṟṟu.

106. (But) that (the awareness of defects) is not the chief cause (of aversion).

107. Aprāptataiyē pratānahētu.

107. The chief cause (of aversion) is incompatibility (with the essential nature of the soul).
108. Bhagavat viṣayattilījikīrataṁ kuṇāṅkaṁṭaṁru; svarūpa prāpta meṁru.

108. It is not by seeing (His) qualities that one becomes involved with the Lord; it is due to the essential nature (of the soul).

109. Ippati kollātapōtu, kuṇahīnameṁru nigaitta tacaiyil pagavatviṣaya pravruttīyum, tōsānusantānatacaiyil sansārattil pravruttīyum kuṭātu.

109. If you don’t take it this way, then striving toward the Lord even when (the Lord) is considered to be imperfect and striving toward worldliness when there is knowledge of defects are incongruous.

If we were attracted to the Lord solely by His qualities, or to the world solely by its qualities, then the fact that we are attracted toward them in spite of their apparent defects would be unexplainable. Our attraction toward the Lord is due to our essential nature, i.e. it is natural rather than being occasioned by the attributes of the Lord.


110. There are these passages; “My cruel heart would dwell on Him alone...” “I, your servant, will long for nothing but (your) lotus-red feet”

The first quotation is from the Tiruvaiyomli 5.3.5: “O maid-servant!, having a slender waist and being ignorant, what can a mother do? He who is the cruellest of the cruel, the Great Lord who has measured the world by His foot, that One of illusive form which cannot be easily comprehended; in spite of this, my cruel heart would dwell on Him alone. Wonderful!” The Ālvār,
speaking to a friend, laments the fact that although the Lord is sometimes cruel and always difficult to comprehend, his heart has been taken away by that Lord.

The second quotation is from *Periya Tirumoli* 11.8.7: “The worm in the Margosa tree will not eat anything other than the neem fruit (even though it is bitter). Likewise, I, Your servant, will long for nothing but (Your) lotus-red feet. O Divine Light, sleeping on the five-mouthed couch, release from bondage this weary, young moon!”

111. Kuṇakruta dāsyattiluṅkāṭṭīl svarūpa prayuktamāṇa dāsyamīre pratānam.

111. Service motivated by (one’s) essential nature is better than service arising from (seeing) the qualities (of the Lord).

112. Anasūyaikkup pirāṭṭiyaruliceyya vārtaiyai smarippatu.

112. Let us remember the words which the Goddess spoke to Anasūyā.

From the *Ramāyaṇa*: Lakṣmaṇa says he is enslaved by the Lord’s qualities; Śītā tells Anasūyā that her relationship to Rāma is a natural one, without respect to the good or bad qualities of her Lord.

113. Bhagavadviṣaya pravrutti pippācic cērumā vegṇil, atukkaṭi prāvaryam; atukkaṭi sampantam; atutāŋ aupāṭikamaṇḍu; sattāprayuktam.

113. If it be said, “Is striving toward the Lord appropriate?” we answer that such striving springs from over-powering love; that (love) arises from the relationship (of the soul to the Lord); that (relationship), indeed, is not conditional; it is appropriate to the very existence (of the soul).
114. There would be cessation of the existence (of the soul) if there were no experience as the result of over-powering love; all efforts to maintain this existence are inevitable and appropriate; therefore, striving toward the Lord is appropriate.

115. The primary reason for renouncing other means is not ignorance or lack of power, but (their) opposition to the essential nature (of the soul).

116. Other means are means for the ignorant.

117. (Other means) are a danger to the wise.

118. They are dangerous because they are destructive of essential nature.

119. It is said, “Do you divert (me) from you by showing a means?”

The reference is to Nammāḻvār’s Periya Tiruvantādi, 6: “Do you divert (me) from you by showing a means? Do you show me the bluish black form of yours? O Krishna, what are you thinking of doing with us who don’t know the days ahead? Please tell me. By doing what, will we be liberated?”
120. "Varttate me mahad bhayam" egkaiyāle bhaya-janakam; "mā śucaḥ" egkaiyāle sōka janakam.

120. That fear is produced is shown by the saying, "In myself there is a great fear...."; that grief is produced is shown by, "Do not grieve!"

The numerous conditions given for success in other upāyas occasion fear for one who feel she may not be able to accomplish the means and grief for one who has failed. Thus, in his Jitanta Stotra. I. 9, "In myself there is a great fear, in all times and in all places, O Acyuta, even in (my) body and movements." Likewise, Krishṇa, after having set forth all other upāyas, concludes the Gītā with the teaching that the Lord Himself is the only means: "Having abandoned all dharmas, take me alone as (your) refuge; I will release you from all transgressions, do not grieve!" (18. 66).

121. lppatī kollātapōtu ētatpravruttīyil prāyaścittiviti kūṭātu.

121. If it is taken otherwise, then the injunction to do expiation for those strivings would be inappropriate.

The Pāncarātṛāgama-s prescribe ritual expiation for those who have adopted upāya-s other than the Lord. This supports the fact that adopting other upāya-s is dangerous to one's essential nature.

122. Tirukkurukeippirāṅ pillān paṇikkumpaṭi-matirā-pintu miśramāṅa cātakumbhamaya kumbhakata tīrthha salilampōlē ahamkāra miśramāṅa upāyāntaram.

122. There is this word from Tirukkurukaippirāṅ Pillān: "Other upāya-s are mixed with' pride (ahaṃkāra) like holy water in a gold pot mixed with a drop of toddy."

This is an oral tradition from one of Rāmānuja’s disciples.
123. Ratnattukup palakāripōlēyum rājyattukku elumiccampaḷam pōlēyum palattukku satrucamaṇḍu.

123. As a cowry is to a gem, as a lemon is to a kingdom, the (means) can never be equal to the fruit.

Just as a cowry can never be equal to a gem or a lemon to a kingdom, there is no upāya which warrants the attainment of the Lord.

124. Tāṅ tatrāṅkāiyālē tāṇakkuk koṭukkalāvatomillai.

124. As, indeed, there is poverty (on the part of the soul), there is nothing to give to Him.

125. Avan tantattaik koṭukkumiṭattile, aṭaivile koṭukkil anupāyamām; aṭaivuketak koṭukkil kaḷavu veḷippaṭum.

125. While giving that which is His and giving in the proper manner, it does not serve as means; while giving in the improper manner, theft is exposed.

Since everything belongs to the Lord, one who gives to the Lord as if the gift were his own, i.e. seeing the gift as a means to attainment, is a thief.

126. Partrubhōgattai vayiṟu vaḷarkkaikku uruppākkumā-pōlē, iruvarkkumavatyam.

126. If (a wife) makes use of the enjoyment of her husband as a profession, there is defect to both (of them).

If a person asks payment from the Lord for giving the Lord what is due to Him by the nature of the soul-Lord relationship, it is like a wife asking money from her husband, like a prostitute.

127. Vedāntaṅkaḷ upāyamāka vitikkiḻapaṭiyen engil.

127. It may be asked, “Why do the Vedānta (texts) enjoin a means?”
128. Augadha Sévai pattavarkalukku abhimata vastuk-kajile attaikkalaciyiyiuvārāippōlē īśvaranaik kalantu vitikkiravittagai.

128. This injunction is tantamount to mixing the Lord (with upāya) like those who mix medicine with something desirable, serving it to those who don’t like medicine.

129. Ittai pravarttippittatu parahimsaiyai nivarttippikkaikkāka.

129. The prescription of this (upāya) is so as to prevent injury to others.

   Scripture prescribes an upāya so as to motivate some people away from worldliness and the harm they may do to others.

130. Ittān purvavihitahimsaipōlē; vitiniśētaṅkaliraṅ-ṭukkum kuṟaiyillai.

130. This is like the killing enjoined in the earlier part (of scripture, and prohibited in the later part); both prescription and prohibition are appropriate.

   There are four types of persons, characterized by a predominance of tamas, rajas, sattva, or paramasattva: Scripture enjoins killing for those dominated by tamas and rajas and non-killing for those dominated by sattva and paramasattva. Just so, scripture prescribes a means for some and no means for others.


131. The prescription of that (the killing, or a means) was in order to produce trust in the scriptures; the prescription of this (non-killing, or no means) was in order to promote trust in (one’s) essential nature.

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132. *Am talpuraiyē pōm; itu marmasparāi.*

132. That (killing) will affect one, only as far as the skin; this (performing a means) affects the very core (the essential nature).

133. *Itutān karmasātyamākaīyālē duṣkaramumāyirukkum.*

133. This (the means prescribed by scripture), indeed, is difficult as it must be accomplished by the aid of *karma.* Scripture prescribes *upāsana* as the means and this must be prepared for by certain rituals.

134. *Prapattyupāyattukku ikkuggafikalogrumillai.*

134. As to the *prapatti-upāya* there are none of these deficiencies.

135. *Ātmayātāmyajñānakāryamākaīyālē, svarupattukku ucitamumāy, “ciṟṟavēntā” eṅkikrapatiyē nivrutti sātyamākaīyālē sukaramumāyirukkum.*

135. Being as it (prapatti) is, the effect of the soul’s nature and suitable to the essential nature, it is easy, since it is accomplished by renunciation alone; as in the saying, “There is no need to be perplexed.”

_Tiruvaimoli_ 9. 1. 7: “There is no other thing. We may speak briefly. All creatures on this earth should not be perplexed—a mere thought (of Him) will do. Oh, see that great herdsman born at north Madurai, superior without a fault! It is not a flaw, but desirable, to live in this world repeating (His) greatness.”

136. *Pūrṇa viṣayamākaīyālē perumaikkītakap paccaiyita voppātu.*

136. As the object is the Perfect One, it is not possible to bring a tribute worthy of (His) greatness.

137. *Āpimukya sucacakamātrattile santōsam vilaiyum.*

137. From the slightest inclination (toward Him), pleasure is produced (i. e. the Lord is delighted).
138. पृत्ति काव्याक्ते मेल्विलुकिकु हेतु वित्तप्राई।

138. The perfection (of the Lord) is for the purpose of (His) descending upon (the soul); it is not to occasion the withdrawal (of the soul).

One should not be frightened by the Lord's perfection; it is this very perfection that works on behalf of the soul's ultimate well-being.

139. "पत्रम पुष्पम", "अन्यत पुरम्". "पुरिवतुवुम पुकै पुवे।"

139. "Leaf, flower..."; "Other than (a pot) full (of water)..."; "Incense and flowers suffice..."

_Bhagavadgītā_ 9. 26:

"Whoever offers to Me, with devotion, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, I enjoy this (offering) made with devotion by him who is pure-minded."

_Mahābhārata_, Udyoga Parva, 86.16:

"जानार्दन देरित्त्र स्वतः ज्ञात्या अन्यतर ज्ञात्या पुरभवानुसार ज्ञात्याः प्राचीनम्।"

_Tiruvaimoli_ 1. 6. 1:

"O people who have the resolve to realize (your self-nature) in full measure by praising the Lord who is free from all miseries, if you want to avoid separation (from Him), sprinkling good water and offering incense and flowers will suffice."

140. Pullaikkattiyālāittup pullaiyūvāraippōlē pala-

sātanāṅkalukku pēdamillai.

140. Like showing grass (to a cow), having called (it), and when it comes, giving it the (same) grass there is no difference between the end and the means.

141. Ākaiyālē sukārupamāyirukkum.

141. Therefore, it (the means), itself, has the form of felicity.
142. अवग्ना विप्रेगा निगाकुम्पुतु इंता प्रपात्तियुम उपायमान्यु।

When this one (the soul) thinks to obtain Him (the Lord), this prapatti is not a means.

143. अवग्नाविप्रेगा निगाकुम्पुतु पातकामुम विलाक्काप्पु।

When He (the Lord) thinks to get this one (the soul), the defects (of the soul) do not stand in the way.

144. आवियरात्तुम स्रीपराताल्वन पाक्कालिलुम स्रीकुहाप्परमाल पाक्कालिलुम कणालम्।

These two (truths) are evident in the case of the blessed Bharata and the Chief Guha.

Bharata implored Rāma to return from exile in the forest, but Rāma did not accede to his request. Guha made no effort to be accepted by Rāma, but Rāma accepted him nonetheless.

145. स्रीपराताल्वुक्कु नामाइतापेते तिमायाय्त्तु, स्रीकुहाप्परमालुक्कत तिमाइतापेते नामाइयाय्त्तु।

As for the blessed Bharata, his very goodness was a fault; as for the Lord Guha, his very fault was goodness.

If a person attempts to attain the Lord by some means, the means itself stands in the way. On the other hand, the faults of a person do not hinder the movement of grace.

146. सर्वपराताल्कलुक्कुम प्रायाशितामणा प्रपात्तितागुम अपराताकृतियिले याय क्षामानम पाण्यवेंतुम्पाति निलानित्रितिगे।

Prapatti, itself an expiation for all kinds of faults, is itself a fault in need of pardon.

Prapatti, performed as a means, although it is an act of surrender to the Lord, betrays an element of self-assertion, contrary to simple renunciation of all effort.
147. This one's performance of prapatti (as a means) is like a wife, who, after having gone in devotion to another (man) for a long time, approaches her husband, without shame or fear, and says, "Take me to your side."

In this case, the husband may indeed take the wife back, but it is far better if the wife is taken back at the husband's own initiative. Likewise, it is better to attain the Lord on the Lord's independent initiative.

148. Dependence upon the other coming from independence is better than dependence upon the other from mercy.

149. This (truth), indeed, is referred to in the living Veda.

Kātha Upaniṣad 2. 23: "Whomsoever this (Self) chooses, by him alone is He obtained." The passage is taken to emphasise the independent initiative of the Lord.

150. Undesired regard came to Tiruvaḍi (Hanumān) and to the great Guha.

Hanumān is known as cirlya tiruvaḍi, "the little one who serves at the feet of the Lord"; Garuḍa is the Great Tiruvaḍi (periya tiruvaḍi).
151. That those whom He (the Lord) accepts are used by him as mediators when another seeks Him can be seen from the (episode of) the giving assurance of safety.

Rāma gave Vibhīṣaṇa assurance of safety after consulting Sugrīva. Sugrīva was acting on behalf of the Goddess, Śītā, as, having found her jewels, he was living in her grace. In the case of Vibhīṣaṇa as she was staying in Lankā, she blessed him so that he may seek Rāma's protection.

152. The two (the soul and the Lord) invoke aid (i.e. seek a mediator) to make up for their faults.

The soul needs a mediator because it is fearful of going before the Lord with all its faults; the Lord needs a mediator, since He is committed to punishing bad deeds and finds it difficult to accept the soul with all its faults.

153. From that (meditation) the essential natures (of the soul and the Lord) come forward.

154. The dependence on each other of the two (the soul and the Lord) is both conditional and eternal.

The dependence of the soul on the Lord is conditional in as far as it is determined by Karma; the dependence of the Lord on the soul is also conditioned by Karma in as much as the Lord cannot move except in accordance with the soul's Karma. On the other hand, the relationship of seṣaṣeṣe is eternal.
Anityamāṇaviruvār pāratantryamum kulaivatum attālē.

By that (mediation) the dependence on each other which is non-eternal (conditional) is destroyed.

Mediation does away with the dependence upon karma.

Sasākṣīkamāṇakaiyālē ippantattai yiruvarālumillai-ceyyappākātu.

As the Lord and soul have the (third factor) of a Sākṣī, namely Puruṣakāra, the two alone cannot bring to an end their mutual relationship of saviour and the saved and the doer of Karma and the dispenser of its fruit.

“Ṭṇṇī nekīlkkilum”, “Kōlamalarppāvaik-kānṟakkiya.”

Even if (He) should forsake me...; You who love the lady of the beautiful lotus...

Tiruvāimoli 1.7.8:

“He who has the greatness of enjoying the bamboo like shoulders of His consort, He who is the prime and sole cause, before the gods, even if (He) should forsake me, He is not capable of leaving my good mind.”

Tiruvāimoli 10.10.7:

“O my darling, You who love the lady of the beautiful lotus, just like a pair of blue mountains, having clutched two crescents and becoming erect, becoming a beautiful boar and lifting the earth between the two tusks, You churned the blue ocean; having obtained You, will I allow You to go?”

Here, Nammāḻvār, giving prominence to the Goddess, affirms that once the soul and the Lord have discovered each other, have broken through the karma-relationship, neither can forsake the other.
158. The abundance of (Her) doership is to be understood from the essential nature and qualities indicated by the passive derivation.

One of the possible interpretations of the term, ‘Srī’, in the Dvaya Mantra, is the passive construction (karmaṇi vyutpatti), i.e. śriyate, “one who is sought after”. Thus is indicated her passive power-she is sought out by the soul due to its essential nature as ṣeṣa and sought out by the Lord as His affectionate wife. In this way, she influences both soul and Lord in her role as mediatrix.

159. For the three kinds (of persons) who are fit (for prapatti) mediation is inevitable.

See 41-43 above.

160. Goodness sought by this one (the soul) is, indeed, to be avoided just like evil.

There is now discussion of the love-relationship between the soul and the Lord. ‘Goodness’ refers to the sense of anxiousness of the allegiance (ṣeṣatva) of the soul toward the Lord; ‘evil’, refers to the sense of independence (svātantrya) of the soul from the Lord. When love develops between the soul and the Lord, the former becomes a hindrance, as much as the latter.

161. As clothes worn as ornament are an obstacle to close embrace.
The soul's sesatva is like ornamental clothing; it stands in the way of the Lord's embrace of the soul like the clothing standing in the way of the lover's embrace.

162. "Hārō'pi"
162. "Even a necklace..."

From the Rāmāyaṇa in reference to Sītā:
"By her who was afraid of an impediment to contact, even a necklace was not put around her neck."

163. Puṇyam pālē pāratantryamum parānupavattukka vilakku.

163. Dependence upon the other, like good deeds, hinders enjoyment of the other.

164. Kuṇampōlē dōṣanivrutti.

164. Like the attributes (sesatva and pāratantrya), defects also are removed.

In the love-relationship, the Lord sees no defect in the soul, taking it even with its body.

165. Āparaṇam anapimatamāy aļukku apimatamāyi-rānipratimāgē.

165. There is dislike of ornament but like of dirt.

Ornaments stand in the way of lovers' embrace, but they do not mind dirt on the body.

166. 'Snānam roṣajanakam' ekkīḍa vārttaiyai smarippatu.

166. Remember the words, "Taking a bath caused anger".

The reference is to an episode in the Rāmāyaṇa. At the end of the great war, Rāma sends Vibhīṣaṇa to bid Sītā bathe and come to him. Though Sītā wants to go to Rāma without bathing, she nonetheless does his bidding. Even so, when she comes Rāma is angered that she has delayed to take a bath.
167. "Vaṣcakkṛtiḥ" "Māṁkavottu"

167. "The deceitful thief...", "Destroying..."

_Tiruvaṁoli_ 10 7.1:

"O poets of sweet words! protecting your life, serve the great Viṣṇu, the deceitful thief of Tirumāliiruṅcōlai! He comes as a poem to confuse me, having mixed indiscriminately with my soul and mind in a manner not understood by those standing nearby; consuming my mind and soul He Himself fills me completely."

_Tiruvaṁoli_ 10. 7. 10:

"Our Lord living at Tirumāliiruṅcōlai! O, You who saved me by Yourself becoming me, Destroy this great māyā completely—these surging sensations, the five Knowledge-senses, the five organs of action, the prakṛti associated with this soul in this world, the māsāt, the ahaṁkāra and this manas.

168. Vercūtumavarkal maṁparruk keḷarātāppōle jñāniyai vigrāhattōte āṭarikkum.

168. As those who wear roots (for decoration, do not take off the dirt attached to them, so in regard to the knowing one (jñāni), the Lord accepts him with all the impurities of his mundane body.

Certain roots, worn by women in their hair, have a pleasant smell only as the mud around them is not removed; just so, the Lord prefers the soul of one of knowledge covered though by its body.

169. Paramāṛttaṇaṁ vivaṇṭaiya saṅrastitiikku hētu kēvāla pagavaticcaiyyē.

169. The reason for such a person hankering for the Lord still remaining in this world is again the will of the Lord.
170. “Tirumāliruṅcālai malaiyē” ḍghāpaṭiYe ukantaruṛi g vilankălāvaṛrī tum paṇṇum viruppattai ivāṇ śaiya ṣaiṭaikategattite paṇṇum.

170. (The Lord's) love for a single man of knowledge is like (His) love for “the mountain Tirumālirumālai”, while yet loving all his sacred shrines.

Tiruvāimolī 10.7.8:

“My head is the mountain Tirumāliruṅcālai and the ocean of milk. My body is Viṣṇu’s Vaikūṭha and the cool mountain of Viṅkaṭēvara. My life, which is mixed with the formless great māra, difficult to overcome, my thought, word and deed-He who was before even this aeon of time, such a one will never separate Himself from all these.”

171. Aṅkuttaivāsam sātanam; iṅkuttaivāsam sāyam.

171. Dwelling there (in temples) is a means; dwelling for the Lord here (in the person of knowledge) is an end.

172. “Kallum kaṅnikaṭalum” enkiṛapaṭiyē itu sittitāl avargilātaram maṭṭamāyiirukkum.

172. When He has found a place in them (bodies of men of knowledge), His regard for those abodes of His (like the milk ocean) is less than for these (bodies), as it is said, “The sacred hills, the milk ocean”...

Periya Tiruvantādi:

“The sacred hills, the milk-ocean and the divine Vaikūṭha, they have completely disappeared-what a sin! That lofty person of black colour, entering inside my mind, will never leave me.”


173. It is such that there is necessity to request, “Do not leave the temporary residence!”
Second Tiruvantadi 54:

“The mountain (Tirumāliruṇcōlai), which is also a park, the mountain Veṅkaṭa, these two are regarded as resting places for you. In the same graceful way, I concentrated on You keeping You in the temple of my mind as Your resting place and thinking, “Do not leave the temporary residence!”

Here, the Āḻvār, having captured the Lord in his mind, is afraid that the Lord will forsake His temporary abode in the milk ocean and the mountain temples.

174. Prāpyapratiiśṭyatvattālum krutajñataiyālum pippavai apimatuṅkaḷāyirukkum.

174. Because of the love of the devotee who is to be obtained by the Lord and for those shrines because of gratitude that it is these shrines that drew the souls to him, His abodes like the Vaikuṇṭha, Milk ocean and temples are dear to Him.

The Lord will not forsake His abode in temples for these are the places through which He first makes contact with the soul and comes there-through to reside in the heart of His devotees.

175. Ākaiyālē tōṣa nivruttipōḷē āntara kuṇaṁum virotiyāyirukkum.

175. Therefore, just like getting rid of defects the native attributes may be a hindrance.

The author returns to an earlier topic-the essential attribute of the soul, seṣatva, as well as the attempt to get rid of defects like the body, may be a hindrance to the love-relationship.

176. Tōṣa nivruttītāṅē tōṣaṁāmiṅē.

176. Indeed, getting rid of defects is itself a defect.

Attempting to get rid of defects like the body is a hindrance to the Lord’s grace.
177. "Taggāl varum nāmmai vilaippāl pōlē; avanāl varum nāmmai mulaippālpōlē" āṛu Pillāṅ vārttai.

177. There is Pillāṅ's word, "Goodness which comes from oneself is like purchased milk; goodness that comes from Him is like breast-milk."

178. Avanāiyoyiyat tāṅ tapakkū nāmmai tētukaiyāvatu-standenaya prajaiyai mātāpitākkal kaiyil nīgrum vāńki kātukānāṅga āttuvāniyāṅ kaiyilē kāttik koṭukku-māpōlē yiruppatoṛu.

178. Indeed, searching for goodness for oneself, without Him, (the Lord), is like pulling a suckling child from the hands of the parents and betraying it into the hands of a murdering butcherer.

179. Tappaittāŋ ēyīre muṭippāṅ.

179. By that (the soul) is putting an end to itself.

180. Tappaittāṅē muṭikkaiyāvatu-ahām kārattaiyum viṣay-ankaḷaiyum virumpukāi.

180. (This) bringing death upon itself is coveting pride and sensuality.

181. Ahamkāramagnisparāsam pōlē.

181. Pride is like touching fire.

182. "Na kāmakaluṣam cittam", "Na hi me jīvitenārthāḥ" "Na deham", "Emmā vīṭṭut tiṇamum"

182. "Mind not confused by desire. . ." ; "For me there is no purpose in living. . ." ; "Neither body . . ." ; "The great abode of release . . ."

Jitānta Stotra 1. 13:

"My mind, which always takes rest in your feet is not confused by desire. In all my births, I desire only being a Vaiṣṇava."

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Ramayana 5.26.5: Sītā is speaking:

“For me there is no purpose in living, there is no purpose in wealth; living as I am, in the midst of these demonesses without Rāma, the great warrior.”

Yāmunācārya’s Stotra Ratna 57:

“O Lord, neither body, nor life, nor the happiness coveted by all, nor (even) the self, nor anything else that is foreign to the glory of allegiance to You, can I, even for a moment, put up with. Let them perish in a hundred ways. This is true, o slayer of Madhu! This is my entreaty.”

Tiruvaimoli 2.9.1:

“O my Lord, who put an end to the miseries of the elephant, if You place Your great lotus-feet, red in color, early on my head, I won’t (even) talk about the great abode of release (Vaikuṇṭha). O my Lord, this servant of Yours desires only this.”

183. Pratikula viṣayasparsam pāle, anukula viṣayasparsam viṣamiśra pocag̣am pāle.

183. Touching perverse objects is like taking poison (directly), touching permitted objects is like (taking) food mixed with poison.

184. Agnijvalaiyai viḷūṇki viṭāyka nīgaikkumāpoleyum āṭukiğa pāmp igiḷalilē yotūṅka nīgaikkumāpoleyum, viṣaya pravaṇaṅgṛay sukikka nīgaikkai.

184. Thinking (there is) happiness by being intent upon sensory objects is like thinking to quench thirst by swallowing flaming fire or thinking to find shelter under the shadow of a dancing serpent.

185. Acurāmā muṣiyumāpōle pakavatanupavaika paraṅgṛay mrutuprakrutiya yirukkumavag viṣaya darśanattāle muṣiyumpaṭi.
185. Just as the Acunamä (bird) perished (at a loud noise), so perishes the one who is dead to the world by reason of supreme experience of the Lord, after seeing sensory objects.

The Acunamä, while listening to sweet music, is unable to bear a loud noise and falls dead at such a sound. By making a such a noise, the hunter catches the bird.

186. "Kaṭhippaṭuppāyo" eṇṇak kaḷavatīrē.

186. Thus it is said, "Would You destroy (me) . . . \"" Tiruvaimoli 6. 9. 9:

"Would you destroy (me), sinful person that I am, by showing many petty joys that assail the five senses in a manner that would confuse the mind? Will not the time for calling me to Your great lotus-feet that completely measured the earth, shorten further?"

187. Ajñāṇā II viṣayapravaṇan kēvala nāstikānāippōle
jnānaviṣayapravaṇā nāstikānāippōle. nāstikānastikā.

187. The ignorant one intent upon sensory objects is like an unbeliever (nāstika); the wise one, even so, intent upon sensory objects is like a half-hearted believer (aṣṭika-nāstikā).

188. Kevala nāstikānait tiruttalam; aṣṭika nāstikānai yorunālum tiruttavonṇātu.

188. The simple non-believer can be reformed; the half-hearted believer can never be reformed.

189. Ivaiyirāntum svarūpēṇa musikkumālavangikalē
pākavata virotattaïyum viḷaittu musikkum.

189. These two (pride and sensuality) not only destroy through their essential nature but also destroy by producing hostility toward the Bhāgavata (one who belongs to the Lord).
190. Nāmarūpakaḷaiyūṭaiyarāy pākavata virotam paṇṇīp porumavarkal taktapaṭam pōlē. Those who have the name and form (i.e. the outward marks of a Bhāgavata), who continue to make trouble for Bhāgavatas, are like burnt cloth.

191. Maṭipuṭavai ventāl uṇṭaiyum pāvumottuk kīṭakkum: kāṭṭaṭittavāṛē paṭantu pōm. When folded cloth is burned it appears to be durable (through the same warp and woof); but it is scattered by the wind.

192. “Īśvarapāvatārittup paṇṇīga āgaittojikāḷellām pākavatāpacārum porāmai” enṛ jiyararuḷiceyvar The Jiyar (Naṉjiyar) has said: “All the mighty tasks performed by the avatāras of the Lord (show) impatience with offence to Bhāgavatas. Naṉjiyar’s saying is part of oral tradition.

193. “Avamānakriyā” “Act of contempt...” Mahābhārata, Aśvamedha Parva: Kṛṣṇa speaking to Yudhiṣṭhira: “Whatever affection you have developed toward Me, let that be always in the case of my devotees. Any act of contempt toward them takes away everything auspicious.”

194. Pākavatāpacārantān anēkavitam. Offences against Bhāgavatas are of many kinds.

195. Aṭiḷē yoṉṛu avarkal pakkal janma nirupānām. One of those is inquiry about their birth.
196. Itutāg arcāvataṁ arccaripatánasamrutiyilinākkātri kru-ram.

196. This, indeed, is more cruel than thinking about the material stuff of (which) the arcāvataṁ (is made).

The arcāvataṁ is icon in which the Lord resides in the temple.

197. Attai mātruyāni parīkasayōtokkum cṛtṝ śāstram collum.

197. It is said in the scriptures that that (inquiry about the birth of a Bhāgavata) is like (a man) inspecting the reproductive organ of (his) mother.

198. Triśaṅkuvaippōle karmacāndālaṇay marviliṭṭa yajnopavitantāṅgē vārāyvītum.

198. Like Triśaṅku, a Cāndāla by karma (former deeds) (his) very sacred thread which he wears on his chest becomes a leather strap.

Triśaṅku, a king, scorned his preceptor because the latter would not perform a ritual by which he (Triśaṅku) could enter svarga in his bodily form. The preceptor cursed him and consequently he became a Cāndāla or outcaste.

199. Jāticaṅdālaṇukku kālāntarattilē pākavatāṅkāikku yogayataiyunṭu; atuvumillai yivaṅukku.

199. To the Cāndāla by birth there is the eligibility to become a Bhāgavata in another time; that is not so for this one (one like Triśaṅku).

200. Āruṭapatitaṅkaïyāle.

200. For indeed, he has fallen after rising.

201. Itu ṭaṅkku atikāriniyamamillai.

201. There is no requirement of fitness for that.

202. Thus, the words, “Though they be of the brahmaṇa jāti, highest among kindred...”

Tirumālai 43:

“O Thou who resides in the great city of Śrīraṅgam! Though knowing the four Vedas and the six āṅgas, immortal, those of the brahmaṇa jāti, highest among kindred, if they scorn Your associates, then and there, there is destruction as if they themselves were outcastes.”

203. Ivviyattile vainatēya vruittenattaiyum pillaip pillaivelvāṅkku ālvāṅ paṅitta vārtaiyaiyum smanippatu.

203. The story of Vainatēya and the words Ālvāṅ gave to Pillai Pillai Ālvāṅ are to be remembered in this connection.

Even Vainatēya (Garuḍa) was punished for offence to a Bhagavata. He lost his plumage and could not fly when he thought ill of the place where Śāṅdīlyā, a female sage, was staying, (Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva).

Pillai Pillai Ālvāṅ, though a man of great learning and high birth, was notable in his constant offence against Bhagavatas. His preceptor, Kurattālvāṅ, exacted a promise from him that he would no longer offend. A short time later he, nonetheless, had ill thought about a Bhagavata and hid himself from his preceptor in shame. His preceptor seeking him out, told him that he should hide no longer since his attitude indicated that he had indeed repented.

204. Jñānānūṣṭanāṅkaiyal yolintalum pēṟukku avarkal pakkal sampantamō yamaikigppōlē avaiyūntañgālu milavukkavarkal pakkal apacāramē pōrum.

204. Even though one does not have knowledge and practice, forgetting their benefit (to the soul), his very connection with them (Bhagavatas) is enough; even so, offence toward them is detrimental.
205. *Itil jagma vruttāti niyamamillai.*

205. There is no requirement as to birth, actions, and so forth here. The status of a Bhāgavata does not depend on caste or any particular ritual actions.

206. *Ivvarttam Kaiśika vruttāntattilum, Uparicaravasu vruttāntattilum kāpalām.*

206. This truth can be seen from the Kaiśika incident and from the Uparicaravasu incident.

Nampādvuvāṉ, an outcaste singer, gave a song, called Kaiśika to a ghost who threatened to eat him. By the song, the ghost, in fact a learned Brāhmaṇ under a curse, regained his original form. Uparicaravasu, a king who by this great tapas had the power to fly through the sky with all his retinue, was asked to arbitrate a dispute between the gods and the rishis over a matter of ritual. Having decided in favour of the gods, he was cursed by the rishis and lost his power.

207. *Brahmanyam vilaiocellukigatu vedātyayanāti mukar-tālē pagavallāpa hetuveggu; atutānē yijavuk- kuruppākil tyājayamāmiē.*

207. The price of Brāhmaṇism is acceptable if as a result of the Vedas and the like there is attainment of the Lord; if that, indeed, is a detriment, then it is to be renounced.

208. *Jaṅma vruttaṅkaḷiṅguṭaiya utkaraṃsamtum apakaraṃsamtum pēṟṟukkumiljavuṟkuṟmaprayojakam.*

208. The superiority or the inferiority of birth and conduct do not affect prosperity or loss.

209. *Prayojakam pakavat sampantamum tatasaṃpantamum*  

209. The cause (of prosperity or decline) is relationship to the Lord or non-relationship to Him.
210. Pakavat sampantuṣṭapālirāṇṭumokkumoc eggil.

210. If it be said, "Is there equality of two (persons) in relationship with the Lord with them?"
   One person is of high birth, the other is low-born.

211. Ovvātu

211. (The answer is) there is not.

212. Utkruṣṭamāka pramitta jaṁmam pramāsampa-
   vagaiyāle “sarīte ca” egklirapaṭiyē paya janakam.

212. The birth understood as superior gives rise to fear since there is the possibility of decline, as in, "Even in (my) body..."

   The quotation is from Jitānta Stotra: see 120.

213. Atukku svarupa prāptamāga naicyam pāvikkavēnum.

213. For this one it is necessary that there be humility appropriate to (his) essential nature.

214. Apakruṣṭamāka pramittta utkrūṣṭa janmattukku irānū toṣamumillai.

214. A superior birth understood as inferior does not have the two defects.

   The two defects are: 1) fear of falling from one’s caste: and 2) the constant need to impose a false notion of oneself projecting that which does not belong to the soul by nature.


215. (For one who is low-born) humility is consistent with birth.

   The high-born must cultivate humility.

216. Ākaiyāle utkrūṣṭa janmame śroṣṭam.

216. Therefore, it (a humble birth) is better than a superior birth.
217. “Śvapaco’pi mahīpāla”

217. ‘Even one who cooks dogs, o king!....”

_Bhāgavata Purāṇa:_

“Even one who cooks dogs (an outcaste), o king!, who has Viṣṇu-bhakti, is higher than a twice-born one. A sage without bhakti is lower than one who cooks dogs.”

218. Nikruṣṭa janmattāl vanta dōsam camippatu vilakṣāna sampantattālē.

218. The defects coming from an inferior birth cease from relationship with distinguished persons (i.e. Bhagavatas).

219. Sampantattukku yogyatai yuṇṭampōtu janmak kottai pōkaveṇum.

219. The defects of birth should go away when there is qualification for relationship (with the Lord).

220. Janmattukkuk kottaiyum atukkup parihāramum “pañutilā voḷukal” enquiry pāṭṭilē yaruḷiccētyār.

220. Birth-defect and the removing of it are stated in the text “The path of good conduct without defect...”

_Tirumālai 42:_

“O you who are well-versed in the Vedas, and follow the path of good conduct without defect! you should worship, give and take on a par with people of low caste if they are devotees of Him. O One of walled-Śirangam! you have graced them to worship on equal footing!”

221. Vedakap ponpōlé yivarkaḷoṭṭai sampantam.

221. Relationship with these persons (Bhagavatas) is like iron in relationship with refined gold.

By mere contact with refined gold, iron is changed into gold.
222. It is necessary to look upon these (Bhāgavatas) with thoughts of equality and thoughts of (their) superiority.

223. That is to say—thinking them as equal to the ācārya and superior to worldly persons, to oneself and even to the Lord.

224. That there is equality with the ācārya is (established) by the ācārya's word.

225. Not thinking in this way is an offence.

226. This can be clearly seen in the Itihāsas and Purāṇas and in the verses beginning with:

"Him whose brightness is ever sung."
"Service to Him whose love is unbounded."
"Shed tears till blood streamed from the eyes."
"Hate-loving fiends equipped with swords."
"One who has reached a status rarely gained."

and in the excellent verses following, "Most precious entity."

The references are to Tiruvaimoli 3.7.1-10 and 8.10.1-10, Periya Tirumoli 7.4.1-10 and 2.6.1-10; Perumāl Tirumoli 2.1-10 and Tirumālai 36-42.
In all of these verses of the Prabandham the emphasis is upon giving due respect and service to devotees of the Lord, irrespective of their caste and other incidental matters.


227. Viśvāmitra, as a Kṣatriya, became a Brahma-rishi. There are a number of examples of individuals honored without respect to their status by birth.

228. Vibhiṣaṅgai Rāvaṅaṅ kulapāmsaṅṇaṅ eṅgṛā; perumāḷ ikṣvāku vamgyaṅṅaṅka ṃṇaṅtu vārtaṅ vārulīcchetār.

228. Rāvaṅa called Vibhiṣaṅa a disgrace to his tribe; the Lord (Rāma) graciously spoke (to him), regarding him as one of the Ikṣvākus (i.e. a member of his own family).

229. Periya vuṭaiyārkkup perumāḷ prahmameta samskāram paṇṭiyanuṅgṛā.

229. The Lord (Rāma) graciously performed a brahma-medha ritual for Periya Udaiyar (Jaṭāyus.).

The brahma-medha rite is a funeral rite for the very highest and most respected brahmaṇas.

230. Tarmaputraṅ acacīri vākyattaiyum jnāntikyattaiyum koṇṭu śṛi vīturarai prahmamettālē samskarittār.

230. Dharmaputra performed the brahma-medha rite for Vidura, on account of the aerial voice and his (Vidura’s) great wisdom.

Since Vidura was born of a Śūdra lady, Dharmaputra hesitated to perform brāhmaṇa funeral rites for him. A voice from the sky advised him to do them.

231. Ruṣikaḷ tarmavyātān vācalilē tuvaṅṭu tarma santehaṅkaḷai camippittuk koṇṭārkaḷ.

231. Sages, waiting at the gateway of Dharma-vyādha, had their doubts about dharma resolved.
Dharma-vyādha was a butcher and thus of low caste.


232. Kṛṣṇa, passing by the houses of Bhīṣma, Drona, and others, took food in the blessed house of Śrī Vidura. When Kṛṣṇa came to Duryodhana’s kingdom as an envoy for the Pāṇḍavas, elaborate preparations were made for his coming, but he went to eat with Vidura.

233. Perumāḻ Śrī Śabari kaiyāle yamutu ceyṭaruḷiṇār.

233. The Lord graciously accepted food from the hand of Śrī Śabari.

Śabari, a low-caste woman, offered Rāma some fruit.

234. Māṟagēriṁampi viśayamākap periyanampi uṭaiyavark karujicceyta vārttaiyai smarippatu.

234. Let us remember the word spoken to Rāmānuja by Periya Nambi concerning Māṟagēri Nambi.

Māṟagēri Nambi was a disciple of Āḷavandār (Yāmuna), of lower caste, but of great learning and devotion. Nearing death, he asked Periya Nambi, a high-caste person, to perform his funeral rites. Periya Nambi did as requested, but was asked by Rāmānuja why he did this rather than allow Māṟagēri’s body to be cremated by his own people. Periya Nambi referred to the example of Rāma and Jāṭāyus.

235. “Prādurbhāvaiḥ” ityādi,

235. Also, there is, “Through manifestation....”

“The God of gods, through various manifestations, becomes like the heavenly beings and

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man. His devotees are born in different births according to caste and conduct. They (the Lord and His devotees) take forms similar to other (beings), but there is no place for contempt; on the contrary, both appear as similar to other (beings) in order to protect this world. The (so-called) greatness of non-devotees through their learning and conduct is like decoration in the case of a widow (i.e. to consider non-devotees of the Lord great even if they are learned and of good conduct is as inappropriate as a widow wearing beautifying ornaments).” (Source unknown)

236. Pākavatāṇārīkkē vedārtta jañāntikālaiyaiyavag
kuṇkumam cumanta kalutaiyopati yegnu collā
nigātīfē.

236. It has been said that he who has knowledge and such of the meaning of the Veda, without being a Bhagavata, is like a saffron-loaded donkey.

237. Rājavāṇa Śrī Kulaśekararappurumāḷ tiryak stāvara
janmaṅkalai yācaippṭṭār.

237. Though a king, the Lord Kulaśekhara desired births as a bird and as an inanimate object.

Kulaśekhara Āḻvār desired such births in order to be near the Lord in the temple at Tiruvengadam

238. Prāhmaṅottamaḷāṇa periyāḻvārum tirumakalārum,
gopajanmattai yāstānam paṇṅigārkaḷ.

238. Periyāḻvār, chief of Brāhmaṇas, and his blessed daughter (Āṇḍāl) imposed upon themselves birth as cowherds.

239. Kantal kaḷintal sarvarkkum nārīṇāmuttamaiyaiyaiya
avastai varakkṭavatāyirkkum.

239. When rags (i.e the body with its defects) are removed all will come to the nature of the best of women (the Goddess, Lakṣmī).
240. Pure persons are equal to that one (Lakṣmī) in essential nature, in six ways.

These six are: (1) having allegiance to no other (than the Lord) -- ananyārha - sēṣatvam; (2) taking refuge in no other -- ananya-sarāṇatvam; (3) being enjoyed by no other -- ananya-bhogyatvam; (4) being composed while in union (with the Lord) -- samsleṣattil āryirukkai; (5) not being composed while in separation -- visleṣattil āryirāmai; (6) being controlled solely by That One -- tadeka-nirvāhyatvam.

241. Drusṭatti latkarṣam ahāṅkārattālē; adruṣṭatti utkarṣam ahāṅkāra-rāhityattālē.

241. Superiority here in this world derives from pride; superiority here-after derives from being free of pride.


242. As Brahmā, there is loss; as a cowherdess, there is gain. Although Brahmā sits in the lotus sprung from Visṣū’s navel, he has not seen the lotus-feet of the Lord. On the other hand, Cintayantī could not go to see the Lord (Kṛṣṇa), yet she was taken by the Lord then and there, when she gave up her body from very longing for Him.

243. Ippāṭi sarvaprakārattālum nācahetuvāṅa vahāṅkārattukkum atīṇuṣayā karāmaṇa viṣaya praṇavat-tukkum vilainilam taṅkāiyālē taṇṇaikkaṇṭāl gatruvaik kaṇṭārpolēyun; avāṛ ukku varttakarāṅa samsārikalaṅ kaṇṭāl sarppattaṅ kaṇṭārpolēyun; avāṛ ukku nivarttakarāṅa srivaiṣṇavakalaṅ kaṇṭāl pantukkalai kaṇṭārpolēyun iśvarāṅaṅ kaṇṭāl pitāṅaṅ kaṇṭārpolēyun, ācāryaṅ kaṇṭāl, paciyan cōṛraṅ kaṇṭār polēyun, iśyāṅaṅ kaṇṭāl apimata-
viṣayattaik kaṇṭāpūlleyum niḍaittu, ahamkārārtta kāmaṅkaṅmugṛum anukūlaṃ pakkal anātarattaiyum praktikulaṃ pakkal prāvāṇyattaiyum upeksīkkuma vavarkaṅ pakkal apeekṣaiyaiyum pirappikku megrāṇci, ātmakurāṅkaṅnammālum pirārālum pirappittuk koḷḷavapnaṅatu, saṭacāryā prasādamātiyākā varukira pakavat-prāsātattale pirakumattanai yeṣaṃ tuṇinte tehāyāttiraiyilupeksaiyum ātmayaṭṭiraiyilapeksaiyum prākruta vastukkaṅil pogyātaṃ putti nivruttiyum tehāṭraṅgam paramātma samārāṭaṃa samāpti prāṣātpratipatti yeṣaṅputti viṣeṣaṃum teṇaṅkoru klegamuṇṭāṅkal karmapala megrāṭal krupāpalamegrātale pirakkum pratiyayum, svānuṣṭāṅgattil sātanātva putti nivruttiyum; vilakṣaṅaarutaiya jñānaṃuṣṭāṅgaṅgalāṅkai vāncaiyum, ukantarulīṅa nilaṅkaṅlāṭaratiçayamum, maṅkaṅlāsaṃanamum, ītaraviṣayaṅkaṅgal aruciyum, āṛttīum anuvarttana niyatiyum ābāra niyatiyum; anukūla sahaṅvāsamum, pratikūla sahaṅvāsa nivruttiyum satacārya prāsātattale varttikkumati paṅnik-konṭu pārakkaṭavān.

243. Considering that he himself is the soil in which is produced the sensuality which is the effect of pride, which is the cause of ruin in every way, he (the Bhāgavata) should see himself as an enemy; seeing bound persons who are promoters of worldly pleasures, he should take them as a serpent; seeing Śrīvaṅgavas who are concerned with renouncing these (pleasures), he should take them as kinsmen; seeing the Lord, he should take Him as a father; seeing the Ācārya, he should take him as food for a hungry man; seeing a disciple, he should take him as an object of favour. Realising that pride, wealth and kāma, these three, (make for) disrespect toward good company, attachment for bad company, and regard for those who are indifferent, he should fear. Resolving that the soul’s (essential) attributes cannot be taken as arising either from himself or from others but that they arise from the grace of the Lord which comes by means of the grace of the true Ācārya, he should, by the grace of the true Ācārya, continue making progress in: disregard for the body,
eager regard for the soul, renouncing the thought of the enjoyment of materialistic things, the clear belief that the maintenance of the body is accomplished by the prasāda acquired by worship of the Supreme Soul, gladness if there be suffering of affliction, whether arising from the fruit of karma or as the fruit of grace, giving up the thought of self-practice as a means, the earnest desire for the knowledge and practice of distinguished persons, intense love and prayer of benediction toward places favoured (by the Lord), aversion for other worldly objects, restlessness, discipline in matters of service, abiding with the well-disposed and avoiding the ill-disposed.

244. Maṅgalāsāsanam svarūpa viruttamagnīto vegñil: jñānatataciyil rakṣyarakṣaka - pāvam taṅkkappile kiṭakkum; premataciyil taṅtumārik kiṭakkum.

244. If it be said that the prayer of benediction (maṅgalāsāsana) is contrary to essential nature, (it is answered that), in the state of knowledge, protected and protector are related as such; but in the state of love this relationship is overturned.

The maṅgalāsāsana is a blessing. In the state of the simple knowledge of one's ātmanhood to the Lord, such a blessing from an inferior to a superior would be inappropriate; but when knowledge gives way to love, such a blessing is quite appropriate.

245. Avagṣvarūpattai yanusandhittālavaṇaik kaṭakākak koṇṭu taṅṇainōkkum, saukumāryattai yanusantittal taṅṇaik kaṭakākak koṇṭu avāṇai nākkum.

245 Considering His (the Lord's) essential nature, he (the soul) protects himself with Him as supporter; considering (His) tenderness, he protects Him because he takes Him as a protector.
By essential nature the Lord is omnipotent, etc. and the soul looks to Him for protection; but, in the love-relationship the soul sees the Lord's beauty and tenderness and naturally moves to protect these in support of a continuing relationship.

246. This truth is seen in the case of the emperor (Daśaratha), Janaka's divine daughter (Sītā), Viśvāmitra, the rishis who dwelt in the blessed Dandaka forest, Tiruvāḍi (Hanumān), the Mahārāja (Sugrīva), the blessed cowherd Nanda, the blessed Vidura, Pillai Urangāvilli Dāsar and others.

All these had occasion to protect the Lord.

247. The blessed Lord Guha, suspending the younger Lord (Lakṣmana), and Guha's servants suspecting them both, they (all) protected the Lord (Rāma).

248. By only once seeing the beauty of (Rāma's) form, (Guha's people) made a great effort (to help Him).

249. The Āḷvārs are outstanding in this matter.
250. Ālvārkāḷellāraiyum pōllall Periyāḷvār.

250. (And), Periyāḷvār is unlike the other Ālvārs (in this matter).

251. Avarkalukkitu kāṭācītkam; ivarkkitu nityam.

251. For the others, it (making maṅgalāsaṇa to protect the Lord) was occasional; for this one (Periyāḷvār) it was constant.

252. Avarkaluttaiaya ālaṅkāltānē ivarkku mēṭāyirukkum.

252. Indeed, the depths for the others was shallow for this one.

The other Ālvārs were only attracted by the beauty of the Lord; but Periyāḷvār, apprehending danger to His beauty, hailed it.

253. Avarkalukku upaya ṣeṣatvattaiyum aḷittu svarupattaik kumijṇṭruṇṇap paṇṇumatu, ivarkku upaya vṛuttikkum hētuvāy svarupattaik karaiyēṟṟum.

253. For the others, there is a diving deep of essential nature, destroying the (their) ēṇa relationship to both (the Lord and the Bhāgavatas); for this one, this (diving deep) is the cause of increasing both (the ēṇa-relationships), augmenting thereby the essential nature.

The other Ālvārs seem to have merged themselves with the Lord, destroying the ēṇa-relationship; whereas, Periyāḷvār deepened the relationship by his maṅgalāsaṇa.

254. Payanivarttakaṅkaḷukku payappaṭuvatu pratikulalaraiyum anukularākkikkolluvatu, atīta kāḷakāḷil apatāṅkaḷukku uttarakāḷaltilē vayiṟerivatu prāptipalamum itu vē yeṉpatu animisaraippārťtu urakuḷaṟa-kal eṉpatāy koṇṭu itu tāne yātraiyāy naṭakkum.

254. This (maṅgalāsaṇa), indeed, was a livelihood (for Periyāḷvār), which took the form of fear for fear-removers, changing enemies into friends, feeling pangs over some dangers of former times, or saying, “This (maṅgalāsaṇa)
is the fruit of attainment”, or saying when seeing the vigilant ones (the guardians of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha), “Don’t sleep”.

These were all the circumstances in which Periyāḻvār invoked protection for the Lord.

255. Allātavarkāḷiap pōle kēṭkīravarkaluṭaiyavum collukiravarkaluṭaiyavum tanimaiyait tavirkkai yanrikkē āḻumāḷareṅkīravanaḍuṭaiya tanimaiyait tavirkkaiKKā-kavāyīṟṟu bhāṣyakāṟarum ivarum upadesippatu.

255. Unlike others, who sought to remove the solitude (the loneliness) of the (teacher and the taught,) the Bhāṣyakāra (Rāmānuja) and this one (Periyāḻvār), when teaching, sought to remove the loneliness of Him (the Lord who has no one to sympathise).

256. Allātārkkku sattāsamruttikāḷ darāṇāṇupava kaiṅkar-yaṅkaḷāḷē ; ivarkku maṅgalāśaśasanattāḷē.

256. The existence and sustenance of others were from seeing, enjoying and serving (the Lord); that of this one (Periyāḻvār) was from the maṅgalāśaśana.

257. Ukantarulīṇa nilaṅkaḷai yanuṣantittāḷ upum urakka-mumirikkē ivuṟuṭa, yātraiyē namakkellāṛkkum yātraiyākavēnum.

257. Thinking about the holy places, without food or sleep, was a livelihood for this one and should be a livelihood for all of us.

258. Ākaiyāḷē maṅgalāśaśasanam svarupāṇuṇuṇam.

258. The prayer of benediction is compatible with essential nature.

259. Anuṅkāḷārāṅkār jāṅgabhakti vairākyāṅkāḷ iṭṭumāṛi- nāṟpōle, vaṭivilē tōṭai koḷḷalāṃpaṭi yirukkum paramāṛṭtar.

259. The well-disposed ones are those who are restless (with samsāra), in each of whom knowledge, devotion or
renunciation seems to be prominent and whose form indicates a connection (with these qualities).

260. Oru cey nirampa nīr nīgrāl acal cey pocintu kāṭṭumāpōle ivaiyillāṭārkkum ivarkaḷōṭṭai sampantattālē uṟāvutal īṟakkāṭavatāyirukkum.

260. Just as from one field standing full, water oozes into a neighbouring field, so from association with these persons by those who are lacking these (knowledge, devotion and renunciation), grief born of deficiency will vanish.

261. Ārunīr varavaṇīttāṇāl atukkiṭāṇa āṭaiyaṭāṇkaluṇtāmāpōle prāpti yaṅittāṇavārē ānta svapāvaviṣāṇkaḷ taṇṇāṭaiyē vilaiyakkaṭavatāyirukkum.

261. These distinctions of self-nature will arise naturally when attainment is near, as the sands of the river-bed produce symptoms of the approaching flood.

262. Ivaṟṟaikkoṇṭu carama saṟṟameṇṭu taṇakkuttāṇē āṟutiyitālāyirukkum.

262. By these marks it becomes certain that this is the last body for the one (in whom they appear).

263. Pratikūlarakīrōr tēhāṭmāpimāṇiķāḷum svatantrarum anyaśeṣapūtār um upāyāntaranisṭār um svaprayājanaraṇam paranarum.

263. The ill-disposed are those who identify soul with body, who do things as they like, who show allegiance to others (rather than the Lord), who are attached to other upāya, and who are self-purposed.

264. Ivarkaḷukku utṭeṣyarum upāyopēyaṅkaḷum pētti-rukkum.

264. For them that which they esteem, the means and the goal differ.

265. Tēhāṭmāpimāṇiķāḷukku utṭeṣyar tēhavarttakaraṇā manuṣyarkal, upāyamarttam, upēyamaihikapōkam;
svatantraukku uttēśyār svarkkātipōkapratar, upāyam karmānuṣṭānam; upēyam svarkkātipōkam, anya gēṣa putarkku uttēśyār brahmurutrātikal upāyam tatsamāsrayaṇam, upēyam tatsayujyam; upāyantaranistarkku uttēśyaṇ tēvatāntaryāmiyāṇa sarveśvaraṇ, upāyam karmajñānapakṣikāl, upēyam pakavatana-pavam; svaprayojanaparakkru uttēśyaṇ ‘neńcigāl naippāṇ yavaṇ’enkiṇavaṇ; upāyam svakīya svika-ram, upēyam svārtta kaiṅkaryam.

265. For those who identify soul and body, their esteem is for persons who foster the body, their means is artha and their goal is worldly enjoyment; for those who act on their own their esteem is for those who give enjoyment in svarga, their means is the practice of karmas and their goal is the enjoyment of svarga; for those whose allegiance is to others, they esteem Brahmā, Rudra and the like, their means is resorting to them, and their goal is union with them; for those devoted to other means, their esteem is for the Lord of all as Indweller of the gods, their means is karma, jñāna and bhakti and their goal is the experience of the Lord; for those who are self-purposed, their esteem is for the one described in “He who thinks (of Him) in whatever form...”, their means is whatever means is adopted by them (rather than the Lord), and their goal is service as to what pleases them (rather than what pleases the Lord).

The self-purposed (svaprayojanapara) are oriented toward the Lord but their performance is according to what pleases themselves. The quotation is from Tiruvāyūmoḷi 3.6.9: “O people of this world, don’t get confused regarding the primeval being amidst the three mūrtis-, He who is the Lord of the divine beings who are never wanting in God-experience, He who happens to be the father capable of affording protection and also the mother and who, without stopping there, becomes a relation of every description. Seeing such a Lord of this much greatness, don’t be
confused that He is different from This One. He who thinks (of Him), in whatever form, that form is really the Great Lord, having the complexion of the expansive ocean.”

266. Mutal con'ja mūvarum nikrahattukkilakku. Maṅgaśāyiyiruvarum anukrahattukkilakku.

266. For the first mentioned three, there is punishment; for the other two there is favour.

267. Mūvaruṣāiyavum karmam anupava vinācyam, nālāmatikārikkku prāyaścitta vinācyam; aṅcāmatikārikkupuruṣākāra vinācyam.

267. The karma of the (first) three is destroyed by experience; that of the fourth contestant is destroyed by expiation; that of the fifth contestant is destroyed by the mediator.

The first three cannot attain the Lord, they simply go on according to their karma. The fourth, who follows the upāya prescribed by the Vedānta-texts, can prepare themselves for grace by doing prāyaścitta. The fifth, the self-purposed, can prosper under the guidance of an ācārya, who becomes a mediator for them.

268. Upāyam svākāralattil puruṣaśāpekṣamumāy puruṣa-kārasāpekṣamumāy irukkum; kāryakāralattil upayanir-apēkṣamāyirukkum.

268. At the time of the choice of means there is dependence upon the puruṣa (the devotee) and the puruṣakāra (the mediator); at the time of accomplishment there is no dependence on these two.

The fifth contestant is brought to favour by the mediator. Thus the question arises as to whether the mediator, himself accomplishes grace. The answer is that the devotee and the mediator are active only at the stage of taking refuge in the Lord; the Lord is independent in accomplishing the salvation of the devotee.
269. Swaprayajanansparar ellaraiyum pratikularaka nigaikkalamovenggal?

269. It may be asked: "Is it proper to think of all those relying on self-purpose as ill-disposed?"

270. Hiku svaprayajanam ekikatu astrayatosha janyamaggattai.

270. (The answer is) that that which is here called 'self-purposing' is that which arises from a defect of reliance (on the beautiful form of the Lord).

The self-purposed one is misguided because he simply reacts to the beautiful external form of the Lord in His arcavatara; he is caught up in the enjoyment of the form and does not truly give himself up to the Lord.

271. Akaiyale tosamillai.

271. Therefore, there is no defect (in saying that the self-purposed one is ill-disposed).

272. Viṣaya toṣattal varumavaiyellam tustyajamayireyi-ruppatu.

272. It is clear that all that which comes from the object of enjoyment is difficult to renounce.

273. "Umaiyarōṭu ceviṭar varttai", "Kathamanyadicchati."

273. "Conversation between the deaf and the dumb..."; "How can it desire anything else..."

Nacciyar Tirumoli 12.1: Āṇḍāl speaking to her friends "To me who has come to have an infatuation with regard to Mādhava that cannot be understood by you whose will is quite different from mine, your talk is like conversation between the deaf and the dumb. Please take me to a place near Mathurā (the place of Kṛṣṇa), who reached the wrestling ground even before the wrestlers
came there and who grew in the house of a different mother after leaving the mother who gave birth to Him."

Stotraratna 27:.

"How can my mind, which is firmly set upon Your nectar-shedding lotus-feet, ever desire anything else? It is well known that when there exists a lotus full of honey, the bee does not even look at the (thorny, nectarless) ikṣuraka flower."

274. Ippati yivai yittañaiyum satācārya prasātattālē varttiikkum pōtaikku vastavyamaćārya sannitiyum pakavat sannitiyum; vaktavyamaćārya vaipavamum svanikarṣamum; japtavyam kuruparamparaiyum tvayamum; parikrāhyam pūrvācāryarkalutaiya vacanamum anuṣṭānamum; parityājyam avaitāvaita sahavāsamum apimānamum; karttavyam ācārya kaṅkaryamum pakavat kaṅkaryamum.

274. When these (virtues) increase by the grace of the true ācārya, the dwelling of the wise one is in the presence of the ācārya and in the presence of the Lord; his speech is of the ācārya’s greatness and his own inferiority; the prayers to be repeated are the line of ācāryas (guruparamparai) and the Dvayam (mantram); that which is to be favoured is the word and conduct of the former ācāryas; that which is to be avoided is association with non-Vaiṣṇavas and their attachments; that which is to be done is service to the ācārya and service to the Lord.

The passage picks up from 259-261, the virtues being knowledge, devotion and renunciation.

275. Kilccolgga pakavat kaṅkaryam aṅivatu śastramu-kattālē; ācārya kaṅkaryamaṅivatu śastramukattālum ācārya vacanattālum.

275. The service to the Lord, referred to above, is to be known from the scriptures; service of the ācārya is to be known from the scriptures and from the words of the ācārya.
276. Kaiṅkaryantarāṇatātu.

276. There are two kinds of service.

277. Atāvatu ɪšṭam  ćeṣayium anɪṣṭam tavrūkaiyum.

277. Namely, doing what is pleasing and avoiding what is displeasing.

278. ɪṣṭānɪṣṭaṅkal  varpaṅraṅkaįliyum  ātmasvarupa-
taiyum  avalampittirukkum.

278. That which pleases and that which displeases depends upon varṇa and āśrama and the soul's essential nature.

279. Puṇyattuk kančūkịavāṇ pāpattaip paṇṇāpiṛē.

279. He who fears even to do good deeds would not perform bad deeds.

Both puṇya and pāpa are detrimental to one seeking attainment of the Lord.

280. Ivaṇ puṇyattaip pāpameṇṛirukkum; avaṇ pāpattaip puṇyameṇṛirukkum. Avaṇukkatu kiṭaiyatu; ivagatu ceyyāṇ.

280. He the (prapanna) takes merit as demerit; He (the Lord) takes demerit as merit; but He (the Lord) will get none (demerit) because he (the prapanna) does not occasion any.

281. Kaiṅkaryantarāṇ pakṣimūlam allatapṭu pītimūlamay varavēṇum.

281. Service, indeed, should come from (fear from loss of dependence on the Lord) if it does not spring from devotion.

282. Atuvumillatapatu aṭikāṛatitiyum upāyopēyaṅkaįliyum anvayamipṛikkē yoliyum.

282. If even that is not so, fitness for prapatti together with the means (the Lord) and the end (the pleasure of the Lord) will be lost.

283. His service should be as fruit, not as the means to fruit.

284. Atāvatu-ταγ kaiyēlētē avāṇaik kaiyēkappāṇukai.

284. That is to say, instead of reaching out to take from Him (the Lord), he should make Him (the Lord) take from him.


285. Not taking by giving, he should give payment for the acceptance (of him by the Lord).

286. Śrīviduraraiyum śrīmaḷākāraraiyum kūṇiyaiyum pōlē kiṇcitkarittāl svarupam niṟam peṟuvatu.

286. If you give something, the essential nature gains lustre, as with Vidura, malakāra and the hunch-backed woman.

All three made simple, selfless offerings to Kṛṣṇa: Vidura offered food, malakāra offered flowers and the hunch-back offered sandal-paste meant for Kaṁsa.

287. Maṭitaṭavātā cōṟum curunāṟāta puvum cuṇṇāmpu paṭāta cāntumigē yivarkal koṭuttatu.

287. These gave food without searching the pocket (i.e. without asking payment), flowers without bad smell and sandal-paste without lime.


288. As in the state of service, so also in stages prior (to that) the self-nature should be made illustrious.

289. Muṇpē nālutcai yuṇṭu.

289. There are four prior stages.

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290. Atāvatu jñānatacaiyum varañatacaiyum prāpti-
tacaiyum prāpyānupavatacaiyum.

290. Namely: 1) the stage of knowledge; 2) the stage of choice; 3) the stage of attainment and 4) the stage of experiencing the goal.

First, there is knowledge of one's seṣatva gained from the ācārya, then there is choosing the Lord as the means, etc.

291. Jñānatacaiyil ajñānattai muññiṭum; varañatacaiyil apurttiyai muññiṭum; prāptitacaiyil ārttiyai muññiṭum; prāpyānupava tacaiyil apinivēśattai muññiṭum.

291. In the stage of knowledge, one bears in mind (his) ignorance; in the stage of choice one bears in mind (his) imperfection; in the stage of attainment one bears in mind (his) restlessness (in samsāra); in the stage of experiencing the goal one bears in mind (his) zeal.

292. Ajñānam pōvatu ācāryajñānattāle; apurttipōvatu īvara pūrttiyaḷe; ārttipōvatu aruḷāḷe; apinivēśam pōvatu anupavavāḷe.

292. Ignorance is dispelled by the ācārya's knowledge; imperfection is dispelled by the perfection of the Lord; restlessness is dispelled by the Lord's grace; zeal is dispelled by experience.

293. Ajñāṇattukkaṭi aparātām, apurttiṣṭkaṭi jñānapurtti, ārttiṣṭkaṭi alāpam, apinivesṭattukkaṭi āḷaku.

293. Transgression gives rise to ignorance; the perfection of knowledge gives rise to (awareness of) imperfection; non-attainment gives rise to restlessness; the beauty (of the Lord) gives rise to zeal.

294. Ārttiyum apinivesṭamum irukkumpāṭi arcciratikatiyile copṇom.

294. The restlessness and the zeal mentioned here are discussed in the Arccirādi-gati (another treatise by Pillai Lokācārya).
295. **Ivaṇ taṇakku nālutacaipōle nālukuṇamum uṇṭu.**

Like these four stages, this one (the *prapanna*) has four attributes.

296. **Atāvatu jñānamum ajñānamum śaktiyum aśaktiyum.**

Namely, knowledge, ignorance, power and impotence.

297. **Itu tāṇ avaṇukkum uṇṭu.**

This, indeed, is true of Him (the Lord) also.

298. **Avagaṇṭaiya jñānattukkilakku ivagaṇṭaiya kuṇam; ajñānattukkilakku ivagaṇṭaiya toṣam; śaktikkilakku ivagaṇṭaiya rakṣanam; aśaktikkilakku parityākam.**

His (the Lord’s) knowledge is (knowledge) of the virtue of this one (the *prapanna*); (His) ignorance is (ignorance) of the defect of this one; (His) power is (power) to protect this one; (His) impotence is (impotence) to abandon this one.

299. **Ivagaṇṭaiya jñānattukkilakku ācāryakuṇam; ajñānattukkilakku ācāratoṣam; śaktikkilakku ācārya kaiṅkaryam; aśaktikkilakku niṣittāṇuṣṭānam.**

This one’s (the prapanna’s) knowledge is (knowledge) of the virtue of the ācārya; his ignorance is (ignorance) of the defect of the ācārya; his power is (power) for service of the ācārya; his impotence is (impotence) to do what is forbidden.

300. **Niṣittantāṇum nālupaṭiyāyirukkum.**

What is forbidden is of four kinds.

301. **Aāṭvatu akrutyakaraṇamum pakavatapacāramum pākavatāpacāramum asabyāpacāramum.**

Namely, 1) doing what is prohibited (by the scriptures); 2) affront to the Lord; 3) affront to a Bhāgavata and 4) intolerable offence.
302. Akrutyakarapamāvatu - parahimsai parastotram paratāra - parikraham paratravyāpahāram asatyakatanam apakṣyapakṣaṇam toṭakkamāṇavaī.

302. Doing what is prohibited is: violence to others; praising others (the unworthy); grasping other’s wives; taking other’s property; telling untruth; eating what should not be eaten, and the like.

303. Pakavatapacāramāvatu - tēvatāntarāñkajōtokka āvaranai niṇaikkaiyum rāmakruṣṇātyavatārāṅkajil manusya sajätīyata puttiyum, varṇārama viparītamāna vupacāramum, arccāvatārattil upātāna nirupaṇamum ātmāpabāramum pakavat - travyāpahāramum toṭakkamāṇavaī.

303. Affront to the Lord is as follows: holding the Lord as equal to other gods; thinking that Rāma and Kṛṣṇa avataras are the same as (ordinary) men; practising (worship) contrary to varṇa and āśrama; thinking about the material of (which) the arcavatāra (is made); thinking of the soul as separate (from the Lord) and taking the property of the Lord.

304. Pakavattravyattait tānapaharikkkaiyum apaharik-kīravarkalkukku sahakarikkaiyum avarkal pakkalile yācitamākavum ayācitamākavum parikrabikkaiyum pakavāṅkukku anisṭamāyirukkum.

304. These are contrary to the desires of the Lord: stealing the Lord’s property oneself, helping others to steal it, receiving these (stolen goods) from others, whether solicited or unsolicited.

305. Pakavatāpacāramāvatu ahaṁkārārta kāmāṅkaḷatiyāka śrīvaiśṇavakalikkup paṇṇum virotam.

305. Affront to Bhāgavatas as follows; hostility toward Śrīvaiśṇavas due to (one’s) being a slave of pride, worldliness and sensuality.

306. Asabyapacāramāvatu nirnipantamāka pakavat
pākavata viṣayameṇaḥ asahamanāpiyukkaiyum 
ācāryapacāramum tatpaktāpacāramum.

306. Intolerable offence is: unmotivated affront to the Lord, the pākavata, the ācārya and his devotees.

307. Ivai yoṣuṣkoggu krūraṅkaḷumāy upāya virotikaḷumāy upēya virotikaḷumāyirukkum.

307. These (the above four offences) are, in comparison more harsh than the earlier and are hostile to the means and the end.

Affront to the Bhāgavata is more serious than affront to the Lord, and so forth, since it is by means of other disciples, the ācārya and the Bhāgavata, that one attains the Lord's grace.

308. Tōp hitspadēṣam pāṇumputu tangaiyum sickness palattaiyum mārāṭi nipaikkai krura nisittam.

308. Indeed, when teaching, it is a forbidden harshness (for the ācārya) to mistake the position of an ācārya, (the position) of the disciple and the fruit (i.e. the results of the teaching).

309. Tāppai mārāṭi nipaikkaiyavatu tangai ṣisyānaiyum palattaiyum mārāṭi nipaikkai krura nisittam.

309. Thinking of himself falsely means his thinking of himself as ācārya; thinking of the disciple falsely, is thinking (of disciple) as his disciple; thinking of the fruit falsely, is thinking of the fruit as: 1 any material benefit; 2 the salvation of the disciple; 3 service of the Lord; or 4 living together with his disciple (i.e. enjoying his company).

The ācārya should not harbor any desire for status, material wealth or personal advantage. He is merely a mediator, a channel for grace.
310. If he does not think on these four fruits, whence are they accomplished? Material benefits result from the devoted disciple's care (for his acarya); salvation results from the Lord's care; service of the Lord results from the acarya's care; co-residence results from (the disciple's) remembering the assistance (of his acarya).

311. It may be asked, whence are accomplished the direct results and the acarya-ship? These result from his (the acarya's) care and the Lord's care.

312. If (the acarya) does not follow these stipulations, the essential nature of both (the acarya and the disciple) is not established.

313. The acarya should show compassion toward the disciple and dependence upon his own teacher.

314. By compassion the essential nature of the disciple is established; by dependence (upon his own teacher) his own nature is established.

315. Nerę acaryanenpatu samsāra nivarttakamāna periya tirumantrattai yupateśittavani
315. The direct meaning of 'ācārya' is, 'one who teaches the great holy mantra (the Āṣṭākṣara), which removes samsāra.'

316. Samsāra varttakaṅkalumāy kṣutraṅkalumāṇa paka-vanmantrakālaḷai yupatēśittavarkalukku ācāryatva pūrttiyillai.

316. Ācārya-ship is not perfect for those who teach Lord-mantras which foster samsāra and are petty.

317. Pakavan mantrakālaḷi kṣutraṅkal ēṅkigatu palatvāra.

317. Lord's-mantras are said to be petty by reason of their fruit.

318. Samsāravarttakaṅkālaṇēṅkigatam attālē.

318. For the same reason they are said to foster samsāra.

319. Itutāṅ aupātikam.

319. This, indeed, (the fruit of certain mantras) is limited to special conditions.

320. Cētanaṇuṭaiya ručiyāle varukaiyāle.

320. As coming from the soul's desire.

321. Śiṣyaṅgeppatu sāyantara nivruttiyum palasātana suṣruṣaiyum, ārttiyum, ādaramum anasuyaiyum uṭaiyavaṇai.

321. He is said to be a disciple who abstains from other than that which is to be accomplished; desires to hear the means to the end, is restless (in samsāra) and is affectionate and not envious (toward the ācārya).
322. Mantramum dévataiyum palamum palānupantikā-∫um palasātanamum aihikapōkamum ellām ācāryanē yenēu dinaiikkakkaṭavaṇ.

322. The mantra, the god, the fruit, those things related to the fruit, the means to the fruit, worldly enjoyments—he (the disciple) should consider the ācārya as all these things.

323. “Mātā pita yuvatayāḥ” epkira slakattilē ivvartattaip paramācāryarum aruliccēyēr.

323. Our great teacher (Āḻavandār) bestowed this in the verse, “Mother, father, women...”

Stotra Ratna 5:

“I reverently bow down my head to the blessed feet of the first lord of our family, which feet are delightful with the bakula flowers and which alone are eternally mother, father, women, sons and wealth to every one of my race.”

324. Itukkaṭi upakāra smruti.

324. The basis of this (considering the ācārya as all these things) is remembering (his) favour.

325. Upakāra smrutikku mutalāṭi ācāryanpakkal kartajñatai; muṭintapilam ūvaranpakkal kartajñatai.

325. The remembrance of favour is, at first, gratitude toward the ācārya and finally gratitude toward the Lord.

326. Śīṣyanum ācāryanum añanyam priya-hitakaḷai naṭattak kaṭavarkal.

326. Disciple and ācārya should act toward each other as to what is pleasant and what is suitable.

327. Śīṣyān tān priyattai naṭattakkaṭavaṇ; ūvaranaiḍik koṇṭu hitattai naṭattakkaṭavaṇ; ācāryan māṭi naṭattakkaṭavaṇ.

327. The disciple himself should do what is pleasant (for the ācārya); he should do what is suitable (for the ācārya), with
the help of the Lord; the acarya should do just the opposite (i.e. he should himself do what is suitable for the disciple and with the help of the Lord he should do what is pleasant for the disciple).

328. Śiṣyaṇ ukappile yuṇippōrum; acāryanujīvanattile yuṇippōrum.

328. The disciple becomes committed to satisfying (the acarya); the acarya becomes committed to rescuing (the disciple).

329. Ākaiyāl śiṣyaṇacāryaṇuṭaiya harṣattukku ilakkākai yōliya rōṣattuk kilakkākaik kavakācamillai.

329. As, therefore, the disciple is the object of the acārya’s love, there is no place for his (the acārya’s) anger (toward the disciple).


330. There is no refusal of reprimand by either of them, at any time, as it is beneficial (to both).

331. Śiṣyaṇukku nikrahaṅkāraṇam tyājyam.

331. The disciple should avoid any occasion for reprimand.

332. Nikrahantān pakavan-nikrahaṃpolē prāpyāntarkkatam.

332. Reprimand, like the reprimand of the Lord, is part of the results (of the Lord’s grace moving).

333. Acāryaṇ śiṣyaṇuṭaiya svarūpattaip pēṇakkaṭavān; śiṣyaṇ acāryaṇuṭaiya dehattaip pēṇakkaṭavān.

333. The acārya should foster the self-nature of the disciple; the disciple should attend to the acārya’s body.

334. Iraṇṭumiruvarkkum svarūpamumāy pakavatkaṅkaryamumāyirukkum.

334. Both of these (the above) are befitting of the two and are service to the Lord.
335. For the ācārya, protecting (his own) body diminishes his essential character (as ācārya); for the disciple, protecting (his own) soul diminishes his self-nature.

336. The ācārya (who thinks he is) performing protection of (disciple's) soul, is destroyed by pride; the disciple (who thinks he is) performing protection of the (ācārya's) body, is destroyed by self-interest.

337. The ācārya should take the property for the protection of his body as his own; the disciple should take the property for the protection of his own body as the ācārya's (property).

338. The ācārya should not take the property of the disciple (which the disciple thinks of as his own); the disciple should not give such property to him (the ācārya).

339. Taking makes him (the ācārya) look destitute; giving makes him (the disciple) look a thief.

The ācārya does not need anything as he is already complete; the disciple does not own anything to give, since everything belongs to the ācārya.
340. When taking and giving arise, the relationship ceases.

341. This one (the disciple) cannot give since he is poor; he (the ācārya) cannot take since he is full.

342. That one’s (the ācārya’s) position is justified by fullness; this one’s (the disciple’s) position is justified by poverty.

343. Then, it may be asked, “Is there no giving of favour by the disciple to the ācārya?”

344. In the thinking of the ācārya, there is (but not in the thinking of the disciple).

Seeing the results of the Lord’s grace in the disciple, the ācārya considers himself favoured.

345. (The results are) namely, knowledge, firm resolve, love and good conduct.

346. For the purpose of pleasing the ācārya this one (the disciple) should abstain from taking away the property of the Lord, obstructing the enjoyment of the Lord, and contempt for the teacher, the mantra and the god.
347. Pakavat-tavyāpahāramāvatu svātantriyamum anya-
śekatvanum; pakavat pojanatiai vilakkukaiyāvatu
avaṇūṭaiya rakṣakatvattai vilakkukai.

347. The taking away of the Lord’s property; is the disciple’s
independence and dependence on another (other than
the Lord); obstructing His protectorship (i.e. refusing to
be protected) is obstructing the enjoyment of the Lord.

348. Avaṇūṭaiya rakṣakatvakramam prapanna paritrāṇattile
conṇām. Kuru-paripavamāvatu kēṭavartattatīṇpaṭī
yauṣṭiyātojikaiyum anatikārikaḷukku upadēṣik-
kaiyum; mantra paripavamāvatu arttttāl vismrutiyum
viṇaṇa ārtta pratipattiyum; tēvatāparipavamāvatu
karaṇatrayattaiyum aprāpta viṣayākaḷiḷē pravaṇa-
mäkkukaiyum, tatviṣayattil pravaṇamäkkātojikaiyum.

348. The modes of His protectorship are set forth in the
Prapanna Paritrāṇum; contempt for the teacher consists
in not practising what is prescribed by him and instructing
those who are not qualified; contempt for the mantra
consists in forgetting its correct meaning and giving it a
wrong meaning; contempt for the god consists in devoting
the three resources (thought, word and deed) to unworthy
objects and failing to devote these to that object (the Lord).

The Prapanna Paritrāṇam is another work of
Pillai Lokācārya.

349. Ivanukku śaṅrāvasāntattalavum ācārya viṣayattil
“ennait tiṃnanam keṭuttāy” “maruvittojum maṇame
tantāy” ennū upakārasmruti nāṭakkavēṇum.

349. With regard to the ācārya, he (the disciple) should, until
the termination of his body, behave, remembering the
favour (of the ācārya) in this way, “you corrected my evil
mind…” and “you conferred on me a mind that will
always serve…”

Tiruvaiyomil 2.7.8:

“You are Vāmana, You are the father of cupid.
Your complexion is that of an emerald; Your eyes are like the lotus. In this way I offered my respects to your feet; You corrected my evil mind in such a manner as to make it pure and to remove the misery of samsāra. O Śrīdhara, what can I do to you in return?"

_Tiruvaiyōmbi_ 2.7.7:

"O my Lord, You are clever; You conferred on me a mind that will always serve Your lotus-feet, after saluting, praising and meditating in the following manner - - O my Vāmana! You who became Trivikrama! O my Lord! You with the red lotus-like eyes, possessed of charming red lips and shiny quartz-like feet!"

350. Manassukkut tīmaiyaṁvatu ṣvakuṇṭattaiyum pakoṭavat pakoṭavat tōṣattaiyum niqaikkai.

351. Evilness of mind consists in thinking on one's own virtue and on the defect of the Lord and the Bhāgavatas.

351. Tōṣam niqaïyantojikiṟatu kuṇampoleyunṭāyirukkaṇṭaṇu, illāmaiyaile.

351. He should give up thinking defect (about the Lord and the Bhāgavatas), not because it is there like his own virtue, but because it does not exist.

352. Tōṣamuṇṭeṇu niqaikkil atu paratōṣamaṇṭu, svatōṣam.

352. If thinking there is defect, it is not the defect of other but his own defect.

353. Svatoṣamaṇṭapaṣi yegaṇṇil;

353. If it be said, "what is the manner of his fault?"

354. Svatoṣattāluṁ pantattāluṁ.

354. It is from his own defect and from relationship (i. e. he attributes his own defect to others with whom he is kindred).
355. *Svatoṣamillaiyākil kuṇapratiṇipatti naṭakkum.*

355. If it is not (due to) his own defect, then there would be ascertainment of virtue (in the Lord and the Bhāgavatas).

356. *Naṭantatillaiyākil tūṣajñānamē tūṣamām.*

356. In the absence (of this ascertainment of virtue) the knowledge of defect is itself defect.

357. *Itutāṇakku avasaramillai.*

357. There is no occasion for this (thinking fault).

358. *Svatoṣattukkum pākavat pākavata kuṇāṅkaḻuk-kumē kālam pōrukaiyāle.*

358. For, time is sufficient (to think) only of his own defect and of the virtues of the Lord and the Bhāgavatas.

359. *Samsārikaṭāṣam svatoṣameṇru niṅaikkakāṭavaṇ.*

359. He should think that the faults of those caught in samsāra are his own faults.

360. *Atukku hētu pantajñāṇam.*

360. The knowledge of kinship (with those caught in samsāra) is the reason for (thinking) that.

361. *“Iraippolūtumennam” eṅkaiyāle atutāṇ tōṇrātu.*

361. Not even that comes to mind, from the saying, “We think not a moment...”

*Periya Tirumolī* 2. 6. 1:

“The Lord who is staying at Kaṭalmallai which has plenty of coolness helpful to an interesting stay, and who, taking the form of a damsel, entered into the midst of harmful demons offering nectar to the gods only-we will not think even for a moment of those who do not think of such a Lord.”

http://acharya.org
362. **Togruvatu niruttanarttaranaka**
362. Bringing (defects) to mind is for the purpose of removal.

363. **Piratthi, rakshasikal kurram perumaljakkkum tiruvashik-kum ariyivatappole, tugakkup pigareeya kurrakk-kalaipakavat pakavata viyayaankalil ariivikkak kaṭavaṇallapp.**

363. **He should not make known to the Lord and the Bhāgavatas, offences committed against him by others, just as the Goddess (Sītā) did not make known to the Lord or to Tiruvadī the offences of the demonesses.**

Sītā did not complain to Rāma or Hanumān of her ill-treatment by the demonesses who held her captive.

364. **Ariivikka vuriyavapakappata väytiavatē sarvaṈa viyayaṈalkakkum maraikkummegnāṇigarige.**

364. **Has it not been said that even the all-knowing One (the Lord), who has the right to make known (faults), does not open His mouth but conceals all things.**

365. **Kurram ceytavaṇkalpakkal, poṇaiyum krapaiyum cirippum ukappum upakāra smrutiyum naṭakka-vēṇum.**

365. **He (the disciple) should give to those who have committed offences (toward him), patience, compassion, a smile, joy and remembrance of favour.**

366. **Svatsañusantānam payahētu; pakavat kuṇānu-santānam apayahētu.**

366. **Meditating on one's own faults is the cause of fear, meditating on the virtues of the Lord is the cause of fearlessness.**

367. **Pāyapayayaṇkaliraṇṭum maṟṟati ajaṈataiyē sittik-kum.**

367. **From reversing the two (i.e. seeing virtue in oneself and defect in the Lord) only ignorance is established.**
368. Āṇāl “nālivāṇiṇṇam cennukinṟay”, “āṟṟaṅkaṟai-
vāḷ maram pōlaṅcukinṟēpp” eṅkira pācurāṅkaḷukku atiyēppēṇnil.

368. If it be said, “What is the basis for the following utterances?”, “Do you cause me distress...”; “I am always full of fear like a tree growing on the bank of a river...”

_Tiruvāimoli_ 7. 1:

“O God who has the immeasurable māya as your instrument! O Lord, eulogized by the gods! O Lord, on whom the three worlds are dependent! O most enjoyable one! O most helpful one! O the One who controls me! Do You cause me distress, tormenting me still by not making me reach Your lotus-like feet and by shutting me up by means of the five senses, so as to stay permanently inside?”

_Periya Tirumoli_ 11. 8. 1:

“O God who is perceived by smell, taste, touch and sound! Even if you can say many things to me, I will tell one to You. I am always full of fear like a tree on the bank of a river, thinking that You may cause my birth in the future in the wombs of men.”

The question is, why do the Āḻvārs express fear?

369. Pantānusantānam.

369. (The answer is that they are) meditating on (their) relationship (to the Lord).

The doubting fear that is expressed by the Āḻvārs is natural to their relationship with the Lord and does not contradict 366.

370. Prajai teruvilē yiṭarit tāy mutukilē kuttumāpōlē, nirupāṭika pantuvāy ēkāṭapāṇē ṣakṭaṅyirukkiṟraṉ vilakkā-
tōlintāl appaćic collalāmīṟē.
370. As a child, stumbling in the street, beats its mother's back (blaming the mother for its stumbling), so one can speak that way to one whose kinship is unconditional (the Lord) and who has the power (to prevent suffering) but does not prevent it.

371. Prajaiyaik kinaṅgin karaiyiningum vāṅkātoḷintāl tāyē tallināḷennak katavatīrē.

371. If (she) does not take the child from the edge of a well and the child falls in, others will say that the mother herself pushed the child in.

372. Ivagutaiya anumati pēṛṛukku hētuvaḷatāp pōḷe avanūṣaiya anumatiyum īlavukku hētuvaṅgū.

372. As the assent of this one (the soul) is not the cause of profit, so also the assent of Him (the Lord) is not the cause of loss.

The Lord's grace, not the assent of the soul, is the cause of salvation; the soul's bondage is not caused by the Lord, but by the soul itself.

373. Ḳrntum iruvarkkum svarupam.

373. The two (assents) are natural to both.

The assent of the soul to salvation and the assent of the Lord to the bondage of the soul are in accordance with their natures and thus not the cause of such.

374. Īlavukkaṭi karmam; pēṛṛukkaṭi krupai.

374. Karma causes suffering; grace causes gain.

375. Maṅgaippati collil īlavukkuṛuppām.

375. Speaking otherwise is the cause of loss.

376. Eṭukka ninaikkiṟavanait tallināyenkaieṭāmaikkuṛupp-pirē.
376. Who wants to rescue a man who stood near him at a well and fell in and who then complains that he pushed him?

As the Lord reaches out His hand to the soul, the soul should not accuse Him of causing its bondage.

377. CỈllumugre vanantarattile yivvattattat tāme yailuiceytaiге.

377. This idea is given by the Ālvār after saying, "That would anger..."

_Periya Tirunoli_ 11.8.2: The Ālvār shows awareness that the Lord is angry with his complaining:

"O God, skilled in wielding the discus, even if I possess sins that would anger you, let me tell you one thing - I stand very much trembling, like the mind of the navigators caught in a storm, with the fear that you may make me take birth in the wombs of men."

378. CỈlamuṭṭarintāl collumpati yennennil, arulum ārttiyum ananyakatitvamum collappanhum.

378. If it be said, "If he (the Ālvār) was conscious of anger (on the part of the Lord), then how is it that he speaks thus (blame)?" (The answer is that) the grace (of the Lord) and the restlessness and helplessness (of the soul) make for such speaking.

379. CỈinanālum kālaikkaṭik kollalampaṭi yiruppāṇoru-vanaipe rṟāl ellām collalamire.

379. Even though there is anger, all these things are said (by the Ālvār) since (he knows that) there is escape from them by embracing (His) feet.

380. "Krupayā paryapālayat", "Arincinattāl".

380. "Pardoned by grace..."; "By extreme anger..."
**Rāmāyaṇa 5. 38. 34:**

The descendant of Kakutstha, the protector, out of grace, pardoned the crow that fell on the ground seeking refuge, though it deserved to be killed.

The reference is to the crow who, desiring to make love to Sītā, pecked at her and made her bleed. Rāma wounded the crow, but then, responding to its plea, pardoned it.

**Perumāl Tirumōli 5. 1:**

"Even if you don’t prevent the grief that has been given (me), there is no refuge except your feet. O mother, living at Vittuvakoṭu surrounded by a garden of flowers with fragrance everywhere! if by extreme anger, the mother who brought forth the child throws it away again, (the child) will be crying thinking of her grace only. I was like that."

381. Tripāṭ vipūtiyilē pariṇāṇānupavam nāvā veṅka, atu upaṭatu urukkāṭatē, dēśāntarakatanāna putraṇ pakkalilē pitru hrutayam kīṭakkumāpolē, samsārikaṇ pakkalilē tiruvulilam kuṭipōy, ivarkalai pirintāl āṅramāṭitē, ivarkalōtē kalantu parimāṅtukaikkuk karaṇakāleparuṇakalaik kośuttu, avaṅkkoṇtu vyaṅparikkaikkitāṇa ṣakti viśesāṅkāyaṁya koṭuttu, kaṅkānāṅkikil āṇaivyitū vilakkuvarkal eṅkū kaṅnuk-kut tātātapati urāṅkukira prajaiyait tāy mutukilē yaṅaitukkoṇtu kīṭakkumāpolē, tānāṅtā sampan-tāme ḍhētvāka viṭāmaṭtātē, akavāyilē aṅaitukkoṇtu, āṭciyil toṭarci nāṅkerea viṭātē, sattaiyai nōkkiyutanātānāy, ivarkal āsakaranaṅkājilē pravart-tikkumāṇaṁ mīkkaṅmaṭtātē, anumati tānattai pāṇi utasaṅnaraip polēyirantu mīkkaṅ kitampāṭtu, nān-maiyaiṅrī pariṭalāvavorū ṭimāyum kāṅtē nēṛiṅyaik kōṭtip pāṭtāl oruvaliyālum pacaiṅkāṅ toḷintāl aprāpoṃkēru kaṅgā niṅṭē miḻuvatu; tāṅkākēru īdam pēṛa vaḷavilē, eṅgūraic connay enpēraicconnay eṅgatiyārēi nōkkiyāi avarkal viṭāyait īṛṭτāy
avarkajuk kotuñka nilalaik kotuttay enṟappōle
cilavarrai yērittu, matimāṅkāyiṭtu, ponvāṇiyān
ponnai uraikallē yuratittu meļukāļe yeṭuttuk kāl
kālaṅcīru tirattumāpoļe, janma paramparaikaļ
tōrum, yadrucikam prāsanikikam ānuṣānıkikamenkiga
sukruta višeāṅkalaik kaṭpittukkoṭtu tāṇē yavarra
onṟupattäkki nāṭattikkoṭtu pōrum.

381. In the splendor of the three-fourths (Vaikunṭha), where
the experience of complete fullness is going on, that enjoy-
ment does not take any shape since the divine mind is
always with those in bondage, like a father, not sleeping,
remembering a son who is in another country. As if
fleeing from (His) house, the divine will, going to the side
of those in samsāra, being unable to bear them
being separate (from Him), grants them organs and bodies
for exchanging (with Him) and power by which to perform
with these. Not visible to the eye, lest being seen (by them)
they curse Him, saying, “Go away!”. He dwells within
embracing them unbeknowns to them, like a mother
embracing her sleeping child unbeknowns to the child.
Sharing their sorrows, protecting their being, not preventing
their continuation in bad deeds, giving premission, standing
as if indifferent, He searches for a way to rescue them.
Without coming across even one defect that can be exagge-
rated into a virtue, He sheds tears just like a physician
scratching the forehead (of a patient) to see if there is any
blood and losing all hope when no blood is seen. As He
gets a chance, if He can find any excuse, imagining that,
“You said the name of My place”, “You spoke My name”,
“You protected My devotees”, “You removed their
thirst”, “You gave them shelter”, then He grants them
these qualities -- like a goldsmith testing gold on a touch-
stone and with the aid of wax, collecting a gram
of gold from what is rubbed off, He imagines distinctions
of merit, however incidental and unintentional, over a
series of births and multiplies them ten-fold to them.

The central concept of the passage is that
unintentional good deeds (yādṛcchikā sukṛta) form
the basis of the Lord’s grace.
382. Lalitā caritātikajjilē ivvṛttam curukka mojiyak kāpalām.

382. This message is to be seen in (extenso) in the story of Lalitā and in other places.

Queen Lalitā, a favorite consort of the king of Varanasi, explained her favored position by reference to the events of a former birth. Therein as a rat, while trying to extinguish the lamp in the temple and help herself to food-offerings, she accidentally re-kindled the dying lamp; for that unintended favor to the Lord, she was reborn in high position. (From the Viṣṇu Dharma Purāṇa)

383. Ajñārāna manusyarkal vālā tantāṇen Tiruppārkāḷ.

383. The ignorant think with indifference that (the Lord) simply blesses.


384. The wise (like Nammāḻvār), remembering (the Lord’s actions), exclaim,

"This god placed Himself inside my mind, after considering me worthy enough -- why did He not care for me for a long time before? I pray that the Lord of Tiruper surrounded by hill-like buildings, should be kind enough to tell me the reason."

(Tiruvaimoli 10.8 9)

"On the basis of what good deed does the Lord of Tiuvāṭṭār shine in my mind? -- that Lord whose form is comparable to water, collyrium and a standing mountain, who possesses the discus that returns to His hand after battling in
the desired place and whose head is scented by the sacred basil that gives forth fragrance on His body constantly."

(Tiruvaiyoli 10.6.8)

"How can I let go that Lord who looks bright after doing some mischief, looking into the eyes of the young cowherdresses? He who does mischief, who happens to be my Lord, who happens to be my life and who is like a lamp (illuminating all), He suddenly, one day, lifted me up!"

(Tiruvaiyoli 1.7.5)

"O Lord who possesses high and baffling qualities and has neither equal nor superior, O Lord, born similar to all the things of this earth, O Lord, Your helping me by being a teacher, the father, the mother who caused my birth, and by being the life of all — - lowly that I am, I cannot measure all your favours."

(Tiruvaiyoli 2.3.2)

"O Lord, having Vaikuntha as your kingdom, having the discus as your weapon and having the eagle as the emblem on your banner, O Lord, having a color similar to black clouds, O Lord, staying in the city of Sirivaramangalam where many learned in the four Vedas reside by your grace! Accepting me as one worthy, even though I was worthless before, You accepted my servitude -- I do not know the manner of repayment!"

(Tiruvaiyoli 5.7.3)

"You corrected my evil mind..."

(Tiruvaiyoli 2.7.8, quoted at number 349)

"Conferred on me mind that will always serve..."

(Tiruvaiyoli 2.7.7 quoted at number 349)
385. Let us remember the discussion which took place on this subject one day in the time of the Bhāsyakāra, when all the religious teachers had met in the assembly on the eastern side of the great hall, expecting the start of the divine procession.

The question was raised as to why the Lord turns a particular person towards Him at a particular time, if salvation is by grace without reference to deeds. The answer given by the learned was that the Lord takes unintended good deeds (yādṛcchika sukṛta) as a pretext for accepting the soul—over a series of births He finds an excuse.

386. Therefore, it is seen that goodneses done unknowingly are taken as qualification.

Examples: a person goes to the market and unintentionally passes the temple; or, chasing a cow, a man happens to go around the temple; or watering flowers, one accidentally waters a tulasi plant.

387. Even these (unknowingly done deeds) are produced to this one (the soul) in the body He (the Lord) first brought forth to this one.
388. From pondering this, (it is seen that) it is not necessary for this one (the soul) to do anything.

389. Pañhayatāka uḻuvatu naṭuvatu viḷaiyatāyppārum kṣētrattile utirimalaittu palaparyantamāmāpōle, ivaitān tanaṇaṭaiyē viḷaiyumpaṭi yāiyē pattiyulavān palam pūgattai sruṣṭita kaṭṭalai.

389. As in all directions, the seed that has fallen accidentally grows up to maturity in fields where ploughing, planting and reaping have long continued, in the same manner, the Ploughman of Bhakti (the Lord) creates, in dry land, fruit to this one (the soul) which has sprung up of its own accord, as it were.

390. Avaitānēvai yēppāl.

390. You may ask, "What are these (fruits)?"

391. Purvakruta punyāpunya palankālai cilakālam pujittu, uttarakālattil vāsanai koṭṭu pravarttikkumattanai yenumpaṭi kaiyoliṭa tacaiyē, ‘nāmār ?, nām nīṭa nilaiyētu?, namakkinimēl pākkaṭiyētū?" ēnu pirappaga cila nirupaṇa viṛṣeṇkaḷ uṇṭu; avaiyatal muṇnu coppavaiyātal.

391. (To souls) having experienced for a long time the fruits of good and bad deeds done in former births and in the future feeling disinclined towards (karma and its fruits) with the thought that life just continues on the (latent) impressions (of past karma), there are questions as to origin, "Who are we?", "What was our original position?", "Where are we going?"-these are the (fruits) referred to earlier.

Such reflections are the result of seeds sown by the Lord and are the first indications of the soul's turning toward the Lord.

392. "Yathā hi moṣakaḥ pānthe" ēnu toṭaṅki itipūtraiyu kramattai pakavac cāstrattile colliyē.
392. The manner of this is explained in the scriptures of the Lord (the Pāñcarātra Āgama-s), beginning with, “As thieves in the case of a traveller......”

_Akirbudhnya Samhitā_ 14. 34:

“As thieves in the case of a traveller who has gone away, leaving his belongings, will cease all efforts at stealing when he comes back.”

A traveller (the Lord) leaves his baggage (the soul) unattended; thieves (puṇya and pāpa) are about to steal it, when the traveller returns; the thieves run away at the very sight of the traveller.

393. “Vērītēyarul ceyvar” enṛiv vartattai spaṭamāka arulicceytāriṅē.

393. Is not this clearly stated in the words, “Gives grace without any expectation...”?

_Tiruvaimoli_ 8. 7. 8:

“I do not know any other favour! The Lord who controls me heartily gives grace without any expectation to those whom He gives (it). He, keeping in his stomach the three worlds, in a manner not affecting their routine, has taken a place in my mind, even though I am infinitisimally small.”

394. “Ceyvārkaṭku” enṛu arulukku bētu sukruta meṇgāniṅratē yēṅgil; appōtu “vērītē ēṅkiṅa viṭam cērātu.

394. If it be said, “Are not good deeds the cause of grace by the words, ‘to those who do’? (the answer is) that then (i.e. if you take the words in that sense) there is disagreement with the words, ‘without expectation.”

The questioner takes ‘ceyvārkaṭku’ to mean, “to those who do (good deeds)”, rather than, “to those whom He gives (it).”

395. Pakavatāpimukkyam sukrutatālagṛikkhe pakavat-krupaiyāle piṛakkiṅatu, atvesam sukrutattāle yēṅgil; inta pala viśeṣattukku attai sātanamākka vṛṅṅātu.
395. If it be said that the Lord's turning His face toward the soul arises from grace and not from good deeds, but the lack of hatred (toward the Lord) arises from good deeds, then, it is answered, that this special fruit cannot be from that means.

The lack of hatred of the Lord could not result merely from good deeds.

396. Śāstramum vitiyātē nāmumāiyātē yirukkīpā vittai sukrutam enē nām perītuķirapati yennennil, nāmanēru, īśvanēnēru kēṭirukkaiyāyirukkum.

396. If it be said, "How can we give the name, 'good deeds', to actions not enjoined by the scriptures and unknown to us?", the answer is, it is often heard, "not by us, but by the Lord."

We do not call these actions good deeds, but the Lord does—this is the wonder of grace.

397. Ivvartta viṣayamāka āḻvārkaḻ pācuraṅkaḻil paraspara viruttam pōle tōṟṟumavāṟṟil collukīṉa parihāramum, maṟṟumuntāna vaktavyāṅkaḻum vistarapayattāḷe collukirilom.

397. As to this, there seems to be statements contrary to one another in the hymns of the Āḻvārs, but we abstain from discussing these from fear of diffuseness. Sometimes the Āḻvārs appear to speak of good deeds as the occasion for grace, and at other times they speak of grace without cause.

398. Ākaiyāl ivan vimukapāṇa tacaivyiluṅkūṭa ujjīvikaṅkaikku kruṣi pāṇiṅga āḻvāṟagai y anusantittāḷ eppōtum nirpparanāyē yirukkumittagai.

398. Therefore, if this one (the soul) merely thinks of the Lord who laboured for the uplift (of the soul) even when this one was in a state of turning away (from Him), this one can be free from worries.
399. "Etir kulal pukku"

399. "Grace has encompassed my Lord who took the three strides in order to favour me. He took many births in order to stand against me in all my births and at all times, so that I may firmly dance and sing the hymns comprised of praise of His great qualities without minding about any other thing and with the thought that I have no succour other than the Slayer of Madhu."

(Tiruvaimoli 2. 7: 6)

400. Oruvanaippitikka nigaittu uraivalivaippaile vyaptiyum.

400. Likewise, to catch one person, people pervade the whole village.

The Lord pervades everywhere just to catch one soul.

401. Sruṣṭyavatārāṭiikalaiippaile svārttamaśka vegařīrje jñānātikar anusantippatu.

401. The wise consider that to be the intention of the (Lord's) creation and avatāras.

402. Karmapalampoḷe krupāpalamum anupavittē yaśa-vēṇum.

402. Like the fruit of karma, the fruit of grace also must be ended through experiencing it.

403. Krupai perukappukkāl iruvar svāntantaryattālum takaiya voṇṭātapaṭi yirukaraiyumāliyap perukum.

403. If the grace of the Lord begins to flow in a great flood, leaping both banks, none can stop it.

404. Payahētu karmam; apayahētu kāruṇyam.

404. Karma is the cause of fear; grace is the cause of fearlessness.
405. Payāpayāṅkaḷiṟṟantum mārimārip prāptiyanavum nātakkum.

405. Fear and non-fear, these two by turns, will go on until attainment (of the Lord). (The soul in bondage undergoes both.)


406. Knowledge of that which is to be removed (i.e. *karma*) causes fear; knowledge of the removing (by grace) causes non-fear.

407. Svatantrāṅai upayamākattāg paṟṟjpapōṭira ipprasāṇ-kantāgullatu.

407. This situation prevails only when there is attachment to Self-dependent one as the means.

408. Upṭapōṭoruvaṟṟtaiyum upṇātapōṭoruvaṟṟtaiyum collu-vār pattuppēṟṟtiṟṟē. avarkāl pācuraṅ koṇṭantu ivvarttamaṟṟutiṟṟiyuṟṟatu.

408. Indeed, there are ten persons whose speech has one intent if they have eaten and another intent if they have not. It is not from their efforts that this meaning is ascertained.

Now begins consideration of the importance of the *acārya*. One cannot always rely on ten of the Āḷvārs as sometimes they speak out of experience of the Lord and sometimes they speak without that experience.

409. Avarkalai cīrītirruppāṟṟoruvaruṇṭiṟṟē; avarpācuraṅ-koṇṭu ivvarttamaṟṟutiṟṟiyuṟṟakāṟṟāvom.

409. One there is (i.e. Madhurakavi) who kept laughing at these; from his word we should ascertain this meaning. Madhurakavi laughed at the other Āḷvārs because they had no ācārya.

410. Svarupattukkum prāpyattukkum cēṟṟturukkaveṇumirē prāpākam.
410. The means should be suitable to the essential nature (of the soul) and to the goal (the Lord). The ācārya is so suitable.

411. Vaṭukanambi āḷvāṇaiyum āṇṭānaiyum irukaraiyarenapar.

411. Vaḻuka Nambi says that Āḷvāṇ and Āṇḍān are double-minded men.

Āḷvāṇ and Āṇḍān (Kūrattāḷvāṇ and Mudaliyāṇḍān), disciples of Rāmānuja, would sometimes seek out the Lord and at other times seek their ācārya.

412. Prāpyattukku pratamaparvam ācārya kaiṅkaryam; matyamaparvam pakavat kaiṅkaryam; caramaparvam pākavata kaiṅkaryam.

412. The first step to the goal is service of the ācārya; the middle step is service to the Lord; the last step is service to Bhāgavatas.

413. Svarūpa prāptiyai sāstram puruṣārttamākac collānigka prāptipalāmyk koṅṭu kaiṅkaryam varukīṟṟīppole satyavivrittiyāyk koṅṭu caramaparvam varakkaṭavatu.

413. Scripture teaches the attainment of self-nature as the ultimate goal of man; since service comes as the fruit of attainment, the last step comes as the further extension of the ultimate goal.

414. Itu tāṅ turlapam.

414. This (the last step), indeed, is difficult to achieve.

415. Viṣayapravāṇanukku attaiṟṟu pākavat viṣayattile varukaikkulla arumai palaṟṟu, pratamaparvattaiṟṟu, caramaparvattile varukaikkulla arumai.

415. Leaving the first stage and coming to the last stage is more difficult than leaving attachment to sensory objects and coming toward the Lord.
416. Aṅku tōṣatarśanattālē mijalām; inkatu ceyyavoppātu.

416. In the latter case, there may be turning away (from sensory objects) at the sight of defects; in the former case, there are no defects to make it so.

Turning from the Lord to the Bhāgavata is difficult because there are no defects in the Lord.

417. Tōṣamuṇṭāṇālum kuṇampōlē upātēyamāyirukkum.

417. Even if defect should appear, like virtue, it is acceptable.

418. Lōkavipātamāyirē iruppatu.

418. It is as the reverse of the world.

When one finds defects in the world, one turns away; this is not so when one finds defects in the Lord.

419. Kuṇam upātēyamākaikkītāna hētu tōṣattukku-muṇṭirē.

419. The very same reason one takes for virtues applies to the taking of defects.

The soul’s relationship to the Lord is a natural one; rather than one based on the Lord’s attributes; therefore, one accepts whatever appears to belong to the Lord, whether it appears as a defect or as a virtue.


420. There is the teaching that He is unmerciful and before the mouth is closed (the teaching) that He is merciful.

Sometimes the Āḻvārs say the Lord is merciful immediately after saying He is unmerciful.

421. Ippti collumpati pāṇirē krupaiyāyeyēnē snēha-mum upakārasmrutiyum natantatirē.
421. There has been love and gratitude (on their part) that out of grace this teaching (the teaching concerning salvation) has been given.

422. Nirkṛupaṅkāka śaṅkittuc culluvaṇvastaiyilum kārṇattai svakatamakavirē colliṟṟu.

422. Even in the state of saying He is unmerciful, the cause is said to be the self alone.

They recognize that the fault is their own and not the Lord's.

423. Kūṅatoṣaṅkalīṟṟum kṣudra puruṣārttattaiyilum puruṣārta kāṣṭaiyiyilum kulaikkum.

423. Virtue and defect (of the Lord), these two put an end not only to petty aims, but even to the highest aim (i.e., service of Bhāgavatas).

Sometimes grace overwhelms the Ājvārs such that they lose sight of service to the community of Bhāgavatas.

424. Nityaṁatruvayīṟē yiruppatu.

424. (The enjoyment of the Lord) is an eternal enemy.

425. Ippatī prāpyattai yaṟṟutiṟṟatal atukku satruśamāka vēṇumirē prāpakam.

425. If the goal is to be accomplished in this way (see 412), the means should be suitable to that.

426. Allatapōtu prāpya prāpakaṅkalukku aikyamillai.

426. Otherwise, there is no identity of goal and means.

427. Isvaranaipparrukai kaiyaiippitittuk kāriyaṅkollumōpāti; acārīyaṁai parrukai kālaippitittuk kāriyaṅkollumōpāti.

427. Embracing the Lord is like taking, by grasping the hand: embracing the acārya is like taking, by grasping the foot.
428. Ācārya iruvarkkum upakārakāg.

428. The acārya serves both (the soul and the Lord).

429. Iśvaraṅguṇku seṣavastuvai yupakarittāg; cētanaṅguṇku seṣiyai yupakarittān.

429. To the Lord he shows the seṣa; to the soul he shows Seṣi.

430. Iśvarāntānum acāryatvattai ācāippaṭṭirukkum.

430. The Lord himself desires ācāryahood.

431. Ākaiyirē kuruparamparaiyil anvayittatum, ērikītaiyum apayapratanamum arulicceytatum.

431. Therefore, there is (His) association in the line of teachers, and the teaching of the Gītā and of the grant of fearlessness (in the Vibhiṣaṇa-episode of the Rāmāyaṇa) The Lord himself takes the role of acārya on more than one occasion.

432. Ācāryaṅguṇku satrua pratyupakāram-paṇṭalāvatu vipūticatuṣṭayamum iśvaratvayamumunṭā kil.

432. If there is to be suitable return of service made to the acārya, there must be four kingdoms and two Lords.

Since there is only one Lord and two kingdoms (the earthly and the heavenly), it is impossible to repay the ācārya.

433. Iśvara sampantam pantamokṣaṇkalīraṇṭukkum potuvāyirukkum; ācārya sampantam moksattukkē hētuvāyirukkum.

433. Common to both bondage and release is the relationship to the Lord. The relationship to the acārya is only for the cause of release.

434. Pakavallāpam ācāryaṅgālē.

434. The attainment of the Lord is through the acārya.
435. Acaryalapam pakavanale.

435. The attainment of the acarya is through the Lord.

436. Upakaryavastu kauravattale acaryapilkattil mikavum-
upakarakap tavaran.

436. The Lord is more exalted than the acarya through the
greatness of the thing gifted.

437. Acarya sampantam kulaiyate kitantal jnanapakti-
vairikyaankal untakkik kollalam. Acarya sampantam
kualintal avai yuipagalam prayajamillai.

437. From abiding without giving up connection with the
acarya, knowledge, devotion and renunciation may be
grasped; from the leaving off of connection with acarya,
there is no purpose for these, even if they arise.

438. Tali kitantal pusanaankal paanippupalam; talipagan
pusanaankaellam-avatyattai vijaikkum.

438. The Tali abiding, jewels may be prepared and worn; the
Tali gone, jewels give rise only to disgrace.

The Tali is the sacred necklace worn by a woman
as a symbol of the marriage commitment. When
the Tali is no longer worn at the death of the
husband, the widow should no longer wear
jewels.

439. Tamaraiyai alartakatava atityantane niraippirintal
attai yurlattumapole, svarupa vikasattaip paanumis-
varun tane, acarya sampantam kulaintal attai
vappapanum.

439. As the very sun which causes the lotus to blossom, dries it
up when it is separated from water, so the same Lord who
causes the blossoming of the essential nature (of the soul)
causes the fading of that when the relationship with the
acarya has ended.
440. Ittaiyoliya pakavat sampantam durlapam.

440. Without this (relationship to the ācārya), it is difficult to attain relationship to the Lord.

441. Irantumamaiyātō, naṭuvil perunkuṭi yeppēggi;

441. The two (the ācārya and the Lord) are appropriate, but why the intervening noble family (the Bhagavatas)?

442. Koṭiyakkōjkompilē tuvakkumpōtu cuḷiḷkāl vēntumāpēḷe, ācāryānvayattukum itu vēnum.

442. As there is need of small sticks when raising creepers to their props, so there is need of this (the noble family) for making association with ācārya.

443. Svāpimānattālē ṭāvarāpimānattāik kulaittukkōnta vivāgukku, ācāryāpimānamoliya katiyillaiyeṟṟu pilḷai palakāllum arulicceyyakkēṭṭirukkaiyayirukkum.

443. (Vaṭakkuttiruviti) Pillai was often heard to say, “There is no way except the affection of the ācārya (acāryabhimana) for him whose self-conceit blocks the affection of the Lord.”

Vaṭakkuttiruvitip Pillai (Lokācārya’s father) heard the above exposition from his guru Nampillai.

444. Sva svātantryapayattālē pakti naḷuvigṛu.

444. Bhakti is lost from fear belonging to independence.

One who follows the path of bhakti necessarily asserts himself; consequently, he is subject to the fear that the Lord will not help him.

445. Pakavat svātantryapayattālē prapatti naḷuvigṛu.

445. Prapatti is lost from fear that arises from the independence of the Lord.

Since one does not know what the Lord is going to do, there may be hesitation in surrendering.
446. Acāryanaiyum tān parāmpāru ahamkāra karpa-
 mākaiyāle, kālankopātū mātrarāmāmāpāti.

446. Since attachment to the acārya is itself pregnant with
 pride, it is like taking a ring from the god of death
 (inviting destruction).

Any self-assertion or independence on the part
of the seeker disallows true surrender to the
Lord as the only means. Therefore, the acārya,
who is free of pride, should initiate the relation-
ship.

447. Acāryāpimāṇamē yuttārakam.

447. The affection of the acārya alone is deliverer.

448. Kaippatā porulai kaiwittu porulai
kapicikkaka kātavanāllag.

448. One should not throw away treasure that is in the hand
 desiring treasure that is in the earth.

The acārya is close at hand.

449. Vītāyipantapōtu karastamāṇa utakattai upēkṣittu,
jīmūta jaḷattaiyum sākara salilattaiyum saritsalilattai-
yum vāpīkūpapayassukkalaiyum vāncikkak kātava-
 nallag.

449. When there is thirst, let not one disregard the water lying
 in the hand, desiring the water of clouds, the ocean, the
 river, tanks or wells.

450. Pāṭukkētkumītamum, kūppitukētkumītamum, kutit-
tavītamum, vaḷaitta viṭamum, uttumītamum ellām
vakuttavītamē yeṣIRRukkakatavān.

450. The place where songs are heard, the place where calls
(for help) are heard, the place of the step, the place of
surrounding, the place of feeding: one ought consider all
these as appropriate (as acārya) (to the soul).

The place described is the place of the Lord
where the nityasūris praise, the place where devas
call on the Lord for help, the places of incarnations of the Lord, where the Lord is omnipresent and where the Lord feeds the soul. To the seeker, the acārya should be all the above.

451. Those who are independent and those who worship other gods are against this one (the soul); those dependent on the acārya are friends and those who are obedient to the Lord are not to be regarded.

The latter are not hostile to the seeker, but they are not going about the matter in the right way, i.e. through the acārya.

452. The two, knowledge and practice, are accessories to the means for others (those who do not have an acārya); for these (who have an acārya), they are accessories to the goal.

What is part of the means for others, is part of the result of having attained the Lord for one who has the affection of an acārya.

453. For him (the prapanna) there is renunciation of forbidden practices, lest there be destruction to himself and to others.

454. From connection with the three faults (faults toward the acārya, the Lord and the Bhāgavatas), he would be destroyed; neglecting him or agreeing with his practices, others would be lost.
455. Vibhitapokam nisittapokampole loka viruttamum-
mangru; narakahetuvumapgru; ayrirukkaceeyts
svarupaviruttamumay vedantaviruttamumay
prapyapratipantakumumay irukkaiyale tyaiyam.

455. Unlike unlawful sexual enjoyment, lawful enjoyment is
not condemned by the world nor the cause of hell; even
so, both of these are to be renounced as opposed to
essential nature, opposed by the Vedanta and a hindrance
to attainment.

456. Pokyapatuttikulaintu tarmaputtya pravarttitalum
svarupam kulaiyum.

456. Even by giving up sexual pleasures as means of enjoyment
and adopting them on the basis of dharma, there is
destruction of essential nature.

Even on the basis of dharma, sexual activity is
a distraction from complete surrender to the
Lord through the acarya.

457. "Ksetrani mitrani"enkira slokattilavastai pirakka-
vegum svarupam kulaiyamaikku.

457. That there be no destruction of essential nature it is
necessary to live in the state (shown) in the verse
"Fields, friends ..."

_Hastikri Mahatmya:

"Whether fields, friends, wealth, sons, wife, animals
or house-property, O Lord, for those who are
drawn to (Your) lotus-feet, all these become
harmful."

458. Prapyapumiyil pravayumam, tyajyapumiyill
jihasaiyum anupavalappattil atmatarapayogayataiyum,
upaya catusthayattukkum vepum.

458. Becoming devoted to the situation of attainment, desiring
to abandon the situation of separation, and being
unable to bear the soul in the absence of experience (of
the Lord), these are necessary to the four upayas.
The four upayás are: bhakti, prapatti, the Lord Himself directly and the Lord through grace. One may attain by the self-effort of bhakti or prapatti, by the grace of the Lord through self-effort or purely by the grace of the Lord. The last two may be interpreted in terms of acárya as well.

459. “Palutakátontarinten” enkira pāttai purvopâyattukku pramāṇamāka anusantippatu.

459. The words, “I have understood something which won’t be in vain...”, are to be considered as authority for the former upāya (i.e. by the grace of the acárya through self-effort).

Fourth Tiruvantādi, 89:

“I have understood something which won’t be in vain, worshipping those who resort to the Lord, meditating on the feet of the Lord of the milk ocean, without any distraction—whoever enjoys this life with humility will destroy the sins attached (to the soul), will open the doors of Vaikuṇtha and remain there with greatness.”

460. “Nallaven toli” “māṟṟaya tāṇavanai” enkira pāṭṭukkalaiyum sṭotrattil muṭintal ṣlokattaiyum ‘paṭur manuṣyah’ enkira ṣlokattaiyum itukku pramāṇamāka anusantippatu.

460. “O my good maid!...”; “Will themselves vanquish those...”- these stanzas and the śloka at the end of the Sītāra (Rāma), and the śloka, “Cattle or humans...”, should be considered authority for this acaryābhimana.

Nacchiyār Tirumoli 10.10:

“O my good maid! the supreme Lord, our supreme one, elevated on the serpent-couch, is wealthy, great Lord; we are small men; what can we do? Viṣṇucitta (Periyālvār) of Śrīvilliputtur, if he is able to obtain a suitable prize from their god, let me see that!” (Āndāl is languishing—the Lord is such a big man.
perhaps He doesn’t care—her father, Periyājvār, will help her out.)

_Fourth Tiruvantadi, 18:

"The merits of those who praise those that praise in a special way the man-lion that ripped open the chest of the inimical demon, with sharp nails, will themselves vanquish those of the latter (the merits of those who praise the Lord directly)." (The point seems to be that the merits of praising the Bhāgavatas are greater than those who praise the Lord without the good offices of an acārya.)

_Stotra Ratna 65:

"Grant me your grace regardless of my own conduct, having in view my grand-father, Nāthamuni, the self-possessed one who is the extreme excellence of sincere love to your lotus-feet.

_Source unknown:

"Cattle or humans or birds, who associate with Vaiṣṇavas, by that alone they will enjoy that highest place of Viṣṇu."

461. Ācāryāpimāṇantā, prapattipālē upāyāntaranākaḷukku aṅgamumāy svatantramumāyirukkum.

462. Paktiyilaśaktaṅukkup prapatti; prapattiylaśaktaṅukku itu.

463. Prapatti is for those who are not able to do bhakti; this (ācāryābhimana) is for those unable to do prapatti.

463. Itu pratamam svarupattai pallaativaikkum, pinpu puśpitaamākkum, anantaram palaparyantamākkum.

463. At first this (ācāryābhimana) makes the essential nature produce a sprout, then produce a flower and finally, the full fruit.
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