love and affection. Very fitly, therefore, you deserve to be called the Divine Mother of the Universe.

The same saint, Bhattaraka Swami, as he is popularly called, sings in another place that the glories of the Divine Mother far outshine the glories of the Divine father and the Divine virtues of the former far excel those of the latter. He takes, for instance, one such virtue into consideration, namely Forgiveness and analyses it critically, He finds that the forgiveness of the Divine father cannot bear comparison with the forgiveness of the Divine Mother. For, He forgives only when we fall at his feet and pray for his forgiveness, whereas, She forgives unasked and of Her own accord. Her forgiveness is purely gratuitous. The saint prays to Her thus—"O Mother, let Thy voluntary and absolutely uncalled for forgiveness drive away all our fears; for we are the blackest of all sinners, when we think of our unpardonable sins, we are in deep despair. But when we are reminded of Thy forgiveness, which is always given gratis, we cheer up, we are freed from all our fears and we become very happy whenever we think of Thy forgiveness." The saint then illustrates the truth of the statement by a concrete example. He cites the examples of Sita and of Rama and compares their virtues with each other. He proves successfully that the virtues of Sita far outshine the virtues of her husband Rama. Thus,

"मानन्मेधिलि राष्ट्रीश्यवि तदेवाद्भुतप्राप्याश्रास्वयम्
रघुनाथ पवनामाजानन्दुता रामस्य गोष्टीज्ञता"
The gist of this quotation is that the glory of the Holy Assembly of the Divine Mother far transcends the glory of the Holy Assembly of the Divine Father and, the virtues of the Divine Mother far outshine the virtues of the Divine Father. To realise the truth of this statement a glance only is needed to be cast upon the scene afforded by the assembly of Rama and his followers when preparing for their fight with Ravana and upon that afforded by Sita, sitting as a poor and helpless prisoner in the Asoka Garden in the midst of many cruel-hearted maidservants of Ravana charged with the task of torturing her almost to death until she consents to forsake her husband Rama and become the mistress of the wicked king of monsters Ravana.

If we were to draw a contrast between the two scenes, it would be at once manifest that the virtues of Rama cannot stand comparison with those of Sita. In the assembly of Rama, we find that he gave shelter and promised protection to two such beings as sought for his protection in a spirit of absolute resignation, namely, to (i) a crow and (ii) to Bibhishana. The crow had incurred his displeasure by tearing with its nails the breast of his wife Sita. He flung an arrow at it. It flew away in fear of being killed by the arrow and tried in vain to find
shelter somewhere or other. But finding shelter nowhere it fell at the feet of Rama and cried for Mercy. Sita was deeply touched with its distress and entreated her husband to pardon it. The crow was pardoned and was allowed to escape with the loss of an eye only. This is an instance of Rama’s kindness to a fallen enemy. Secondly, Bibhishana being highly displeased with the sinful behaviour of his brother Ravana, and receiving only insults in return for the precious advice he gave him, deserted his home, his dear ones—wife and children—and all his dearest possessions on earth and sought shelter under Rama. Bibhishana said to Rama that he had forsaken everything in the hope of becoming a follower of Rama, who at once received him as a friend and admitted him into the assembly of his followers. This is another instance of Rama’s kindness even to the kindred of his mortal enemy.

Let us now examine the virtues of Sita in her state of imprisonment. She was being constantly persecuted by the cruel and wicked maid-servants of Ravana when Hanumán saw her in that pitiable condition—Hanumán who was charged with the mission of ascertaining the whereabouts of Sita and of consoling her with the happy news that her husband was making a grand preparation to recover her as soon as possible by killing the wicked Ravana with all his progeny and party. When Hanumán saw how cruelly she was being persecuted by the maid-servants he resolved to be fully revenged for the wrongs she suffered at their hands. He went away with a heavy
heart and when he was deputed again to communicate to Sita the happy news of Rama's victory and her own deliverance, Hanumán, before escorting Sita to her husband, wanted to be fully revenged for her persecutions by putting her persecutors, the maidservants of Ravana, to a cruel death. Meanwhile, before this second advent of Hanumán, the woeful wailings of these persecutors at the news of their Lord's death reached the ears of Sita. Moved with their lamentations, she learnt on enquiry that they were crying simply because they were sure that Hanumán would wreak his vengeance fully upon them and torture them to a cruel death now that their lord Ravana was dead and now that there was no one to save them from his wrath. Sita immediately removed their fears and anxiety and set them at rest by promising her protection. When Hanuman came to her and begged her permission to punish her persecutors, she only expressed her dissent and disapproval of the act by turning her face away from him and setting with her back towards him—a sign of disgust and displeasure. She said nothing, but, Hanuman understood that she was very much displeased with him for asking her permission to do something which, in her eyes, was extremely dishonourable and disgraceful. He had thought that he would please her by putting her persecutors to a cruel torture before her eyes. He had, however, thoroughly misunderstood her divine nature and her superhuman character. For, she said presently,
i.e., "O best of monkeys, who should ever think of venting his spleen upon such unworthy objects as these poor creatures? Are they not absolutely dependent on the pleasure of their king? Have they not been executing the wicked commands of their king simply through fear of incurring his serious displeasure? Are not menial maid-servants simply creatures in the hands of their master and mistress? And are they not guided entirely by the will of their lord and lady? When they do something wrong at the bidding of their lord, have they any choice in it? A subordinate is not to blame when he is forced to do something by his superior or when he is strictly enjoined by his superior to do something on pain of incurring his serious displeasure. What faults, then, have these poor creatures been found guilty of that you should think of avenging the wrong I have suffered at their hands by torturing them to a cruel death? Whatever they have done, they have done at the bidding of their lord. I consider them to be fully innocent and I highly disapprove of your intention to punish unnecessarily innocent creatures like these."

Hanuman replied, "O kind-hearted Mother, let me humbly remind you that wicked as he was Ravana never ordered his maid-servants to persecute you so cruelly as they have done. He simply asked them
to guard you in your imprisonment, to use persuasion and not force. They simply took advantage of their position to betray their extremely wicked and cruel nature by persecuting you unnecessarily and unbidden. Whatever wrongs, therefore, you have suffered at their hands must be fully retaliated now. Your poor son, Hanuman, can never bear the idea of pardoning the cruel persecutors of his venerable Mother. I humbly beseech you not to depend such extremely wicked instruments of oppression from my noble indignation."

Finding him so firm in his purpose, Sita again said to him:

"पापानी वास्तुभाना वा वधाहिता प्रवक्षम।
काथं कव्षमायिष्य न कविब्धापराधिनं॥"

(The Ramayana—Valmiki).

i.e. "You are at best a monkey; you only know how to walk by leaps and bounds. It is your nature to do so and you betray your nature in all things. You do not understand business. In business, one should never proceed by leaps and bounds, as you do. Besides, what you have said is utterly unworthy of the servant of the very noble-hearted lord you serve under. He is an Aryya (पार्थ) or nobleness personified. And, mercy is the most essential attribute of a truly noble mind. •He who has such a noble mind should always show mercy even to his mortal enemy and even if such enemy be the very image of vice and the embodiment of all sorts of evil and even if his offences be so heinous in their nature
as to be punishable with death alone. Further, let me ask you 'Who is there in this world that has committed no sin?' There is none. Have I not sinned myself when I sent my husband away in pursuit of a golden deer—a monster in disguise—and thus voluntarily exposed myself to a danger which has cost the lives of so many innocent creatures? Has not the great Lakshmana also sinned when he left me to myself and went away in quest of his elder brother, Rama, at my words which he ought to have wholly disregarded in consideration of the fact that Rama left him as my guard and protector in his absence? Is not your worthy Lord, Rama himself guilty, when he killed so many monsters in the forest of Dandaka, who had done no offence to him personally. He came to the forest merely as an exile at the bidding of his father, who never bade him wage an eternal warfare with the monsters of the forest. He had no business whatever to kill the monsters of the forest and thus invite unnecessary dangers. Again, are not you yourself to blame when you burnt the golden city of Lanka and killed the servants of Ravana unbidden? You were deputed simply to ascertain the whereabouts of myself and console me with the news of your Lord. But, on your arrival here, you did many things of your own accord and for which you had no sanction whatever. You see, therefore, that if put to the test, no one in this world would be found altogether free from faults. Should you, then, being the ideal servant of an ideal master, ever think of punishing these innocent
creatures, my cruel persecutors, as you say, who are the best objects of your pity now? If you do so, it would be a disgrace to yourself and to your all-noble and all-merciful master, Rama himself."

By these and such like irresistible arguments Sita succeeded in pacifying the anger of Hanuman and saved her cruel persecutors from his vengeance and from the jaws of death.

Language can hardly conceive of an idea, so grand so lofty, so noble as this cited above. The idea, "पापानां वायुसमानं वा......नापराधिं" finds parallel nowhere and stands unique in its spirit and sentiment. That we should be merciful even to our mortal enemy that we should treat kindly even those who are the very images of vice and the living embodiments of all sorts of evil and who are so guilty as to deserve death by all means, that we should be ever alive to the truth that there is none in this world who can boast of being altogether free from faults, are lessons which are so grand and noble in their very nature as to deserve being impressed on our mind so deeply as to fear no erasure. It is an idea which is the very essence of Religion and which is at the root of all virtues. If we remember it always in our minds and if we always try to reduce it into practice, the mission of our life would be fulfilled. It must always be the ruling principle of our conduct. The lesson taught to Hanuman by the kind hearted and all accomplished Sita should be recorded in all the languages of the world and it should be preached from one end of the world to the other. The idea contained in this lesson
is so holy as to purify our heart by washing off all its harshness and unpleasantness. It must be noted here that the promise made by Sita to shield her cruel persecutors from the vengeance of Hanuman was purely gratuitous. They never prayed to Her to make such a promise. They were too well aware of their own cruel treatment and unkind behaviour towards Sita to think of saving themselves with her help. Their lamentations, however, pierced her to the quick and unasked she volunteered her services to save her bitterest enemies from a death which they so well deserved.

If we now weigh in the balance the virtues of Sita with those of Rama, the latter would be found to kick the beam at once. Rama showed his mercy to those who fell at his feet and prayed to him for his pardon and protection and Sita to those who had unnecessarily persecuted her almost to death who had never even dreamt of going to her for her protection and help. The forgiveness of Sita was thus purely gratuitous.

The consideration of this pleasing and hopeful idea encourages the Saint Bhattaraka Swami to pray to the Divine Mother for Her gratuitous forgiveness. He confesses to Her that he is infinitely more guilty than the cruel persecutors of Sita and humbly prays to the Divine Mother that Her gratuitous forgiveness may shield him from the vengeance of the Divine father. "ता न: सान्ध्रखागसः खुखयतु चार्ग्नस्म्वाभक्षिकी" Thus it is seen everywhere that the virtues of an ideal woman far outshine the virtues of an ideal
man. If the two be separately analysed it would appear that woman is the combination of the tender graces and man of the sterner qualities. It is only by virtue of his association with woman, who is very aptly called his better half that man reflects in himself the graces which are peculiarly her own. Man is by nature hard in his heart and woman soft and tender in her heart.

Let us now turn to our Divine Father, and see if the truths which hold good in the case of man and woman here hold equally good in Heaven and if they are applicable to our father there or not. In doing so, however, we enter the world of Faith. But nevertheless, faith may sometimes be found to stand on the foundation of facts, experiences, certain truths and immutable laws. If it be at all possible to conceive of God as our father, it is far easier to conceive of Him as our Mother also. It is a natural fact that a child knows more of its mother than of its father, and, in the first stage, it recognises its mother only. It is the mother, who gradually teaches her child to recognise the father also. Again, we always see that the three entities namely, father, mother, and child are inseparably associated with one another. In the world of Religion, therefore, if we acknowledge God as the father and man as His child, we must also acknowledge the third entity, namely, God as the mother. For, the conception of the whole thing would be incomplete if either of the three be omitted. The three entities, father, mother, and child is a complete idea in nature. But
only two entities father and child, or even mother and child is an incongruity. If by mere analogy, therefore, we regard God as our Father and ourselves as His children and ignore the third element, namely, God as our mother, the analogy itself is defective. If it be argued that it is not at all a mere analogy but a truth in the world of faith and religion that there is only God, the father and men His children and that there is no God, the Mother, still, we are free to compare this truth with that which equally asserts the existence of the three entities, namely, God, as Father, God as Mother, and we their Children and we are equally free to choose either of the two truths.

A still more weighty consideration is the fact that man is always regarded as the sinful child of God and he needs must be redeemed and reclaimed by the Father. A child who has sinned against his father, and, specially, when the sins are so heavy as to be unpardonable in their very nature, has no hope whatever of being ever redeemed by his father, inasmuch as the father would always turn away from him at the very sight of his sins. But, if, in such a case there be a mother who is always blind to the defects of her child and who also combines in herself such graces as to have the father entirely in her hands, she would find no difficulty whatever in having her child redeemed and reconciled to the father. This truth cannot be denied and disputed.

Again, if we assume only two entities, namely, father and infinite sinful children, it would at once
appear that the children would all perish in no time. If a mother dies soon after childbirth, the father is at a loss. At this crisis, the father would invariably appoint a good nurse to take care of the child. The father is by nature utterly incompetent for the task of nourishing and bringing up the child. That onerous and responsible duty always devolves upon the mother: If, then, it be difficult for a father to take care of even one motherless child, how much more difficult would the task be of bringing up many such children. The father himself would surely die of despair when he finds himself so unfortunate as to have to take care of infinite motherless children. Here perhaps, someone would come forward with the argument "That which is not possible with man is possible with God." It is possible with God, no doubt. But how?

Let the two ideas,

The Divine Father, taking care of his countless children without the help and co-operation of their Divine Mother,

and,

The Divine Father taking care of his infinite children with the aid and co-operation of the Divine Mother,

be compared and considered side by side, and the question will answer for itself.

The Divine Father can save so many sinful children only with the gratuitous help and co-operation of the Divine Mother. To ignore the entity of the
Divine Mother is to deprive the Divine Father of this valuable help and co-operation.

Again, to a sinful child who turns penitent and who is eager to be reconciled to his father, the idea that he has an affectionate mother who is always blind to his defects and who is ever ready to reconcile him to his father without any ado is very much pleasing, hopeful, and encouraging. If, therefore, we sinners of this earth only remember that we have a Divine Mother who is ever anxious of reconciling us to our Divine Father and if we sinners of this earth only remember that we have a saviour in our own Divine Mother, if we only turn to Her and cry, "Mother, receive thy sinful children unto Thy bosom and save them from their sins," we are then and there redeemed. For, our Divine Mother is constantly praying for our redemption gratuitously, pleading our cause before our Divine Father and has already secured His pardon for us. We sinners, therefore, need only turn penitent and turn to our Divine Mother to be redeemed and reclaimed for our eternal sins.

The saints of Southern India, past as well as present, preach this grand doctrine to the whole world. They all acknowledge the Blessed Ramanuja Swami (an incarnation of Ananta Deva or the Ideal servant of God in Heaven) to be their Spiritual Preceptor. And it is only Ramanuja Swami who has revealed the pleasing truth that our Divine Mother is our natural and original saviour. He calls the Divine Mother Sri (Śrī) (the sixfold derivation of
the term (page 67) has already been given in the chapter preceding) and the sect to which he belongs is called the Sri Sampradaya (श्रीसम्प्रदाय) inasmuch as the followers of this sect acknowledge the Divine Mother Sri (ਸ੍ਰੀ:) to be their original saviour and inasmuch as they hold that we sinful children can approach our Divine Father only through our Divine Mother Sri, whom they regard as the Mediatrix between God and the sinful creatures. The followers of this sect, therefore call themselves as Srivaishnavas (श्रीवाईन्द्रवा:) as distinguished from the other Vaishnavas. The predecessors of Ramanuja also preached the same truth, but as they could not make it a popular religion, Ramanuja himself is regarded as the real founder of the doctrine in consideration of his having preached it successfully all over India and the doctrine is called after him as the Ramanuja Siddhanta.

The conception of God both as our Father and Mother is more pleasing, more encouraging and more hopeful than the conception of God as Father only. It is also more natural and therefore more attractive.

Again, we can never think of God as our Father without thinking of God as our Mother. If we do so at all, it is a defect of the thinking faculty for to conceive of God as Father only and as apart from any conception of God as Mother also is to conceive of a flower apart from its smell. A flower and its perfume are inseparably associated with each other and it is only the perfume that makes the flower sweet.

The Saint Bhattarakka Swami sings in another place,
“तत्वंशर्योत्त श्रवणि करणे मन्यवतेः।
तवेदं निपाध्ययनिष्ठतं श्रीरसिः यतः॥
प्रस्तुतं पुष्पकीर्मिपि परिसल्लिं जिगमितुः।
नंतेरं लाहेरं सदृश देितं कामित् कावयतै॥”

(Sri-Guna-Ratna Kosa)

i.e. “O Divine Mother, Thou who art the
embodiment of all blessings, it is Thy contact alone
by virtue of which the Divine Father receives His
graces. For, in Thy very essence, Thou art the
sum total of all graces, virtues and blessings.” A
king is a king by virtue of his title only. Strip him
of this title and he is an ordinary man. Similarly,
God is the Lord of all blessings simply by virtue of
His association with the Divine Mother, who, in her
very essence, is the embodiment of all blessings what-
ever. Separate the Lord from Her and He is no
longer the Lord of all blessings but simply a Lord.
The Divine Mother gives a title to the Divine
Father; Cp. “श्री: पति:” sifted from “श्री:.” He
becomes an ordinary “पति:”.

The word “Blessing” श्री: is not, however, a mere
title to the Divine Mother, sri, (श्री:) for, she is in herself
the natural embodiment of all blessings. It is
pre-eminently the perfume which gives a flower the
title “sweet-scented.” Strip the flower of its perfume
and it is nothing; it is worthless. When we speak
of the excellence of the perfume, however, we never
say, the perfume is so sweet because of this or because
of that or because of anything whatever.” In other
words, the perfume gives a title to the flower (the
title "sweet-scented"). but, there is nothing to give a title to the perfume itself. The excellence of the perfume, therefore, makes the flower excellent. Similarly, the excellence of the Divine Mother makes the Divine Father excellent.

Man has his virtues, no doubt. But, it is only his association with woman that gives him an idea of the tender graces of a woman. A man who has never seen a woman is an imperfect man inasmuch as he has no idea whatever of the excellent virtues and graces of a woman. It is a patent fact that some virtues are peculiar to man only and some graces are peculiar to woman only. God, therefore, who combines in Himself all the graces and virtues and who is the perfection of all manly virtues as well as the perfection of all feminine graces must surely be regarded as having a male as well as a female aspect or, better, a divinely male and a divinely female aspect. As it is undeniable that the Divine attributes are partly masculine and partly feminine, it is very easy to conceive of God both as our Father and as our Mother. And a child who knows both his father and his mother is surely far better than a child who knows only his father or only his mother. The growth, development and nature of the latter will surely be incomplete, imperfect, defective as well as unnatural. In the same way a man who can conceive of God both as his Father as well as his Mother may be compared with a man who can conceive of only one aspect of Him and the difference will at once appear to be very striking.
Again, when we consider the question of servitude, the difference in the result is seen to be very great. He who serves and pleases his father as well as his mother may be compared with him who serves and pleases only one of them and in the same degree, and the result will appear to vary very greatly.

Besides, to think of the all-glorious kingdom of Heaven, to think of the still more glorious king of Heaven and never to think of the all-transcendent and all-glorious, all-graceful, all-perfect, all-merciful, all-good and all-accomplished Queen of Heaven is something unnatural and unpleasant. A kingdom which has always a king only but which has never seen a queen, is surely a defective, disagreeable and undesirable place of habitation, though it be Heaven itself. A king who is never blessed with a queen is at best only a fraction of a king.

King and Queen are correlative terms. The idea of king includes the idea of queen. We should, therefore, always like to think of the King of Heaven along with the Queen of Heaven.

We should always serve the king and the Queen of Heaven together. A king without a queen is dangerous to serve. A king with a queen is far more easy and safe to serve. The queen is surely the better half of the king.

The worship of God, only as the King of Heaven must surely be a very dangerous and difficult task and it does not seem to be consistent with reason, truth and analogy. But, the worship of God in His dual aspect as the King and the Queen of Heaven is
at once easy and pleasant, natural and consistent with reason, truth and analogy.

Let us conclude this chapter with some of the solemn hymns which recount the glories of our Divine Mother, in the words of the Saint Bhattaraka Swami:—

"ऐश्वर्यस्वरूपतिः परसं पदं वा।
कथितपितृक्षलिंगं वहति विवीर्णं॥
पशौ न विशिष्टविचितं ज्ञातमिवः जाश्य।
लोकलोकतिष्ठति कोष्ठसुदारभावः॥"

(Sri-Guna-Ratna-Kosa "बीर्गुणरत्नकोशः")

"Mother, your manner of bestowing the divine gifts upon your devotees is transcendentally graceful and charming. Even after heaping all the choicest gifts upon a devotee, even after showering all your choicest blessings upon him, you appear to be ashamed of having done nothing to him. This generosity of Thine strikes us with mute admiration."

Again,

"ज्योतिर्योगर्भं यदं सष्टि सुमुद्रद्रवणेः निष्प्रस्फुटं।
गिर्देचं दुलक्ष्यं दाक्ष्यरसिकं भूमा संधिं पराम्॥
सुप्रस्फुटा दासरसिकं भास्य लम्बया बङ्गत्।
सर्वभृं लम्बयं लम्बवः ज्ञातवः कोष्ठसुदारभावः॥"

(Idem)

In these lines, the Saint Sri Parasara Bhattaryya (श्रीपरासरभाव) prays to the Divine Mother and invokes Her Divine blessing thus:—"Mother, may
I enjoy the supreme bliss of Divine servitude along with those who are nearest to my heart for a long hundred years in this Heavenly city of Sri Rangam, without ever being hampered by any obstacle or misery; may I continue to enjoy the supreme delight of Divine servitude for ever here, unfettered by a sense of crime, and unmolested by any domestic misfortune. May I be ever so busy in serving Thee and Thy Holy Assembly as to forget myself altogether and may I be literally transformed into the very dust of the lotus-like feet of Thyself and Thy Lord. O Mother, Thou art Thyself my Father, Mother and everything. Let Thy absolute and gratuitous Grace receive me for ever unto Thy Holy Feet. May Thou continue to shower Thy choicest blessings upon all Thy devotees, upon this King of sinners and upon all Thy children.” Amen!

The fourth purification, therefore, consists in the first place in our being reconciled to our Divine Father through the mediation of the Divine Mother, and, secondly, in our serving both of them simultaneously. Worship or servitude only of the Father or only of the Mother does not produce so quick and good a result as the worship or servitude of both does. If we can please our Father and Mother both, the result would be ceteris paribus, far better than if we please only one of them and to the same degree. Again, servitude of the Divine Father and Mother reaches its culminating point when it ends in the servitude of the Lord’s devotees. The Divine Father and Mother are both served best when Their devotees are
served. We can please the Lord most only by pleasing the Lord’s devotees. Cf.

“भाराधनानां सर्वं विषयोराधनं परं
परातु परतरं प्रोत्स तद्दायराधनं द्रुप।”

(Prapannamrita प्रपवास्थ by Anantacharya Swami).
i. e. “The worship of the All-pervading God is the highest form of worship; but, higher than the highest is the worship of God’s devotees.”

CHAPTER IX.

The Fifth purificatory Act or Panchama Samskara

We now come to the Fifth Purification which helps us in following a sacred routine of life. It is called Yaga (याग) or Aradhana Bidhi (आराधन विधि) i.e. the method of daily Divine servitude.

A sacred routine of life means a routine which is calculated to make our lives sacred. Our lives are a series of actions and these actions again are three-fold in their nature,—mental, physical, and vocal. All our actions become sacred when we follow a sacred routine of life. Such a routine helps us in cherishing noble thoughts and aspirations, in purifying our speech and all our bodily acts. For, the purification of self means the purification of our mind, body and speech. The three aspects of our nature require to be perfectly purified before we can hope for any.
progress in the path of our spiritual advancement. Such a purification, however, is by no means an easy task. It can be attained only by a crowning act of Divine Mercy. Man is by nature impure and imperfect and he can become pure and perfect only by the Absolute Grace of the Almighty. Self-exertion is indispensably necessary, no doubt, but, self-exertion needs must be directed aright, and, in order that it may be so directed we need constantly to invoke the blessing of the Lord. Without his help we can do nothing whatever. Let us now consider carefully the question of a Sacred Routine of our lives. Such a routine must be so framed as to leave no room for our indulgence in anything unworthy and undesirable. The duties of the morning must be carefully reckoned in the first place, then the duties of the mid-day and finally those of the evening.

“प्रातर्तिप्रवर्तिषिन, मध्याह्न शीर्षपर्वत:।
सायं शीर्षपर्वत कालो गर्वविनिश्चाब्यमताम्॥”

i. e. “Wise men beguile their morning hours in recounting such of the Divine attributes as reveal to the fullest extent the tender solicitude of the All-merciful Lord for the welfare of those who seek refuge in the cool recess of His Holy Feet; they beguile the the hours of noon in chanting the glories of the Lord who can be easily pleased and approached through the mediation of the Divine Mother; finally, they beguile the evening hours in singing those attributes of the Lord which wash away all our impurities and bathe us with all the blessings of the Lord.”
In the morning we should think of those Divine attributes which lead the Lord to serve those who seek shelter at His Holy feet.

The mid-day hours should be spent in recounting the glories and infinite graces of the Divine Mother who is our natural Saviour and who helps us in being reconciled and reunited with our Divine Father.

In the evening we are to think of those attributes of God the very recollection of which robs us of all our imperfections and impurities.

A precious part of the morning should be set aside for our private prayer. During this prayer we are to repent bitterly for having wasted a precious life in doing nothing but evil, and, then we are to cry for Divine Mercy. We are to expose our weakness fully before the Lord and enumerate in detail the sins that we commit from day to day. It is a never ending and ever lengthening chain of sins that we are to reveal to the Lord and ask for His forgiveness. And the infinite Mercy of the Lord leads him to forgive and forget all our faults as soon as we repent for him and ask for His forgiveness. Whenever we pray to God, we must, in the first place, repeat for the past, expatiate on our follies and failings and then submit ourselves to the Lord in a spirit of deep humiliation and in an attitude of absolute resignation. By virtue of this resignation we feel confident that the All-merciful Father has very kindly pardoned all our past misdeemours and received us once more into his favour. We then recount the praises and the glories of the
All-kind and All-forgiving Divine Mother and the Divine Father and then pray for the welfare of the whole universe. When we become purified by constant private prayer we pray for others more than for ourselves. Such is the wholesome effect of a truly unselfish prayer that it causes us at once to forget ourselves and think only of the welfare of the world. Very aptly, therefore, has it been said by Tennyson that “More things are wrought by prayer than this world can dream of.” Such is the efficacy of prayer that it purifies our heart at once and we are melted at the sight of the miseries of the world. We feel keenly how difficult it is to reform our own conduct, how very difficult it is to free ourselves from the temptations of flesh and blood and how utterly impossible it is for us to get rid of our sins without the Absolute Grace of the Lord. When we realise fully the difficulty of self-improvement and self-reformation we pray earnestly to the Lord to help us in the matter as well as to help our brothers and other beings in the Universe. Prayer for ourselves as well as for others, therefore, is the primary business of our lives. Prayer is the prime factor of our lives and it is prayer alone that is the end of our existence. Prayer and praise of the Lord purifies the impure and makes perfect those that are imperfect.

A sacred routine of life, therefore, must be so framed as to afford ample scope for constant private prayer. We must always learn how to snatch a half-hour from our arduous task of the day in order to find time for a fervent and pathetic private prayer.
We are, by nature, Ignorant, Incapable and Incompetent.
We do do not know what will lead to our good; we are utterly incapable of doing anything which will bring forth our good and we are really incompetent in this respect.

(1) "चङ्ग" (2) "चपङ्गत" and "चपङ्गास" (i.e. चङ्गोङ्गा)

These are the three epithets which mark the absolute dependence of puny, insignificant and sinful finite creatures upon the Absolute Grace and Mercy of the Infinite Being. The three attributes enumerated above are the very essence of our being. Whatever we do, we do only a sin. We are, by our very nature, sinners; and, we can do nothing but sins. We are, therefore, entirely at the mercy of the Lord. We should only cry and cry and cry again for His Mercy. His Mercy alone can save us. We can never save ourselves by our own merits.
For,

"Merit lives from man to man
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

(Tennyson—In Memoriam.)

We shall be all weighed in the balance and found wanting. Hence, the necessity of constant private prayer. Whenever we do anything we must acknowledge before the Lord that we have done only a wrong and we must ask for His pardon. We should never lose sight of the awful reality that whatever we do is nothing but a sin, and it is only when we confess our sins before the Lord and ask for His pardon that we
are really pardoned. Jesus Christ also teaches us the same lesson. After you have done all your duties of the day say to your Lord,

"Lord, we are unprofitable and unworthy Servants."

Prayer, therefore, should always precede and follow all our actions whatever. When we have learnt this we have learnt everything and so long as we do not learn this, we learn nothing.

When we become the object of Absolute Grace of the Lord, our Saviour, we learn how to pray. We pray not for ourselves but for the whole world. This is, therefore, the highest glory and the most enviable position of man—the position, namely, when he forgets himself and prays only for the well-being of the universe. We can attain this high position only by a crowning act of Divine Mercy and Divine Grace.

A precious part of the morning being thus spent in prayer to the Lord for the welfare of the whole universe, the devotee then attends to the other duties of the day which may be broadly divided as—

(1) Morning and Forenoon Duties.
(2) Mid-day and Afternoon Duties.
(3) Evening and Night Duties.

**Morning and Forenoon Duties defined:**

Physical Ablutions—Purification of the body as the most favourite temple and the dearest abode of God. The Holy Bible says, "The upright heart and pure is the temple where God most delights to dwell."
When we bathe we must remember that the sacred water with which we wash the Holy Feet of the Lord, our Saviour, and, of the Lord's devotees washes us of all our sins and impurities. This is the ethical and esoteric significance of a Holy Bath. Thus,

“भगवद्ध मागवताचार्य श्रीपादतीथे मां पुनातु ।”

Whenever we perform our ablutions we should bear in mind that the Sacred Water, or, श्रीपादतीथे, as it is very aptly termed, purifies our mind, body, and, soul together. We should think that we are for ever being immersed in this ocean of Sacred Water and steeped in this nectar of Holy Water which sanctifies the soul of a sinner and secures for him the bliss immense of endless servitude of those Blessed Beings who bless all the beings of the universe. Being thus steeped in the ocean of this Nectar of Sacred Water, we find ourselves from the frailties of this body of flesh and blood and we offer our thanks to the Saviour who saves us from all our sins. Thus.

“निलं सम्ब्रह्मस्त जल्च्छि निलसर्वं सवाच्छिम् ॥”

i. e. “May I cross very easily the ocean of life by being for ever steeped in that Ocean of Sacred Water with which we bathe the Holy feet of the Lord, our Saviour, and of the Lord’s devotees.” After this ablution, we are absorbed in holy meditation (ध्यान). We are now at peace with the whole universe and we feel ourselves to be enjoying divine delight under the cool shade of the Saviour’s Holy Feet which we bathe in the tears of our gratitude.

By virtue of this meditation we find ourselves
translated into the holy assembly of the Blessed Attendants of the Lord. Worship of the Lord and of the Lord's attendants and devotees comes next. How to worship them properly is a question which can be answered only by those devout saints and advanced sages who enjoy the special privilege of carrying out the dearest wishes of the Lord and whose only duty consists in pleasing the Lord in every possible way and by every possible means.

The Lord does not like anything which takes the form of a mere insincere show of worship or a hollow ceremony. Worship offered by a sincere heart and in a spirit of deep humility is that which pleases the Lord most. Again, we should not worship him with any selfish motive for, "अङ्गहवेश्वरश्य स्ति न त्यात्तथात्मापिना अत्यदर्शर्य नातिप्रोलये भवति्" i. e. "Those who worship the Lord for the fulfilment of an unworthy object of desire can never please the Lord by their prayer. No doubt, the all-blessed Sage, the great Sathakopa Swami in his memorable work Bhagavad Vishaya" (भगवद्विध्य) invites the universe to join him in his prayer to the Lord and never in the least stops to think whether those who join him in his prayer are free from their selfish desires or not. No doubt, the same Sage assures the world that all forms of prayer and worship of the great God of gods are welcome to him; but, it is not meant thereby that they are all dear to him to the same extent and degree, and, surely, they differ from each other very greatly in their results. What the all-blessed Sage really means when he invites all to join him in his
prayer is that “Prayer to the Almighty God purifies all impure hearts and from whatever motive we may pray to Him at first we are sure to become unselfish in our prayers ultimately.”

A sample of sincere and unselfish prayer is given below.

Thus,

“भमयोदः चुदर्वलमतिरस्माप्रसवमुः।
शतलोहमानोहरपरवो वचनपरः॥
द्रुष्मः पापिष्टः कथर्महिमतो दुःखजलवे।
रामादुत्तरोष्ट्रवपरिचरियं चरणयोः॥”

i.e. (मालमन्दार or The Hymn of Hymns by the Saint Yamanacharyya Swami)

Lord, I am a monster of cruelty, an image of pride, egotism, self-conceit, envy, malice, arrogance, lust, avarice, anger and ignorance. I am no respecter of superiors; I am mean-minded,—a living and never-failing fountain of jealousy, ungrateful, treacherous, deceitful and the king of sinners. How is it possible for me, then, O Lord, to overcome these obstacles in the way of my prayer and worship, to cross this boundless ocean of miseries which always await a sinful life like that which I lead here, and to wait upon Thy Holy Feet?”

दुःखावशोहस्मिनं तव दुष्टचेष्टः।
शुभद्भिमोहिनर्म भश्वामताश्चः॥
व्याप्तर्नकः नव गिशष्टजनीघमधे।
मिथ्या चरामि यतिराजततोऽविन्भुवः॥

(Prayer by Vara–Vara–Muni Swami.)
i.e. “Lord, my only business is to make Thee miserable, for, I do only such acts as are highly displeasing to Thee. I am, by nature, wicked to the extreme; the gratification of the pleasures of the senses is the be-all and the end-all of my existence. Yet, I call myself as one whose sole refuge is the Lord. I practise dissimulation by introducing myself in the assembly of the good and the pious as though I were a devoted follower of Thy Holy Feet, O Lord.”

The daily worship over, we are to take a part of the “consecrated food.” The expression “consecrated food” requires an explanation. It reminds us of the sublime principle of conduct underlying all religions, viz.

“भावार्थतन्द्री बहुवधुः सस्मवधुः भ्रावास्मति:”

i.e. “Consecrated food is the very essence of the consecrated soul, and only such a soul enjoys an uninterrupted communion with the Lord.”

It is only based on the trite principles of (1) Plain living and high thinking” and (2) “Cleauliness is next to godliness.”

Before taking a part of the consecrated food, the living Saints of Southern India sing the glories of the Saviour, the Divine attributes of the Saviour and how he sacrificed himself for others and how he saves the world by taking upon Himself the burden of sins of mankind. After singing the glories of the Sarvior, the living saints of Southern India perform the ceremony of श्रीपादतीर्थप्रहण (Sir-pada-tirtha-grahana), that is to say they drink the sanctified
water with which the Holy Feet of the greatest of the saints are bathed. And, finally, they take a part of the consecrated food, which is more wholesome than any food in the world. It may be described in the following words,

"अष्टिप्रभुतमलमलं भज्जनपूतं चतुर्विंदं।
पञ्च पाशविनियमां रुचि द्वीपविवर्जितं॥
दिब्यं हरिपदं हरां वरसं सौमभोजं॥
सर्वेऽपरिपूर्वेत् यत् सर्वायंपंपूर्वं॥
देवदेव तदेतसु ते दर्दे वर्षरी सुनि:।
चतुर्दशृ विषय प्रोतिप्रसङ्गित: कर्षणानिि।
पनेव साधाय रामणिलः स्त्र कृत्तिभिः।
प्रनवचालदेव संध्यासीन: परामानि।
श्रीमारायण स्वामिनात्रते स्त्रीकृतिमणि॥

(निकाराधनविध by the Disciples of Vara-Vara-Muni)

* The consecrated food is prepared in a very large quantity by those devotees whose hearts are full of reverence and affection for the Lord. There is always an ample variety of the dishes—broadly classified under four heads. 1 Food that is to be chewed down (चवे) 2. That which is taken by sucking (चोष) 3. That which is taken by licking (लेख) 4 That which is drunk or liquid food or (चेथ) as it is usually called. The consecrated food is very healthy and exceedingly palatable.

It is cooked by the best experts, systematically, methodically and scientifically, with all the necessary
ingredients, the best spices, the most recently collected herbs and fresh vegetables. It is free from all defects whatever. It is divine in its nature and agreeable to the sight. It revivifies the spirits and is invigorating in the truest sense of the term. It is succulent and its flavour is always far-reaching. It is not wanting in any of the details which go to make a thing wholly perfect and it is offered to the Giver of all blessings with a heart rendered pure by constant devotion. It is a very wholesome food and it may be prescribed even to a dying soul without any injury.

The saints partake of this healthy diet after offering their heartfelt thanks to Heaven. Their hearts overflow with gratitude when they think that the after-effects of the enjoyment of this divinely excellent dish is purifying to an eminent degree and that it always brings in its train health, happiness and longevity. They are reminded of the truth that the partaking of the consecrated food enables us to lead a divine life.

Thus, "प्रसादादृवीयम्"

(The Holy Text of Vara-Vara-Muni).

The word "Prasada" means a Divine food—a food which is really accepted by God. And it is a fact that God accepts a food only when His dearest servants on earth partake of that food. When they enjoy a dish, God himself enjoys it. Anything which is gratifying to them is gratifying to Him also. It is for this reason alone that all truly great men in
this world sacrifice everything to please the dearest servants of God living on this earth at present. The mightiest Alvârs of Southern India, the great Parakala Swami and the great Kulasekhar Swami spared no pains to find out the greatest of the saints living in their days and when they succeeded in finding them out they spent all their hard-earned money in feeding those saints every day. And, what remained after they (the saints) had partaken of the dishes offered to them, became the "Prasâda" or consecrated food which was afterwards shared among all the members of the family of Kulasekhar Swami and of Parakala Swami.

The ethical significance of this laudable practice is obvious and interesting. We should every day feed some of the dearest servants of God, before we enjoy a dish ourselves. Those that are God-fearing and those whose lives are a continuous round of prayer and thanks-giving to God, are always fortunate enough in finding the real servants of God as guests in their sacred houses every day. When we feed these deserving guests we feed God himself and that which remains after these guests are properly fed everyday is commonly called the "Divine Food" or "Prasâda" or "Nectar." It is only this food which we should take everyday and no other. Such a food purifies our heart and unites us for ever with our Heavenly Father and Mother.

To do justice to the Fifth Purification or Yâga (याग) as it is commonly called, we need only think of the Aradhana-Vidhi (अराधना विधि) of the great Vara-
Vara Muni Swami. He used to get up very early in the morning between the hours of three and four and to spend nearly an hour in holy Contemplation in which he used to hold direct communion with God. During this blessed communion with the Almighty Being, he would not ask for any blessing but he would forget his own being altogether and he would be busy in invoking all the blessings upon God himself, as though God were his dearest new-born baby whom he was anxious to guard against all evils whatever. He would then go to the holy river Cauvery (कावेरी) along with his select disciples and perform the ceremony of Tirumanjana or Holy Bath. After that he would return to his hermitage and perform his daily worship; then accompanied by a few followers he would go to visit the Holy Temple of Sri Rangnath (for, he used to live at Sri Rangam in Trichinopoly, in the Madras Presidency). In that temple he would worship (1) Devi-Goda (देवी-गोदा), i.e. (पाण्डाल) A’ndál; or The Divine Mother (2) Yatifati (यतिफति) or the Universal Saviour (3) The Great Alvár Sathakópa Swami (साठकोप खामो) (4) Ranga Sringam (रंगस्रिंगम) (5) Senánátha (सेनानाथ) or Vishvakasena Swami (विशवकस्मन खामो)—(6) Vihaga-Vrishava (विहगव्रिशव) or Garúdá Dēva (7) Mahá Lakshmi (महालक्ष्मी) i.e. श्रीदेवी (Sri Devi) together with भूदेवी (Bhoo-Devi) and नीलादेवी (Neela Devi)—नीरंगनायको (Sri Ranga Náyaki) and नीरंगनाथ (Sri-Ranga-nátha). All these may be summed up in the following well-known verse which is chanted daily by the followers of Vara-Vara-Muni-Swami, viz,
“देवी गोदा यतिपति गठ्डेविंशी रंगमण्डलः ।
श्रेयसायो विप्रदानम्: श्रीनिव: सिंहुव्रजः ।
भूमा नीला गुदंसंहतः पुष्पबल्लभमीषा
सप्ते निलबं वरवरसुनेिर्विषुवः प्रथमः॥”

On his return from the Holy temple he would enter the Blessed Mandapa styled Sri Sailanatharyya (श्रीशल्लानाथर्य नामम् श्रीमति मण्डलः) and there he would busy himself in expounding the mysteries of the Divya Pravandha (दिव्य प्रवन्ध) or Dramidopanishada — the Tamil Vedas and Vedantas—to his select disciples. Thus,

ँष्य श्रीगौरनाथाय नामम् श्रीमति मण्डलः ।
तद्रूप्त यशोबन्धुदामर्म्मिनाविनम् ॥
तत्रं दिव्यप्रवन्धानां शारं संसार वैरिष्टम् ।
सरसं सरस्नानां ब्राह्मण्यं नमामि तस्माः॥

This Tamil Veda is so very sweet and so full of deep thoughts that its study is said to destroy all our attachment for anything but God. It teaches us that God alone is the object of our love and affection and that God is really all in all to us. If we forget Him even for a moment it is our greatest loss and greatest misery. The singing of the Divya-Pravandha brings about our salvation and unities us with the Divine Being in such a way as to know no separation.

After explaining the secrets of the Tamil Vedas to his disciples, the great Sage Vara-Vara-Muni Swami would bless his disciples and favour them with the Holy Water or Sri-Pada-Tirtha (श्रीपादतीर्थ).
Then he would perform his daily mid-day worship or *Tiru Aradhana* (திரு ஆராதன) as it is called in Tamil and then distribute the consecrated food or *Prasada* to his disciples. Afterwards he would sit in the holy assembly of the saints and purify the hearts of sinner by looking kindly on them and invoking the blessings of God upon them. Then he would forget himself altogether in the holy contemplation of the infinite excellent attributes of the Divine Being. He would then become one with God and he would pray to him earnestly to save all creatures by a crowning act of Divine Mercy.

Thus the blessed sage Vara-Vara-Muni passed the whole day in doing good to the world. And, in the evening also he would only pray for the welfare of the universe. His sacred routine of life reminds us of the beautiful lines of Tennyson,

"Thrice blessed whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher loves endure,
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?"

(*In Memoriam*)

Those favourites of God who are so fortunate as to be entirely free from the temptations of flesh and blood, enjoy the privilege of serving Him at all times under all circumstances and in all places. It is their sacred routine of life that we should always try to follow through the grace of God. It is an ideal routine, and, as such, it can be followed only with the kind help of the All-merciful Father.
“Have mercy on Thy sinful children, O Father, and teach them to walk on the path of Virtue; and,

Let Thy children be all redeemed,

O kind Father.”

Amen!

CHAPTER X.

Conclusion.

We have thus given a brief account of the Five Purificatory Acts which make a man absolutely perfect and wise, or Paramaikanti परमेकाल्ती as he is usually called. “ज्ञानीत्र परमेकाल्ती” i.e. the two words Jnani (ज्ञानी) and Paramaikanti (परमेकाल्ती) are synonymous.

The living saints of Southern India teach us how to be initiated into the doctrines that tend to purify us at once and unite us with God.

The Pancha Samskara Deeksha (पञ्चसंस्कार दीक्षा) is meant only for those who are altogether impatient of being united with God in this life. It enables a man to seek the company of the dearest servants of God on earth living in these days, who are within the reach of all men at all times in all places. If a man be so blessed by God as to become the favourite of His dearest servants on earth, the living saints of the day, the mission of his life is fulfilled.
Southern India is the seat of the living saints of these days. The chief of them may be mentioned here for the sake of reference at least.

1. His Holiness Srimad Paramhansetyadi &c. Appan Govinda Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, who occupies the chair of His Holiness the Late Embar Jeeyar Swami, Or Madhúr-mangal-Jeeyar Swami, at Sriperumbudur (twenty-five miles to the west of Madras) in the District of Chinglepet.

2. Vidvan Nrisinhachari Swami (विद्वान नृसिन्हचारी स्वामी), the learned Principal of the Sanskrit College at Sriperumbudur.

3. His Most Exalted Holiness Koil Kandádai Kumára Singarácháriar Swami of Singáperumál Koil in the District of Chinglepet, Madras. He is the great Dumb Sage who is the representative of the family of Vádhool-Varadáryya, a lineal descendant of Dasarathi Swami, the renowned saint and sage who was the nephew of the great Ramanuja Swami.

4. The younger brother of the above-mentioned Dumb Sage is the great Mudli Andán Swami who heads the lists of saints at Melkote in Mysore.

5. His Holiness the great Totadri Swami at Nagunuru in the District of Tinnevelly in the Madras Presidency.

6. The great Annan Swami at Sri Rangam, (Trichinopoly in Madras).

7. The great Parásara Bhattar Swami at Sri Rangam.

8. The great Veda Vyasa Bhattara Swami of Sri Rangam.
11. His Holiness the Jeeyar Swami living at the Back Gate of the temple of Varada Rája Bhagavana at Kanchi or Conjeeveram.
12. His Holiness the three Jeeyar Swami at Alvár Tirunagari in the District of Tinnevelli.
13. His Holiness the great Jeeyar Swami at Tirukkuranguri or Kuranganagari in the District of Tinnevelli.
14. His Holiness the great Jeeyar Swami at Sri Villuputtur, [twenty-five miles from the Railway Station Satur, South Madras Railway.]
15. The great Sirupillur Swami at the same place, (i.e. at Sri Villuputtur)
16. The Saints of Tirukkanpuri, a Divya Desa or Holy place, some fifteen miles off the Railway Station Ninnelum (South Madras Railway).
17. The Saints at Madhur-mangala, some twelve miles from Sriperumbudur.
18. The Saints at the sacred Hills of Venkatadri Varanadri, Vanagiri, Yadavadri, Svetadri, Ghatikachalam, Totadri, Neeladri.
19. And finally those living at all the one hundred and eight Divyadesas in the whole of India. (Notably the saints of Srimushnam, Chidambaram, Shiyali, Parakala Tirunagari, Tiru Nangur in the District of Tanjore, Triplicane in Madras, Combakonam, Melkote in Mysore). Under this head we have
counted the saints of Northern India also. The fact is that there are ninety-seven Divyadesas (दिव्यदेशः) or Holy Places in Southern India, and only eleven Holy Places in Northern India. That part of India which lies north of the Vindhyā Hills is here called Northern India and the part which lies south of the Vindhyā Hills is called the Southern India.

Of all these Holy places, Sriperumbudur (Sanskrit name श्रीपुरुषपुरो) heads the list. It is the birthplace of the great Ramanuja Swami and it is the principal seat of learning at present in southern India. The greatest of the saints of the day live in this Holy place. His Holiness Appan Govinda Ramunuja Jeeyar Swami is the most distinguished Saint of Southern India in these days. If we have the good fortune of enjoying his blessed company even for a very short time, we are sure to turn a new page in the history of our lives. India is proud of this godly man. He is regarded as one of the most precious jewels of Southern India, and, his godly nature and godly character have endeared him to all the good men of Southern India.

Our last act even as our first act is to recount the glories of the Saints and Sages of the Lord's devotees. Thus

"वधोगाय षामार्ध्रां माययासुनमपमाम्।
सस्दापावें यथं वत्से युगपरम्बश्राम्।"

In other words, we should bow down before all who are in the chain of our Gurus or spiritual pre-
ceptors; we should begin with singing the glories of the Lord of Lakshmi (the benign mother of all).

In the middle we are to sing the glories of the Divine sages Natha-muni and the Blessed Yamuna-Muni.

Finally we should for ever sing the glories of our immediate Saviour, our own blessed spiritual preceptor.

Thus, we should for ever sing the glories of all our spiritual guides in succession, viz., His Holiness the Late

1. कुमार वेंकटाचार्यस्वामि—Kumāra Venkātachāryya Swami, whose divine attributes are sung in the following lines. Thus,

श्रीवेंकटाचार्यस्वामि श्रीवंशिदिगुणसागरं

वाधूहृषिवेंद्र पूर्णंदु श्रीवेन्द्रमहं भज॥

His Holiness the Late Kumara Venkatacharyya Swami was the spiritual preceptor of the Late Rangacharyya Swami of Govardhana Giri (Brindabana—Muttra). Almost all the living saints of southern India are disciples of His Holiness the Late Kumara Venkatacharyya Swami, whose glories are for ever being chanted in the verse quoted above.

2. We then come to his holy preceptor, the great Vadhool Venkataryya Swami (वाधूहृषिवेंकटाचार्यस्वामि) whose glories are sung in the following sloka :—

वाधूहृषिवेंकटगृहसमप्रसन्नं

श्रीस्वेत लक्ष्मणसुन्तीन्द्रद्यवधाप॥
From the above verse it will appear that the Great Venkataryya Swami was well versed in both the Vedantas viz. (1) Sanskrit Vedanta and (2) Tamil Vedanta. The epithet वेदांतयुम्भविष्णुदीकरण प्रवीणः signifies that he could give a lucid exposition of both the Vedantas.

3. We then come to his Holy Preceptor Venkata Guru Swami, whose excellent virtues are thus described:

श्रीमद्वधूलकुलवारिषिपूर्णचन्द्रः
श्रीश्रीनिवाससरसस्मरोजस्वलः
श्रीवेंद्रार्थ्यांत्यन्यविनयोजकलम्
श्रीवेंद्रार्थ्युद्देश्यरस्मायामः

4. Then comes his venerable Preceptor Sri Venkataryya Swami, whose divine virtues are sung as below:

श्रीवाधूलकुलप्रदेेघमशितश्रीवेंद्रार्थ्यालम्
श्रीवासवप्रदायंतन्यश्रीवेंद्रार्थ्यालम्
तत्तवद्प्रवयंरमानिप्पुरुससम्प्रासवोच्चायं
श्रीवासवप्रदायंतन्यश्रीनिधिम्

5. Next we come to his Achāryya, who is thus described:

श्रीमद्वधूलकुलदेशियवंशजातः
श्रीश्रीनिवासवरदायंयुद्धःस्थपुरः
श्रीवासस्मवर्योगीश्वासवोधः
श्रीवेंद्रार्थ्युद्देश्यरस्मायामः
6. We then come to his adorable Preceptor Sri Man Natártihara Desika Swami, whose virtues are sung in the following lines. Thus,

शीमद्वभूषणकृत वेंकटच्छूर्विप्रवृत्तों,
शीवीमिवाय वरदायरुरोषत्दृवः ।
तत्तदव्रुम्मरं तद्दुपाशितारं,
शीमघटाङ्तिशं श्रीमकाष्ठमााध्यामः ॥

7. We next come to his worthy Preceptor the Great Srinivásá Varada Guru, whose glories are sung thus:—

वापूलवेंकटांछार्यतनवं तत्तदाश्यं ।
तद्वासानिधिं वंदे श्रीवास वरदं गुहस् ॥

8. We then come to his venerable Guru, the All-perfect Sri Venkatáryya Swami, whose divine virtues are sung thus:—

शीमद्वभूषणस्तवारिविप्रवृत्तोंचन्द्रः,
शीवीमिवायतनवं तद्वासतवेचः ।
शीकेकटान्नपदंपंकज राजहंसः,
शीवेंकटांश्मनवायुः भजामि ॥

9. Then comes his Preceptor the Holy Srinivasa Guru who was master of both the Vedantas,

वापूल वेंकटांचाहं स्रवं तत्तपाद संबच्यं ।
शीवीमिवाय गुरुं वंदे वेदानाद्य देशिवं ॥

10. Next we come to his Preceptor Venkata Desika Swami,

वापूल श्रीवीवालक्तनवं विनयोज्यसमः ॥
बरदायरुपास्यं वंदे वेंकट देशिवं ॥
11. Next comes his Acharyya the venerable Varadaryya Swami,

वांचूल श्रीनिवासाय पदपूजा घटपदम्।
बरदाहसां वनें वेंकटाय नम्नम्॥

12. Then we come to his Preceptor Srinivasa Acharyya who was full of all the excellent attributes which mark a spiritual guide with a heart overflowing with affection for his pupils. Thus,

वाणखाद्य गुणावंतो वाणकुलभूषणं।
वेंकटाय कपापायं श्रीनिवासगुहं भवे॥

In the above chain of Acharyyas or Spiritual Preceptors we have counted in regular succession twelve saints who are all descended directly from the line of

13. Sri Venkata Guru who was the favourite disciple of the Great Vadhoola Varadacharyya Swami or Koel Annan Swami as he is called in Tamil. Thus.

वाणखर्दाचायं कपापूर्वं मनोरंग।
श्रीवेंकट गुहं वनेश्वरशादिगुणसागरस्॥

14. We now arrive at dry land. We come to Vadhoola Varadácháryya, the great Saint of Southern India who claims the bulk of the Sri Vaishnavas as his own dear disciples by virtue of his descent from the Great Dasarathi Swami who was the dearest disciple of Sri Ramanuja Swami—Koore Swami (कूरेश्वामी excepted) and who had so deep and sincere a reverence for his venerable preceptor, Ramanuja Swami, that he is symbolically represented to be the Holy Feet of the Saviour Rámanuja. The
Saint Vadhoola Varadácháryya Swami was very dear to His Holiness the All-blessed Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami of the Sacred Mount Vánádri or Totadri (Vána-má-malai—Jeeyar Tiruvadi—Halai—Saranam—is the Tamil prayer of the Sri Vaishnavas of the world). Thus,

श्रीमठ वाणमतिष्ठ रामानुजमुनिप्रियम् ।
वाणूल वर्द्दाचार्यं वन्दे वाणात्मकावरम् ॥
रामानुजयोगीन्द्र पादपंक्षेष्ठाब्यं ।
वर्द्दाचार्यं वन्दे वाणूलकुशभूषणम् ॥

15. We then come to the dearest disciple of the great Vara-Vara-muni Swami, viz His Holiness the All-blessed Vánádri Rámanuja Jeeyar Swami who occupies one of the eight Chairs of Learning created by Vara-Vara-muni Swami to propagate the principles of the followers of the Saviour Ramanuja, who uphold the doctrines inculcated by the Visistadvaita Theory of the Vedanta Philosophy. His divine virtues are sung in the following words :

रामानुज योगीन्द्र पादपंक्षेष्ठाब्यं सदा ।
तदायतांभसतादि रामानुजमुनिन भजे ॥

16. We now come to his Preceptor सौम्याजामत्री-योगेन्द्र (Soumya-Jamatri-Yogeendra) or Vara-Vara-Muni Swami (वरवरसुनि स्वामी) whose Tamil name is Mandavalma-muni (मण्डवाल-मा-सुनि) who is only another Image of the Saviour Ramanuja Swami. His divine glories are sung in the following memorable lines :

श्रीयेलिष्ट द्वापारं श्रीभक्तवादि गुष्ठार्थं ।
यतीत्वपवं वन्दे रामामातं सुनिम् ॥
17. We then come to his Holy Preceptor Sri SAILA-NATHARYYA Swami (शृणैस्वायतेः खामो). His praises are thus sung by his devotees:—

नमः श्रीणैस्वायतेः क्षत्रियगर जनाने ।
प्रमादलच्यंपरमप्राप्योकांक्षेपालिने ॥

18. We now come to his venerable preceptor the great Lokacharyya Swami or Loka-Desika-Swami,

लोकाचार्यवै गुर्वे जाताद्यू समवे ।
संसारभोगसोद्दृष्ट जोव श्रीवाति नमः ॥

Loka Desika Swami is here described as ‘gifted with the miraculous power of reanimating those that are stung to death by the serpent-shaped Devil.’ He can save those that yield to the temptations of flesh and blood.

19. We then come to his preceptor Sri Krishnapada Swami, whose virtues are sung in the following verse:—

श्रीक्रिष्णपाद पादाले नमामि श्रीरः सदाः ।
यदृ प्रसाद प्रमाहवेन स्वर्जनस्यवृभुशाः ॥

20. We next come to his Holy Preceptor, the Blessed Saint Kali-Vairi Dás Swámi (अलिबैरिदास खामो) whose divine virtues are sung as below:—

वेदान्तवैरिदासत्वरचरिषि वेदार्थसरास्रत्वूर्मप्रभा ।
पादाय वर्तमानं प्रवेशे कालुपूपथे कालिवैरिदासम ॥
21. His Preceptor was Vedánti Swami or Nan-Jeeyar Swami as he is called by his Tamil name, who is described thus:

नमो वेदान्तविष्णु जगन्नाथल प्रेमवे।
यखः वामनसतासारपूरित भूवनन्तनम्॥

This Nan Jeeyar Swami was the greatest learned man of his time in India. His expositions of the secrets of the Vedanta Philosophy are sweet as nectar and they have gained for him an undying reputation in the three worlds.

22. We then come to his All-blessed Preceptor the great Sri Parásara Bhattáryya (श्रीपरासर भट्टार्क) more commonly known to the Sri Vaishnavas by his Holy epithet Sri Bhattáraka Swami (श्रीभट्टारक स्वामी) who occupied the chair of the Saviour Rámanuja Swami after His Holiness Govindáryya Swami. He was brought up and educated by the Great Rámanuja Swami himself and he was the son of the All-blessed Kooras Swami (कूराणुषवामी). He and Veda-Vyása-Bhattar (वेदव्यास भट्टर) were twin brothers. It is said that Ramanuja Swami had felt that he could by no means repay “the debt immense of endless gratitude” which he owed to the literary leviathans, the great Parasara Muni (परासरमुनि)—the well-known author of the Vishnu Purana (विष्णुपुराण) and Veda Vyasa, the celebrated author of the Vedanta Sútras, for the services they had rendered to the propagation of the Sri Vaishnava doctrines. The saint Yámunacharyyya Swami, the Paramacharyyya परमाचार्य or Grand-Preceptor of Sri Ramanuja Swami in his
excellent prayer *Almandár* had thus expressed his deep sense of gratitude to the great sage Parasara:—

```
“तलेन धिष्ठितिरश्चततस्माय ।
भोगायवः तदुपय गतीवदारः ॥
सम्बायचितिरस्मीति पुरावरणे ।
तक्षे नमो मृत्तिवराय पराशराय॥
```

i.e. I bow down to the great sage Parasara who in his all-excellent Purana has given us a beautiful solution of the difficult problems of life by explaining clearly the essence of the three entities, चित् (*chit*), अचित् (*Achit*) and इश्वर (*Iswara*), in other words, Individual souls or Finite being, Infinite Being and Achit or Maya (*maya*) which is the inseparable gulf that separates the finite creatures and the Infinite Being, who has also explained the *summum bonum* of life, the means of attaining salvation and its end.

The sage Parasara is thus regarded as the pioneer of the Visistadvaita Theory as expounded by the predecessors as well as followers of Ramanuja. *Veda Vyasa* the author of the original *Vedanta Sutras* is also regarded as a great benefactor and is treated with greatest respect by the predecessors of Ramanuja. Accordingly Ramanuja had taken a solemn vow that he would name some of his dearest disciples after these two great benefactors of the Sri Vaishnavas to shows his deep sense of gratitude to them. And when by the blessing of God the twin sons of Koores Swami were born, the Saviour Rama Swami named the first as Sri Parasara Bhattar and second as *Veda*
Vyasa Bhattar. It is said that Ramanuja had taken a special care of the first whose future greatness was clearly foreshadowed in his very childhood. The glories of Sri Parasara Bhattaryya (श्रोपरारभट्टार्य) are sung to this day in the following words:—

श्रोपरारभट्टार्यः श्रीरंगश्रयुरपोषितः।
श्रीवास्तूमृतः श्रीमान् चेयसे नैस्तु मूळयि॥

23. We then come to his preceptor Govindaryya (गोविन्दर्य) Swami who was a cousin of the great Ramanuja Swami (i.e. the son of his mother's sister). He is said to be the shadow as it were of the Holy Feet of the Saviour Ramaunja Swami. Thus,

रामानुजदर्श्याया गोविन्दर्यानाथपारिनी ।
तद्रायतनमुन्द्रा जीवाधू विश्वमञ्चली॥

24. We next come to Koores Swami (कूरेश्वर्मी) the dearest disciple of Ramanuja Swami. His memorable sayings shine as a precious and holy necklace round the neck of the goddess of the Three Vedas. His surname was Sri Vatsa-Chinha-Misra, (श्रीवस्ताचिन्ह मिश्र)

श्रीवस्ताचिन्ह मिश्रभयो नम विन्ति मधीमंधि ।
यदुल्लश्व चरिजस्य वान्ति संभलच्छलतातः॥

24. Then, we come to the All-blessed Dasarathi Swami (दासरथिश्वर्मी) who was the nephew (sister's son) of the Saviour Ramanuja Swami and who is regarded as the Holy Feet of the Saviour. Thus

पादुके यत्रास्त्र संधुबंबि यदान्थायाः।
तस्मादस्य: पादी चिरसा चार्यामविवेदः॥
26. We next come to the Saviour himself, the great Ramanuja Swami, whose love for the lotus-like Holy Feet of God was so great that he regarded all other things as no better than a straw and who was literally a great ocean of kindness. Thus,

यो नित्यमच्छुत पदासुज्ज्वलमः
व्यामोहतस्तिमुदारणि भवाय चिने
सद्युगुरोभिगतो तर्यकस्मिनः
रामानुजसः चरणो शरणं प्रपदे

27. We then come to the preceptor of Rámánuja Swami, namely, Mahá Purna Swami (महाृपूर्ण खामी), who is described thus:

कमलापति कश्चाष्ट्र गुष्णात्तत्त्विन्द्रया
पूर्णाकामाय सततं पूर्णाय सहते नमः

28. Next we come to his preceptor the All-blessed Yámunácháryya Swami (यामुनाचार्य स्वामी) whose memory is thus preserved,

यत्यादाश्चोरह्यान विच्छन्नाशिषक्षाः
वसुनाशुप्रपत्तो यामुनायं नमामि नमः

29. His preceptor Sri Ráma Misra Swami (श्रीराममिश्र स्वामी) is described in the following terms:

प्रत्यक्षे यामुनामादासमंस्कर्तपर्वतिर्युखि निजायेन
यः क्षीतवानालिं यीवराच्यं नमांसि तं राम मेव वच्चमः

30. His preceptor again Sri Pundaríkáksya (श्रीपुन्दरिकाक्षा) Swami is described thus:

नमः पञ्जनेत्राय माय जोपात्पवजः
बदकर्षेरायाध्यातु हृदगाशाव चीमते
31. We then come to his preceptor Sriman Nathmuni (श्रीमलयथमुनि) who was an Astanga Yogi (षटाङ्गयोगी) and whose wisdom, reverence, piety and other inconceivable divine virtues are compared to an unfathomable ocean. Thus

नमोमेघाकूतार्जुनेऽपि भानवेतराय रामेऽ।
मातापिता युवतसुन्तमया विभूति ।
भापुवः यदेव नियमेन मदनप्राणाम्॥
श्रीमलयथमुनि विश्वविद्यानामिनि ॥
श्रीमलयथमुनि विश्वविद्यानामिनि ॥
"श्रीमलयथमुनि विश्वविद्यानामिनि ॥"

32. His venerable preceptor Srimán Sathakopa Swami (श्रीमान् शाखोप स्वामि) comes next whose sacred memory is thus cherished:

मातापिता युवतसुन्तमया विभूति ।
भापुवः यदेव नियमेन मदनप्राणाम्॥
श्रीमलयथमुनि विश्वविद्यानामिनि ॥
श्रीमलयथमुनि विश्वविद्यानामिनि ॥
"श्रीमलयथमुनि विश्वविद्यानामिनि ॥"

33. Then comes his preceptor the divine Visvak Sena Swámi (श्रीमान् विश्वक्षेत्र स्वामि) who is described thus:

श्रीरङ्गनाथसममिन्दरयाविश्वतः ॥
विनयक्ष विम्पशिद्रविश्वसनाविकारं ॥
यो निवृद्धनिंद्रमुसलिमुद्रयोऽवरः ॥
स्नानमयविसुःधास्मदयासः।

34. His preceptor is the Divine Mother Sri Ranga Náyaki (श्रीरङ्गनायकी) Herself. Her divine glories are chanted in the following verse:

नमः श्रीरङ्गनायकी यद्दृश्यविश्वम नेताः।
प्रेयोगित्वः वेष्यम् निबोज्नतमिदं जगत्॥

THE DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE
35. Her Preceptor is God Himself who is worshipped at Sri Rangam (Trichinopolli) as Sri Ranganatha lying down on the lap of the Divine Serpent-shaped Ananta Deva, whose divine glories are chanted in the following glowing terms:

\[ \text{चर्चनाभरणं तेजः चौरंगित्यमास्थी।} \\
\text{चिन्तामणि मिश्रोद्भासु सरससंज्ञानशोभिनः॥} \]

Thus we have sung the divine glories of all the Acharyyas or Spiritual Preceptors from our own preceptor up to God himself. God is the Original Preceptor. For, the Vedas describe him in that light. Cp. "पाचार्य मा विज्ञानोयात्" i.e., "know me to be the Original Acharyya or Spiritual Preceptor."

Here, in recounting the glories of all the spiritual preceptors we have proceeded in the ascending order. We should now sing their Divine names once more in the descending order. We descend from God down to our own blessed spiritual preceptor. Thus, then, we begin with,

1. God in his worshipable Divine manifestation at Sri Rangam (Trichinopolli) who is known to us by His Divine name Sri Ranga Nātha (श्रीरंगनाथ). Then comes

2. The Divine Mother herself, known to us as Sri Ranga Nāyaki (श्रीरंगनायकी).

3. Sri Visvak Sena Bhagavāna (श्रीविष्कर्षेन भगवान) is the third spiritual preceptor.

4. The Fourth spiritual preceptor is the all-blessed Sathakopa Swami (श्रीमान् शंकरोप स्वामी).
5. The fifth in the chain of Guru Paramparā (गुरुपरामर्श) is Sríman Náthamuni (श्रीमन्नाथमुनि).

6. The sixth in succession is Srí Pundarikáksha Swami (श्रीपुन्दरीक्षा श्रामी).

7. The seventh is Srí Ráma Misra Swami (श्रीराममिश्र श्रामी).

8. The eighth in the chain is the great Yámunácháryya Swami (यामुनाचार्य्य श्रामी).

9. The ninth is Mahápurna Swami (श्रीमहापूर्ण श्रामी).

10. The tenth Guru or the Saviour of the world is the Great Rámánuja Swami (श्रीरामानुज्ञामी). He is very aptly said to be the Saviour inasmuch as He is the Ideal Servant of God. And, no one would hesitate to accept the Ideal Servant of God as his spiritual preceptor, or, Saviour. He is otherwise called as “Lakshmanáryyo Jagad-Guruh (लक्ष्मणाय्यो जगद-गुरुः)”.

11. His dear disciple Dásarathi Swami (दासरथी श्रामी) is the eleventh in the chain of spiritual preceptors.

12. The dearest disciple of Rámánuja, Sríman Koores Swami (श्रीमन्न कौरेश श्रामी), is twelfth in the chain.

13. Next is Govindáryya Swami (गोविंदाय्य श्रामी).

14. Srí Parásara Bhattáryya (श्रीपरासर भट्टार्य) stands fourteenth in the chain. But, in reality, he stands next to Rámánuja himself, in the opinion of all the saints and sages of southern India.
15. Vedanti Swami (वेदान्तीस्वामी) or Nan Jeeyar Swami, as he is called in Tamil, stands next.

16. The next in the chain is Kali-Vairi Das Swami (कालीवैरीदास स्वामी).

17. Then comes Sri Krishnapada Swami (श्रीकृष्णपाद स्वामी).

18. Lokacharyya Swami (लोकचार्येस्वामी) stands next.

19. Sri Saila nath Swami (श्रीसाइलनाथस्वामी) follows him.

20. The great Vara-Vara-Muni-Swami (पवरवर्मुनि स्वामी) who is only another Image of the Saviour Ramanuja, comes next.

21. Vanadri Ramanuja Jeeyar (वानाद्रीरामानुजजीयर)
22. Vadhoola Varadacharyya (वाधूलवरदाचार्य).

23-35. Then there are thirteen spiritual preceptors in succession who all go by the sacred name Sri Venkata Guru (श्रीवेंकटगुरु). The word *Venkata* means *destroyer of sins* (वेंकट = पाप, कटित = दृष्टि, दृष्टि वेंकट:). The last of the Venkata Gurus is His Holiness the Late Kumara Venkatacharyya Swami who claims the majority of the Sri Vaishnavas to be his own disciples. He has two sons left to him, namely:

(1) The Great Dumb Sage Koel Kandadai Kumara Singarchariar Swami (कोएलकंदादै कुमार सिंगरचार्येस्वामी) who dwells in the holy village Singaperumal Koel in the district of Chingleput in the Madras Presidency.

(2) Mudli Andan Swami (मुदली पाषाण स्वामी).
This Tamil name when translated into Sanskrit would stand as (चौदाष्टेरीस्मृतिक्षाय) who now adorns the presence of Sampat Kumara Bhagavana or the Holy God of Yadavadri (यादवाद्रि) i.e. Melkote in Mysore.

May all those that stand in the chain of our Spiritual preceptors ((गुरुपरम्य) prosper for ever. Amen!