

SrI KulasEkhara AzhwAr's

# Mukunda Maalaa



Annotated Commentary in English  
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**Mohana KrishNan**





श्री :

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

श्रीकुलशेखरदिव्यसूरिकृता

मुकुन्दमाला

KULASEKHARA AZHAWAR'S

MUKUNDA MAALAA

## INTRODUCTION

This stotram is a celebration of Nama Siddhaantham, Saranagati, prayer for unceasing remembrance of the Lord's holy feet at all times and places, ParatatvaNirnayam, exhortation to Chetanas to offer Prapatti at the holy feet of the most merciful Lord, who has Sri Devi as His inseparable companion. Hence, it is a summation of all the profound principles of our Sri Sampradhaayam.

Regarding the celebration of the NaamAs of the Lord, Vishnu Sahasra Naamam points us the secret behind the names of the Lord. It Says "Yasya Naamaani Gownaani". It reveals that His names are Gaunaas (i-e) His names are nothing but a sound Form of His Gunaas (attributes). The Lord, who is the abode of infinite attributes, has therefore Infinite Naamaas. By celebrating these names, one grows one's Bhakti and enters the "Rama Bhakti Saamrajyam". Kulasekhara, as one of the greatest Rama Bhakthas followed Naama Siddhaantham and made his city resonant with the shouts of Sriranga Yaatra to remind himself and others about the Lord of Ishvaaku Kulam resting at Srirangam in Kali Yugam.

This Yugam is an age of emotion and in this age, one can be saved only through the easy route of Bhakti or dedicated devotion to the Divya Dampathis

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through Raaganga Bhakti (emotional attachment) through Naama Sankeertanam and Archana with Nama Kusumaas. Saint Thyagaraja and many others have followed the message of Mukunda Maala and attained the supreme goal of life. That is why Saint Thyagaraja chose Sri Ragam for his Kriti "**Naama Kusumamulacheh Poojincceh Nara Janmameh Janmamu Manasa**". Here the Saint, who is both a Naama and Naada Siddhanti follows the technique adopted by Kulasekhara in Mukunda Maala, where many of the verses are set in the context of the poet's conversation with his Manas (Maanasa Sambodhanam).

Swami Desikan in our Acharya Sampradhaaya established in his powerful grantham (**Dramidopanishad Taatparya Ratnaavali**) that the 1000 verses of Thiruvaimozhi of Sri Nammazhwaar are the celebration of the thousand (Infinite) Gunaas of the Lord having Sri Devi as His Consort. The 1000 verses of Kuruhoor Satakopan are housed in ten decads. Swami Desikan states those ten decads are like a trunk way to all the limitless Gunaas of the Lord known as Sri Vallabhan, Srinivasan and Sridharan. These ten Gunaas mapping on to the ten decads and through linkages to the other infinite Gunaas are summarized in this slokam of Swami Desikan:

Sevyatvaat bhogya bhaavaat Subha tanu Vibhavaat Sarva bhogyaadhikatvaat  
Sreyastadhedhudhaanaat Sritavivasatayaaa Svaasritaanishtahrutvaat |  
bhaktacchandhanuvrutteh: nirupadhiga Suhrdbhaavaata: Satpadhavyaam  
Saahayaccha Svasiddeh: Svayamiha KaraNam Sreedhara: Pratyapaadhi ||

The **TEN GUNAAS** celebrated by Nammazhwar according to Swami Desikan are:

1. **Sevyatvam**: Worshippable,
2. **Bhogyatvam**: Enjoyable,
3. **Subha tanutvam**: Having a Divya mangala Vignam,
4. **Sarva Bhogyaadhikatvam**: Standing as the supreme Bhogya and transcending all the other enjoyable tattvas or objects,
5. **Sreyastadheudhanatvam**: Representing all the four purusharthams as







well as the cause behind them and as anugraha sakti to attain them,

6. **Srita Vivasatam** : Being under the spell of Prapannas (ie) He is Vasyan (Vaseekaranam) to Prapannas,
7. **Svaasritaanishta hrutva Tatvam** (Gunam): He removes the sorrows and sufferings of those, who take refuge in Him,
8. **Bhaktaanucchandaanuvruttam**: Acting according to the wishes of His devotees as Yatoktakaari,
9. **Nirupadhika Suhrut Bhavam**: Well wisher and protector of His Bhaktas without any premeditation or reason (AVYAAJA SUHRUTH) and
10. **Sat-Padhavyaam Saahayaam**: Being a companion on the road of the Prapanna (Mukti Maargam) as MUKUNDA.

These ten Gunaas celebrated by Nammazhwaar in his 1000 verses of Thiruvaimozhi representing the 1000 gunaas of the Lord (**Sahasra Saakopanishad Samaagamam**), according to Swami Desikan are the essence of the teachings of the Sama Vedam with its 1000 Upanishads corresponding to each of its 1000 Saakaas. That is the greatness of the Naamas (Gunaas) celebrated by Kulasekhara in his MUKUNDA MAALA .





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# Mukunda Maalaa

## Verses & Commentaries

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Engal KulasEkharan





## TANIYANS SALUTING KULASHEKHARAAZHVAAR:

घुष्यते यस्य नगरे रङ्गयात्रा दिने दिने ।

तमहं शिरसा वन्दे राजानं कुलशेखरम् ॥

ghushyate yasya nagare ranga-yAtrA dinE-dinE |  
tamaham SirasA vandE rAJAnAm kulaSEkharam ||

உடையவர் அருளிச்செய்த தனியன்

இன்னமுதம் ஊட்டுகேன் இங்கேவா பைங்கினியே  
தென்னரங்கம் பாடவல்ல சீர்ப்பெருமான்-பொன்னஞ்  
சிலை சேர் நுதலியர்வேள் சேரலர்கோன், எங்கள்  
குலசேகரன் என்றே கூறு.

innamudam UTukEn ingE vA paingkiLiyE  
tenn-arangam pADa-valla seerp-perumAn- ponnanj~n  
cilai-sEr nudaliyarvEL cEralar-kOn, engal  
kulsEkarAn enRE kURu

மணக்கால் நம்பி அருளிச்செய்த தனியன்

ஆரம் கெடப் பரனன்பர் கொள்ளாரென்று, அவர்களுக்கே  
வாரங்கொடு குடப்பாம்பில் கையிட்டவன், மாற்றலரை  
வீரங்கெடுத்த செங்கோல் கொல்லிகாவலன் வில்லவர்கோன்  
சேரன் குலசேகரன் முடிவேந்தர் சிகாமணியே.

Aram keDapparanbar koLLArenRu, avargaLukkE  
vArankoDu kuDap-pAmbil kaiyiTTavan, maRRalarai  
veerankeDutta sengkOl kolli-kAvalan-villavarkOn  
cEran kulasEkarAn muDi-vEndar sika-maNiyE.







SrI Krishna Karnamritam

## VERSE 1

Let me sing your praise always!

श्रीवल्लभेति वरदेति दयापरेति

भक्तप्रियेति भवलुण्ठनकोविदेति

नाथेति नागशयनेति जगन्निवासे-

त्यालापिनं प्रतिपदं कुरु मे मुकुन्द ॥ १ ॥

SrI-vallbhEti varadEti dayAparEti  
bhakta-priyEti bhava-luNThana-kOvidEti |  
nAthEti nAga-SayanEti jagan-nivAsa  
iti AlApinam prati-padam kuru mE mukunda || 1

### MEANING

The appeal here is to Mukunda, who blesses one with the boons of enjoyment in this Earth and in Srivaikuntam. The appeal is:

"Srivallabheti----Jagannivaasethi, Iti Pratipatam Aalipinam Maam Kuru."

The appeal to Mukunda starts in the traditional manner with the salutation first to Sri Devi. In our tradition, Sri Devi as Pum Pradhaneswari is saluted first before saluting the Lord. As Pum Pradhaneswari, She is the ruler of the individual souls, Prakriti and the Ruler Himself. That is why one of the Sahasra Naamam salutes Him as "Sree-Vibhaavanah:" This Naamam implies that He owes His greatness mainly to Sri Devi . Following this tradition, Kulasekhara salutes the Lord as SRIVALLABHA:

He then follows that salutation and appeal by describing the Lord as Varada, Dayaapara, Bhaktha Priya, Bavalundanagovidha, Naagasayana and Jagannivasa.

His appeal is to the Krupa of the Lord of Sri Devi to bless him to recite the



Lord's names always. Kulasekhara recognizes and describes his Lord first as Srivallabhan and hints at the His Nitya Sri Nature due to which He is forever united with Sri Devi. That association makes him "Srimathaam Vara:" or the foremost among the opulent in all worlds.



**Sri Vallabhan - Thanjai Mamanikoil**

His opulence resulting from his association with Sri Devi makes Him the granter of all kinds of Boons. Thus, He becomes Varada or Sarvaabheeshta Varada. He bestows the required boons on Gods and Bhakthas and gets thus the name of Varada.

The third name by which Kulasekhara recognizes the Lord is Dayaaparan, the all merciful Lord, who runs to rescue His devotees in trouble. Therefore, He gets the fourth name, which is Bhaktha Priyan. The fifth name selected by Kulasekhara in his appeal is Bavalundanagovidhan. Bhavam is the Samsaaram and its ills. Lundanam is stealing. Govidhan is one, who is capable of Lundanam of Bhavam. Hence, the Lord is saluted here as the one, who has the power to destroy the afflictions of Samsara.

The Sixth Naama is Naathan. He is the Supreme Lord of the Universe and therefore He is the Naathan. He is also Nagasayanana. Resting in the Milky



Ocean on Adhi Seshan, he is engaged in Yoganidra. When the Devas and Rishis approach him there for help to overcome their sufferings , He incarnates into the appropriate Avathaaraas and re- establishes Dharma. The Naga Sayanan is also Jagannivaasan. He is Jagannivaasan for two reasons:

(1) He gives a home for the Universes in His stomach during the Mahaa Pralayam and

(2) He is Sarva Vyaapi and therefore He is saluted as:

"Antar Bahisccha Tath Sarvam Vyapya Naraayana: Sthitha: "

Kulasekhara salutes the Lord by the above EIGHT names and asks him not to save him from Uphaayatva Sankhaa through lapse into Svapravrutti and thereby end up with Svarupa Naasam. He does not want to fall into the trap of delusion that it is he and his efforts (SVAPRAVRUTTI) that makes him recite the Lord's names. That will lead to doubts about the means (UBHAAYATVA SANKHAA). Such a doubt can only lead to loss of identity of the Jivan and calamity. Hence, Kulasekhara humbly requests the Lord to give him the power to recite His names and seeks His grace to undertake that mission.





## VERSE 2

### HAIL TO THE LORD!

जयतु जयतु देवो देवकीनन्दनोऽयं

जयतु जयतु कृष्णो वृष्णिवंशप्रदीपः ।

जयतु जयतु मेघश्यामलः कोमलाङ्गो

जयतु जयतु पृथ्वीभारनाशो मुकुन्दः ॥ २ ॥

jayatu jayatu dEvO dEvakI-nandana: ayam  
jayatu jayatu kRshNO vRshNi-vamSa-pradIpa: |  
jayatu jayatu mEgha-SyAmala: kOmAlAngO  
jayatu jayatu pRthvI-bhAra-nASO mukunda: || 2

### MEANING

This verse is like a Pallaandu.

Kulasekhara salutes the Lord as:

1. Deva:
2. Devaki Nandana:
3. Krishna:
4. Vrishni Vamsa Pradeepa :
5. Mega Syaamala:
6. Komalaanga:
7. Prithvi Bhara Nasa: and
8. Mukunda:.

There are again **EIGHT** Naamas included in this verse. Lord Krishna is saluted as the Son of Devaki and as the light of Vrishni clan of Kings. His dark blue





complexion reminding one of the clouds of the rainy season, His beautiful limbs and His lightening of the burden of the Earth through destruction of the wicked during the Bharatha War are hailed here. Kulasekhara like Periyazhwaar says, Victory to Thee and may you thrive forever!

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## VERSE 3

Request for a small and specific Boon!

मुकुन्द मूर्ध्ना प्रणिपत्य याचे

भवन्तमेकान्तमियन्तमर्थम् ।

अविस्मृतिस्त्वच्चरणारविन्दे

भवे भवे मेऽस्तु भवत्प्रसादात् ॥ ३ ॥

mukunda! mUrdhnA praNipatya yAcE

bhavantam EkAntam iyantam artham |

avismRti: tvat caraNAravindE

bhavE bhavE mE astu bhavat-prasAdAt || 3

### MEANING

O, Mukunda! I prostrate before you and only beg for this small boon. Please bless me to remember your Lotus Feet in every one of my births without let. This is the essence of the 58th verse of Nammazhwaar"s Periya Thiruvandhaadhi :

பிறப்பின்மை பெற்றடிக்கீழ்க் குற்றேவலன்று,  
மறப்பின்மை யான்வேண்டும் மாடு

pirappinmai perru adikkeezh kurrEvalanru,  
marappinmai yaan vendum maadu "

Marappinmai or the ceaseless remembrance of the Lord's holy feet of the Lord in all the births is the small request made by the Kolli Nattu Arasan. Marappinmai or AVISMRUTHI is the same as the Dhruva Smruthi sought by Azhwaars and Acharyas.



## VERSE 4

Sublime and dispassionate devotion!

नाहं वन्दे तव चरणयोर्द्वन्द्वमद्वन्द्व हेतोः

कुम्भीपाकं गुरुमपि हरे नारकं नापनेतुम् ।

रम्या रामा मृदुतनुलता नन्दने नापि रन्तुं

भावे भावे हृदयभवने भावयेयं भवन्तम् ॥ ४ ॥

nAham vandE tava caraNayOr dvandvam advandva hEtO:  
kumbhIpAkam gurumapi harE nArakam nApanEtum |  
ramyA-rAmA-mRudu-tanulatA nandanE nApi rantum  
bhAvE bhAvE hRdaya-bhavEna bhAvayEyam bhavantam || 4

### MEANING

Here, Kulasekhara spells out to Mukunda as to what he is NOT praying for.

1. I am worshipping your holy feet not to gain evanescent joy or to shake off my samsaric sorrow;
2. I am praying to you not to escape from the terrifying Narakam known as Kumbhipaakam.
3. I certainly am not offering my salutations to enjoy the celestial damsels with beautiful limbs in the pleasure gardens of Indra.

O Lord, who chases away the sorrows of the bhakthaas! **Please grant me the boon of realizing you through meditation in every one of my births in the house of my Heart.** That is all I am praying for and not for anything else.



## VERSE 5

### PRAYER FOR STHIRA BHAKTHI!

नास्था धर्म न वसुनिचये नैव कामोपभोगे

यद्यद् भव्यं भवतु भगवन् पूर्वकर्मानुरूपम् ।

एतत् प्रार्थ्यं मम बहुमतं जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि

त्वत्पादाम्भोरुहयुगता निश्चला भक्तिरस्तु ॥ ५ ॥

na AasthA dharmE na vasu-nicayE naiva kAmOpabhOgE  
yat yat bhavyam bhavatu bhagavan pUrva-karmAnurUpam |  
Etat prArthyam mama bahu matam janma-janmAntarEpi  
tvat-pAdAmbhOruha-yuga-gatA niScalA bhaktirastu || 5

#### MEANING

O Lord filled with the six celebrated qualities! I am not interested in the acquisition of wealth or in the pleasures of the other worldly life. I am not attracted by sensory pleasures at all. Whatever that will happen as a result of Purva Karmaas, let it happen! The only thing that I pray for is the steady and undiminishing devotion at your Lotus feet in every one of my births.



Bhagavan - Thiru NArAyaNan



## VERSE 6

Prayer for the remembrance of the Lord's Feet at the last moments of life!

दिवि वा भुवि वा ममास्तु वासो

नरके वा नरकान्तक् प्रकामम् ।

अवधीरित शारदारविन्दौ

चरणौ ते मरणेऽपि चिन्तयामि ॥ ६ ॥

divi vA bhuvi vA mamAstu vAsO  
narakE vA narakAntaka! prakAmam |  
avadhIrita-SAradAravindau  
caraNau tE maraNE api cintayAmi || 6

### MEANING

Here the King of Kolli Naadu prays for the lotus feet of the Lord as **Antima Smurithi**. Azhwaars and Aacharyals have begged the Lord to have thoughts about HIM during their Anthima Prayaanam. **One Example of such prayer is found in the twelfth verse of Sri Gopala Vimsathi:**

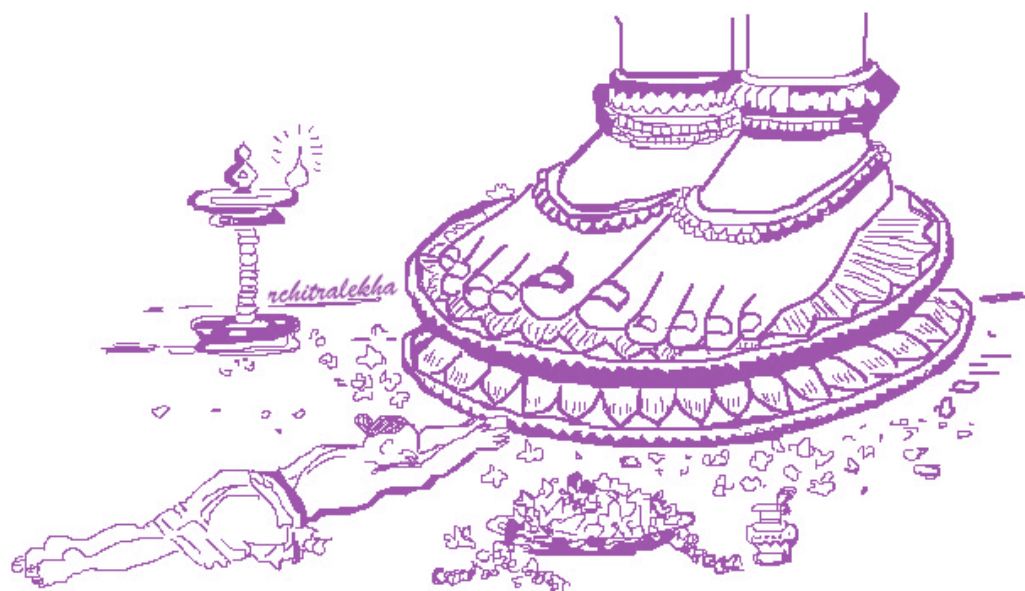
हरिनीलशिलाविभङ्गनलिः प्रतिभाः सन्तु ममान्तिमप्रयाणे ॥

harineela Silaa vibhanga neelaa: pratibhaa: santu mamaantima prayaaNe ||

(May the images of the beautiful blue complexion of your body resembling that of an Indra Neela Gem appear before me at the time of my departure from this earth?)

Kulasekhara states in this verse that he is indifferent to his residence at Svargam or Earth or Narakam at the time of his Anthima Prayaanam. The only

thing that he cares for is the memory of the Lord's Lotus feet that surpass the beauty of the lotus of the autumn season.



**Charming Lotus Feet**

## VERSE 7

Request for residence inside the cage of Lord's Lotus Feet  
immediately!

कृष्ण त्वदीय पदपङ्कज पञ्जरान्तम्

अद्यैव मे विशतु मानस राजहंसः ।

प्राणप्रयाणसमये कफवातपित्तैः

कण्ठावरोधनविधौ स्मरणं कुतस्ते ॥ ७ ॥

kRshNa tvadIya pada-pankaja-panjarAntam  
adyaiva mE viSatu mAnasa-rAja-hamsa: |  
prANa-prayANa-samayE kapha-vAta-pittai:  
kaNThAvarOdhana-vidhau smaraNam kutastE || 7

### MEANING

Kulasekhara prays here for safe residence as of now inside the cage of the Lord's holy feet. He compares his mind to a king swan that wishes to enter the safe cage of the Lord's Lotus feet. He explains the reason for this urgent and pressing request. He says that at the time of his departure from this earth, he may be totally helpless and will be overcome by blockage of throat from the Phlegm, bile and irregular respiration.

"I may not be able to think of you under those circumstances. Therefore, let me enter the safe haven (cage) of the lotus feet of thine NOW!"

The Azhwaar's Paasura Vaakyams such as:

1. "Appothaikkippothah Solli vaithen",
2. "Vaayorupakkam Vaangi Valippa, Vaarnda NeerkkuzhikkaNkaL Mizharra"

are reminiscent of the terror experienced by the Azhwaars and their seeking Insurance from the Lord to protect them, when they are helpless during the last moments of their life.



### Sri VarAhar

Varaha charama slokam is the answer that the Lord gives to Kulasekhara. Those charama Slokam words are:

"mriyamaananthu kaashta paashana sannibham,  
aham smaraami madh bhaktham nayami paramangathim "

Lord Varaha assures the Bhakthas that he will think of them at the time of their death, when they lie incapacitated on their death bed as stones or a piece of wood and lead them to His supreme abode.

## VERSE 8

Unceasing meditation on Lord Sri Krishna!

चिन्तयामि हरिमेव सन्ततं

मन्दमन्द हसिताननाम्बुजम् ।

नन्दगोप तनयं परात्परं

नारदादि मुनिबृन्द वन्दितम् ॥ ८ ॥

cintayAmi harim Eva santatam  
mandamanda hasitAnAmbujam |  
nanda-gOpa-tanayam parAt param  
nAradAdi-muni-brunda-vanditam || 8

### MEANING

Here, Kulasekhara states that he meditates always on Hari, the destroyer of all of our sins. That Hari worshipped by celebrated saints like Naaradhaa has a radiant smile like a blossoming lotus. He is the supreme most among the Gods and that Hari is none other than Krishna, who came down to this world as the son of Nandagopa of Gokulam.



## VERSE 9

Hari as the cool pond removing the heat of Samsaaram !

करचरणसरोजे कान्तिमन्नेत्रमीने

श्रममुषि भुजवीचिव्याकुलेऽगाधमार्गे ।

हरिसरसि विगाह्यापीय तेजोजलौघं

भवमरुपरिखिन्नः खेदमद्य त्यजामि ॥ ९ ॥

kara-caraNa-sarOjE kAntiman-nEtra-mInE  
Srama-mushi bhuja-vIci-vyAkulE agAdha-mArgE |  
hari-sarasi vigAhyApIya tEjO-jalaugham  
bhava-maru-parikhinna: khEdamadya tyajAmi || 9

### MEANING

Here, Kulasekhara is nourished by the meditation on the beautiful limbs of the Lord and equates that invigorating experience to that of taking a deep dip in a cool pond in the middle of scorching summer. He compares the hands and feet of the Lord to lotuses blooming in that cool pond. He recognizes the fish swimming in the pond as the two eyes of the Lord. The waves of the pond remind him of the inviting shoulders of the Lord. He is reminded of the deep Bhagavat Tatvam, when he thinks about the depth of the pond.

The refreshing and joyous experience of immersing in that pond known as Hari and



The Beautiful Limbs



drinking its nourishing waters makes him think that, that experience is comparable to the state of a traveler in the torrid and dry desert sighting a cool pond in the middle of all of that waste land and getting relief from his sufferings by dipping into that inviting waters. His afflictions are gone. The afflictions are the sorrows of samsaric life caused by the Taapa Thrayam. Dipping in the Hari Saras is the sure way to quench those Taapaas.

Kulasekhara states that the dip in the cool emerald pond (Hari Saras) has cured him of the afflictions. Poets have used the analogy of a cool emerald pond in a summer to describe the invigorating and relief giving qualities of the meditation on the Lord.

Following this tradition, Swami Desikan states in Devanayaka Panchaasat,

"mama dhee: bhavantam greeshmeh tataakamiva seetham anupravishtaa".

He states that his mind attained rest and vigor through meditation on the auspicious attributes of the Lord of Thiruvahindrapuram, just as one gets relief from the scorching summer heat by the act of dipping in a cool pond. One Azhwaar has described RAMA as "Dayarathan Perra Maragada Mani Thatam" (RAMA, the emerald pond born as the son of Dasaratha).







## VERSE 10

Exhortation to the mind!

सरसिजनयने सशङ्खचक्रे  
मुरभिदि मा विरमस्व चित्त रन्तुम् ।

सुखतरमपरं न जातु जाने

हरिचरण स्मरणामृतेन तुल्यम् ॥ १० ॥

sarasija-nayanE sa-Sankha-cakrE  
mura-bhidi mA viramasva citta rantum |  
sukha-taram aparam na jAtu jAnE  
hari-caraNa-smaraNAMrutEna tulyam || 10

### MEANING

In this beautiful verse, Kulasekharāa reveals that the thought of the holy feet of the Lord is similar to the joyous experience of drinking nectar. It is an experience that is not surpassed in its Sukham by any other experience. Therefore, he appeals to his mind to dwell on the lotus eyed Lord bearing the disc and the conch, who destroyed the evil Muraasura. He asserts that there is no joy that can match the exhilarating joy of meditation of the Lord's lotus feet.





## VERSE 11

Lord is our Master; dread not Yama Dandanai!

माभीर्मन्दमनो विचिन्त्य बहुधा यामीश्विरं यातनाः

नामी नः प्रभवन्ति पापरिपवः स्वामी ननु श्रीधरः ।

आलस्यं व्यपनीय भक्तिसुलभं ध्यायस्व नारायणं

लोकस्य व्यसनापनोदनकरो दासस्य किं न क्षमः ॥ ११ ॥

mAbhI: manda-manO vicintya bahudhA yAmI: ciram yAtanA:  
nAmI na: prabhavanti pApa-ripava: svAmI nanu SrI-dhara: |  
Alasyam vyapanIya bhakti-sulabham dhyAyaSva nArAyaNam  
lOkasya vyasanApanOdana-karO dAsasya kim na kshama: || 11

### MEANING

Here, Kulasekhara appeals to his mind and asks it not to be afraid of the torment of Yama Deva due to worry over the commitment of many sins over a long time. He says that these sins will not hold Lordship over you, since our true Lord is Sridharan. O my poor mind! Please shake off your procrastination and meditate on the Lord. He is the remover of the sorrows of the world. You are His servant. He will hence come to your rescue and save you from the punishments of Yama Raja.



## VERSE 12

Vishnu as the divine Boat to cross the samsaaric Ocean !

भवजलधिगतानां द्वन्द्ववाताहतानां

सुतदुहितृकळत्र त्राणभारार्दितानाम् ।

विषमविषयतोये मज्जतामप्लवानां

भवतु शरणमेको विष्णुपोतो नराणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

bhava-jaladhi-gatAnAm dvandva-vAtAhatAnAm

suta-duhitru-kaLatra-trANa bhArArditAnAm |

vishama-vishaya-tOyE majjatAm aplavAnAm

bhavatu SaraNam EkO vishNu-pOtO narANAm || 12

### MEANING

Here, Kulasekhara describes the state of Chetanas. He says that a majority of them have fallen into the deep and dangerous ocean of Samsaaraa. They are buffeted by the wild winds of shallow pleasures and great sorrows. They are sinking under the load of responsibility to protect their children, wife and relatives. They do not see the shores during this struggle for survival. Kulasekhara points out that for those desperate chetanas, the boat known as Vishnu is the sole hope for escape from the torments of the ocean of Samsaaraa and to reach the kingdom of the Lord.

Thirunindravoor Bhakthavathsalan



## VERSE 13

Bhagavat Bhakti as the sure means to escape samsaanic terrors !

भवजलधिमगाधं दुस्तरं निस्तरेयं

कथमहमिति चेतो मास्मगाः कातरत्वम् ।

सरसिजदृशि देवे तावकी भक्तिरेका

नरकभिदि निषण्णा तारयिष्यत्वश्यम् ॥ १३ ॥

bhava-jaladhim agAdham dustaram nistarEyam  
kathamahamiti cEtO mA sma gA: kAataratvam |  
sarasija-dRuSi dEvE tAvakI bhaktirEkA  
naraka-bhidi nishaNNA tArayishyati avaSyam || 13

### MEANING

Here, Kulasekhara comforts his mind and assures it that there is no need to fret and fear over the ways of crossing the deep and dangerous ocean of Samsaaraa through its own feeble efforts. He says that the deep devotion for the Lotus-eyed Lord, who destroyed Narakaasuran would surely transport it over the dangerous waters of the sea of Samsaaraa. Aandaal's Nacchiyaar Thirumozhi verse:

"TUNBA KADAL PUKKU VAIKUNDHAN ENPATHOR

TOHNI PERAATHU UZHALHINREHN",

is an example of similar feeling-state. Here, Aandaal says that she is struggling hard in the ocean of sorrow for the want of the safe boat known as Vaikuntanathan to ferry her across.





## VERSE 14

Bhakthi is the boat to cross samsaaraa !

तृष्णातोये मदनपवनोद्धृतमोहोर्मिमाले

दारावर्ते तनयसहजग्राहसंघाकुले च ।

संसारख्ये महति जलधौ मज्जतां नस्त्रिधामन्

पादाम्भोजे वरद भवतो भक्तिनावं प्रयच्छ ॥ १४ ॥

tRshNA-tOyE madana-pavana uddhUta-mOha Urmi-mAlE  
dArAvar+E tanaya-sahaja-grAha-sanghAkulE ca |  
samsArAkhyE mahati jaladhau majjatAm na: tri-dhAman !  
pAdAmbhOjE varada bhavatO bhakti-nAvam prayaccha || 14

### MEANING

In this verse, the AzhvAr describes the terrors that abound in the ocean of samsAra. He prays to Lord Ranganaatha to bless him with the boat of bhakti to ferry across the troubled waters of the ocean of samsAra.

He compares the whirlpools and crocodiles of the ocean to the joys and sorrows caused by worldly attachments to wives, children and relatives.

The AzhvAr addresses SrI Ranganaatha as "tri-dhAman" and "varada" in this Slokam. He calls the great boon giver (varadan) as "tri-dhAman" to remind us that He resides in the three abodes:

1. SrI-vaikUNTham
2. milky ocean, and
3. atop the tiru-venkaTam hills on the Earth.

He bases his choice of the name, "tri-dhAman" on the vedic passage, "ambasya-





pArE bhuvanasya-madhyE nAkasya-pRshTE".

He again reminds us that sincere bhakti focused on the Lord will serve as the mighty ship to cross the terrifying ocean, populated by sea monsters, full of powerful waves of mOha, churned up by the wind of manmata:

"uddhUta mOha Urmi-mAlE samsArAkhyE mahati jaladhau majjatAm na:  
bhavata: pAdAmbhOjE bhakti nAvam prayaccha" .





## VERSE 15

Lord Ranganaatha is the supreme Master !

माद्राक्षं क्षीणपुण्यान् क्षणमपि भवतो भक्तिहीनान् पदाब्जे

माश्रौषं श्राव्यबन्धं तव चरितमपास्याऽन्यदाख्यानजातम् ।

मास्मार्षं माधव त्वामपि भुवनपते चेतसाऽपह्नुवानान्

माभूवं त्वत्सपर्या व्यतिकर रहितो जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि ॥ १५ ॥

mAdrAksham kshINa-puNyAn kshaNamapi bhavatO bhakti-hInAn padAbjE  
mASrausham SrAvya-bandham tava caritam-apAsya anyat-AkhyAna-jAtam |  
mAsmArsham mAdhava tvAm api bhuvana-patE cEtasA apahnuvAnAn  
mAbhUvam tvat-saparyA-vyatikara-rahitO janma-janmAntarEpi || 15

### MEANING

In this verse, SrI kulaSEkhara asserts his devotion to SrI Ranganaatha and declares aloud his disinterest in those who lead wasted lives by discarding the Lord from their thoughts.

AzhvAr has no use for such



Tridhaman





detestable souls who do not have bhakti for Ranganaatha. He just cannot imagine such empty lives! He says he cannot live without performing nityArAdhanam to SrI Ranganaatha in every one of his lives on this Earth.

He reminds us here of the two principles for which bhAgavata-s are well-known, viz.,

"Atma-dAsyam harE: svAmyam".

Here he reminds us that the only way to attain salvation is to remember constantly that one is the servant of the Lord and the Lord is the Supreme Master for all of us. Any belief to the contrary will lead one astray and such thoughts are totally unacceptable to SrI KulaSEkhara.

I will translate now word-for-word to enjoy the sentiments expressed by SrI KulaSEkhara AzhvAr:

"hE bhuvana-patE ! bhavata: padAbjE bhakti-hInAn kshINa puNyAn kshaNam  
api mA drAksham"

(O Lord of the universe! I will not look even for a second at the unfortunate who do not offer bhakti at your lotus feet)

"SrAvya-bandham tava caritam apAsya anyat AkhyAna-jAtam mA Srausham"

(O ranganaatha! I will not hear any prabandham other than those of Your's which are the most delectable for the ears. I will not pay even momentary attention to delightful songs other than those related to you.)

"hE mAdhava tvAm apahnuvAnAn cetasa mA smarsha"

(O mAdhava! I will not think even for a moment about those unfortunate ones who reject you from their lives.)

"janma janmAntarE api tvat saparyA vyatikara rahita: mA bhuvam"

(In this and other lives I will not be passing my time without performing your





daily ArAdhanam. Please bless me with this boon.)

In fact, AzhvAr prays to SrI Ranganaatha to bless him to be free from all the mishaps he summarized in this verse.

SrI KulaSEkhara AzhvAr's thoughts about rejecting the Godless reminds us of another AzhvAr :

"kaNNamangai nagarALan kazhal sUDi avanai uLLatteNNAda mAniDattai  
eNNAda pOdellAm iniyavARE"

Here the other AzhvAr echoes KulaSEkhara's thought: Sweet indeed is the times when I do not think of those who eject the Lord of tirukkaNNamangai from their minds.



## VERSE 16

Control of the sense organs to meditate on Lord Ranganaatha !

जिह्वे कीर्तय केशवं मुररिपुं चेतो भज श्रीधरं  
पाणिद्वन्द्व समर्चयाच्युत कथाः श्रोत्रद्वय त्वं शृणु ।  
कृष्णं लोकय लोचनद्वय हरेर्गच्छांघ्रियुग्मालयं

जिघ्र घ्राण मुकुन्दपाद तुलसीं मूर्धन् नमाधोक्षजम् ॥ १६ ॥

jihvE kIrtaya kESavam mura-ripum cEtO bhaja SrI-dharam  
pANi-dvandva samarcayAcyuta-kathA: SrOtra-dvaya tvam SruNu |  
kRshNam lOkaya lOcana-dvaya harE: gaccha anghri-yugmAlayam  
jighra ghrANa mukunda-pAda-tulasIm mUrdhan nama adhOkshajam || 16

### MEANING

In this verse, KulaSEkharar entreats all his senses - tongue, ears, eyes, legs, nose, head and mind to engage in the service to Lord SrI Ranganaatha.

The first appeal goes to SrI KulaSEkharar's tongue - He asks it to praise Lord KeSavan. The name kESava has three meanings covering:

1. dushTha-nigraham,
2. svAmitvam and
3. soundaryam of SrI Ranganaatha.

In the aspect of destruction of the unrighteous (dushTha-nigraham) he refers to the Lord slaying an asura by name "kESi" - therefore the name kESava.

In the aspect of svAmitvam, kESava stands for SrI Ranganaatha being the master of brahma and rudra.

In the aspect of soundaryam, kESavan means one with beautiful hair. Through



the invocation of the name kESava, SrI KulaSEkhara implies that the kalyANa guNa-s of the Lord are countless and his tongue will not run out of kIrtana-s to sing about Him.

The second appeal of SrI KulaSEkhara -" hE cEta: mura-ripum bhaja!" - goes to his mind. He asks his mind to meditate on the Lord who is the destroyer of an asura by name "Muran". By this meditation one will see Him clearly inside oneself, says the AzhvAr. He probably has the following verse from brahma-bindu-upanishad in mind:

"ghutamiva payasi nigUDham bhUtE ca vasati viGYAnam |  
satatam manthayitavyam manasA manthAnabhUtEna || "



Mukunda pAda ThuLasi

The upanishad verse says that Lord SrIman-nArAyaNa is hidden in all cEtana's





hearts like ghee in milk. Just as one churns the milk with a wooden instrument (ie mattu, in tamizh) to release the butter, so should one use one's mind to witness SrIman-nArAyaNa in one's heart?

Then the AzhvAr asks his two hands to do arcana with tulasi leaves and flower petals. He wants his hands to do arcana to SrI-dharan with perfection appealing - "pANi-dvandva SrI-dharam samarcaya (samyak arcaya)". He wants his hands to do arcana not only to nArAyaNa but also to SrI-dEvI by choosing the name, SrI-dhara. The divya-dampatis are inseparable.

SrI svAmi dESikan later followed the AzhvAr's thought when he bowed to the divya-dampati's Eka-SEshitva-yOgam in his SrI-stuti and declared: "yuvAm dampatI daivatam na:" (ie dampatI yuvAm na: daivatam) SrI dESikan amplified the thought behind SrIdhara: by stating that both MahAlakshmi and nArAyaNa, shining as matchless couple, serve as Supreme and unified God in one inseparable form.

After the appeal to his hands, SrI KulaSEkhara turns his attention to his ears. He asks them to hear (SrOtradvaya tvam acyuta kathA: SrNu!) stories about acyutan. The name acyutan symbolizes His total resolve to come to prapannas' rescue without fail. By invoking acyuta, SrI kulaSEkhara reminds his ears about SaraNAgati-vratam and abhaya-pradhAna-guNam of SrIman-nArAyaNa reclining on Adi-SEsha at SrI-ranga kshEtram.

AzhvAr says to his ears that hearing of the kathA-s of Acyutan such as :

1. vibhIshaNa-SaraNAgati,
2. kAkAsura-SaraNAgati,
3. draupatI-mAnasamrakshaNam,
4. gajEndra-mOksham,
5. AmbarIsha-caritram etc.

can only assure one of the secure and delectable experiences of tasting the nectar-like SaraNAgata-rakshaNa anubhavam. sAtvata-samhitA echoes



AzhvAr's thought as follows:

"sankalpAdEva bhagavan tattvatO bhAvitAtmAnAm |  
vrtAntamakhilam kAlam sEcayatmRtEna tu || "

The samhitai verse states that SrI Acyutan blesses those who worship Him with the nectar-like experience of association with Him throughout their earthly lives and gives them the refuge of His cool feet by driving away afflictions.

SrI KulaSEkharar next calls on his pair of eyes to enjoy the beauty of SrI Ranganaatha in His avatAra as SrI kRshNa. His appeal is:

"kRshNam lOkaya lOcana-dvaya:"

To witness and enjoy the beauty of SrI kRshNa bhagavAn, he asks his legs to go to temples where His arca-mUtIs are enshrined. The AzhvAr advises his legs as follows : "anghriyugma harE: Alayam gaccha".

AzhvAr then asks his nose to smell the sweet perfume of tulasi leaves that adorned the holy feet of SrI kRshNa - "hE kRshNa, mukunda-pAda-tulasIm jighra".

Finally, he asks his head to bend and offer its namaskAram-s to Lord Ranganaatha - "hE mUdhan adhOkshajam nama".





## VERSE 17

SrI KRshNA the powerful nectarine medicine !

हे लोकाश्शृणुत प्रसूति मरणव्याधेश्चिकित्सामिमां

योगज्ञास्समुदाहरन्ति मुनयो यां याज्ञवल्क्यादयः ।

अन्तर्ज्योतिरमेयमेकममृतं कृष्णाल्यमापीयतां

तत्पीतं परमौषधं वितनुते निर्वाणमात्यन्तिकम् ॥ १७ ॥

hE lOkA: SRNuta prasUti-maraNa-vyAdhE: cikitsAm imAm  
yOgajn~A: samudAharanti munayO yAm yAjn~avalkyAdaya: |  
antarjyOti: amEyam Ekam amRtam kRshNAkhyam ApIyatAm  
tat pItam paramaushadam vitanutE nirvANam Atyantikam || 17

### MEANING

In this verse, SrI kulaSEkharar talks to people of the world at large. He asks them to listen to the cure recommended by great yOgi-s and sages like yAGYavalkya against the cycles of birth and death that cEtana-s are subject to as samsArin-s.

AzhvAr points out that the medicine recommended by the revered sages is a nectar-like drink known as SrI-kRshNa. That shining nectar which is immeasurable in its qualities will cure one's samsAric illnesses permanently. AzhvAr equates SrI kRshNa to the powerful medicine which will cure the disease of recurring cycles of birth and death. He says the medicine has been time-tested by great sages and it is the panacea for the disease of samsAra.





## VERSE 18

The greatness of ashtAkshara Manthram !

हे मर्त्याः परमं हितं शृणुत वो वक्ष्यामि संक्षेपतः

संसारार्णवमापदूर्मिबहुलं सम्यक्प्रविश्य स्थिताः ।

नानाज्ञानमपास्य चेतसि नमो नारायणायेत्यमुं

मन्त्रं सप्रणवं प्रणामसहितं प्रावर्तयध्वं मुहुः ॥ १८ ॥

hE martyA: paramam hitam SruNuta vO vakshyAmi sankshEpata:  
samsArArNavam Apad-Urmi bahuLam samyak praviSyA sthitA: |  
nAnAjn~anam apAsya cEtasi namO nArAyaNAya iti amum  
mantram sa-praNavam praNAma-sahitam prAvartayadhvam muhu: || 18

### MEANING

In this verse, AzhvAr addresses humanity out of compassion for their suffering. He points out to them that chanting of SrIman-nArAyaNa's ashTAKshara mantram will easily deliver them from their sorrows and worries. He addresses the samsAri-s who are about to drown in the ocean of samsAra and gives them a roadmap to overcome their desperate situation.

AzhvAr reveals that recitation of "namO nArAyaNAya" together with praNavam would remove their ignorance and set them on the right path leading to mOksham.

SrI AzhvAr addresses humans as:

"Apad Urmi bahuLam samsAra arNavam praviSyA sthitA: hE martyA:"

AzhvAr sizes them up as those who are deeply immersed in the ocean of samsAra with its dangerous waves.





"va: param hitam samkshEpata: vakshyAmi"

"Let me share with you what is very good for you, in a condensed fashion. Please hear (SruNuta!) this brief statement. My message to you for your deliverance is to recite the ashTAkshara-mantram with rich intonation of praNavam, in a clear state of mind free from delusions and with reverence."

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## VERSE 19

The majesty, glory and greatness of

Sriman Narayana !

पृथ्वी रेणुरणुः पयांसि कणिकाः फल्गुस्फुलिङ्गोऽनलः

तेजो निःश्वसनं मरुत् तनुतरं रन्ध्रं सुसूक्ष्मं नभः ।

क्षुद्रा रुद्रपितामहप्रभृतयः कीटास्समस्तास्सुराः

दृष्टे यत्र स तावको विजयते भूमावधूतावधिः ॥ १९ ॥

pRthvI rENu: aNu: payAmsi kaNika: phalgusphulinga: anala:  
tEjO ni:Svasanam marut tanu-taram randhram su-sUkshmam nabha: |  
kshudrA rudra-pitAmaha-prabhRtaya: kITA: samastA: surA:  
dRshTE yatra sa tAvakO vijayatE bhUmA avadhUtAvadhi: || 19

### MEANING

In this verse SrI KulaSEkhara talks about the splendor and glory of the God behind the ashTAKshara-mantram. This verse is the essence of the mahA-nArAyaNa upanishad. Where SrIman-nArAyaNa is described :

1. as the eldest among Gods (yO dEvAnAm dEvEbhyO jAta:) and
2. as the benevolent leader of the Gods. (yO dEvAnAm purOhita:)

The fourth and the fifth verses of mahA-nArAyaNa upanishad provide the basis of SrI KulaSEkhara's celebration of SrIman-nArAyaNa as the most Supreme principle and the highest among the Gods. These verses of the upanishad are as follows:

"yatam prasUtA jagatam prasUtI tOyEna jIvAn vyacasarja bhUmyAm  
yadOshadhIbhi: purushAn paSU{gm}Sca vivESa bhUtAni carAcarANi |





ata: param nAnyadaNIyasa{gm}hi parAtparam yanmahutO mahAntam  
yadEkam-avyaktam-ananta-rUpam viSvam purANam tamasa: parastAt || "





**dEvAnAm dEva - Thirukkachi**

Along the upanishadic lines, SrI KulaSEkhara's extols the Supreme greatness and the majesty of SrIman-nArAyaNa among all objects in the creation and among all Gods. SrI KulaSEkhara compares the "ananta-rUpam purANam mahatO mahAntam parAtparam" referred to by the upanishad, with the panca-bhUtam-s like fire, water, earth, ether and air. He also compares the parAtparam with the other Gods such as brahma, rudra etc. and concludes that none of them approach in scale the dimension, majesty, power and greatness of SrIman-nArAyaNa.

The AzhvAr says that, next to Him, the vast Earth resembles a speck of dust,







the oceans resemble a drop of water, the mighty agni resembles a spark, the great winds resemble a feeble breath, and the vast sky resembles a little hole. AzhvAr concludes his statement on the greatness and supremacy of SrIman-nArAyaNa with awe and abject wonder in the following manner:

"sa: avadhUta avadhi: tAvaka: bhUmA vijayatE"

Such is SrIman-nArAyaNa's limitless, immeasurable glory that shines forth, says SrI KulaSEkhara.



## VERSE 20

Remembering the Lord's Lotus Feet!

बद्धेनाञ्जलिना नतेन शिरसा गात्रैस्सरोमोद्गमैः

कण्ठेन स्वरगद्गदेन नयनेनोद्गीर्णं बाष्पाम्बुना ।

नित्यं त्वच्चरणारविन्दयुगळं ध्यानामृतास्वादिनां

अस्माकं सरसीरुहाक्ष सततं संपद्यतां जीवितम् ॥ २० ॥

baddhEna anjalina natEna SirasA gAtrai: sarOmOdgamai:  
kaNThEna svara-gadgadEna nayanE udgIrNa bAshpAmbunA |  
nityam tvat-caraNAravindayugaLa dhyAnAmRtAsvAdinAm  
asmAkam sarasIruhAksha satatam sampadyatAm jIvitam || 20

### MEANING

After meditating on and describing the viSva-rUpam of the Lord in the previous verse, SrI KulaSEkharar is awe-struck and his voice falters. Tear swell up in his eyes; he has horripilation. With anjalI hastham and bent head, the AzhvAr begs Lord SrI RanganAtha for His blessings to have continued memory of His nectar-like Feet.

In utter humility, the AzhvAr says, "O Lord, Remembering You is the most blessed experience, like drinking nectar. Let this bliss continue forever for us (asmAkam jIvitam satatam sampadyatAm) with your blessings."



## VERSE 21

There's no other protection than Sriman NaaraayaNan !

हे गोपालक हे कृपाजलनिधे हे सिन्धुकन्यापते

हे कंसान्तक हे गजेन्द्र करुणापारीण हे माधव ।

हे रामानुज हे जगत्त्रयगुरो हे पुण्डरीकाक्ष मां

हे गोपीजननाथ पालय परं जानामि न त्वां विना ॥ २१ ॥

hE gOpAlaka ! hE kRupA-jala-nidhE ! hE sindhu-kanyA-patE !  
hE kamsAntaka ! hE gajEndra-karuNA-pArINa ! hE mAdhava ! |  
hE rAmAnuja ! hE jagat-traya-gurO ! hE puNDarIkAksha! mAm  
hE gOpI-jana-nAtha ! pAlaya param jAnAmi na tvAm vinA || 21

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Lord reclining on AdisEshan - Rangasthala





## MEANING

After the humble prayer seeking the Lord'd blessings for constant memory of His nectar-like feet, SrI KulaSEkharar surrenders to Him in abject humility and confesses that there is no other savior for him except the Lord reclining on Adi-SEshan at SrI-rangam. He requests the Lord to protect him. He cries out the many names of the Lord and begs for protection and concedes that he has no one to turn to. (mAm pAlaya tvam vinA param na jAnAmi)

When seeking protection, AzhvAr's first thoughts turn to gOpAlan who protected the cows and calves on the plains of gOkulam. He thinks of that ocean of mercy (kRpA-jala-nidhi) who took care of the cows as a cowherd and seeks the same type of protection from Him. While thinking of the Ocean of Mercy, AzhvAr's thoughts focus on the daughter of the Milky Ocean whom the Lord married. (sindu-kanyA-pati:)

The AzhvAr's vast knowledge of purANa-s forms the basis of his next nAmArcanam-s like kamsAntaka and gajEndra-karuNA-pAriNa. He reflects on the celebrated deeds such as the destruction of kamsa and the rescue of the king of elephants from the mouth of the crocodile at a lotus pond. AzhvAr pays his respects to SrI kRshNa avtAram by exclaiming the Lord:

1. as rAmAnuja (younger Brother of Bala-rAma),
2. as gOpI-jana-nAtha and
3. as the teacher of the three worlds (jagat-traya-guru) because of His blessings through the teachings enshrined in the bhagavad-gIta.





## VERSE 22

Descent of Sri Ranganatha as Sri KrishNa

भक्तापायभुजङ्गरुडमणिः त्रैलोक्यरक्षामणिः

गोपीलोचनचातकाम्बुदमणिः सौन्दर्यमुद्रामणिः ।

यः कान्तामणिरुक्मिणीघनकुच द्वन्द्वैकभूषामणिः

श्रेयो देवशिखामणिर्दिशतु नो गोपालचूडामणिः ॥ २२ ॥

bhaktApAya bhujanga-gAruDa-maNi: trailOkya-rakshA-maNi:  
gOpI-IOcana-cAtakAmbuda-maNi: saundarya-mudrA-maNi: |  
ya: kAntA-maNi rukmiNI-ghana-kuca-dvandvaika-bhUshA-maNi:  
SrEyO dEva-SikhA-maNi: diSatu nO gOpAla-cUDA-maNi: || 22

### MEANING

The thought of SrI kRshNa in the previous verse stirs the kRshNa-bhakti of SrI KulaSEkharar and in this verse the AzhvAr further celebrates the descent of SrI RanganAtha as SrI kRshNa.

AzhvAr describes and celebrates the splendid gem of SrI kRshNa bhagavAn. AzhvAr states that HE is like gAruDa-maNi which removes the dangers arising from poisonous snakes. He recognizes SrI kRshNa as the supremely brilliant gem which protects the three universes. (traI-IOkya-rakshA-maNi:)

Azhvar also describes HIM as gOpI-IOcana-cAtaka-ambuda (i.e) , HE is the gem in the form of rainy clouds for the cAtaka birds which represent the eyes of the cowherdesses of gOkulam.

SrI KulaSEkharar is overcome by the beauty of SrI kRshNa and describes HIM as the combined essence of all the beauty in this world, shining as an invaluable gem. (saundarya-mudrA-maNi:)





This beautiful gem of kRshNa is visualized as resting HIS head between the breasts of SrI RukmiNI dEvI. Hence the AzhvAr describes HIM as the blue sapphire that adorns the chest region of SrI RukmiNI. (kAntA-manIr-rukmiNI- ghana-kuca-dvandvaika-bhUshA-maNi:)

Our AzhvAr also appreciates SrI kRshNa as the crown jewel of gOpas (gopAla-cUDA-maNi:) and crown jewel of deva-s (dEva-SikhA-maNi:)

AzhvAr prays to that illustrious blue gem (sa: na: SrEyO diSatu) and prays for HIS benevolent blessings.







## VERSE 23

Chanting of Sri KrishNa Manthram !

शत्रुच्छेदैकमन्त्रं सकलमुपनिषद्वाक्यसंपूज्यमन्त्रं  
संसारोत्तारमन्त्रं समुपचिततमस्सङ्घनिर्याणमन्त्रम् ।

सर्वैश्वर्यैकमन्त्रं व्यसनभुजग सन्दष्ट सन्त्राणमन्त्रं

जिह्वे श्रीकृष्णमन्त्रं जपजप सततं जन्मसाफल्यमन्त्रम् ॥ २३ ॥

Satruc-chEdaika-mantram sakalam-upanishad-vAkhya-sampUjya-mantram  
samsArOttAra-mantram samupacita-tamas-sangha-niryANa-mantram |  
sarvaiSvaryaika-mantram vysana-bhujaga-sandashTa-santrANa-mantram  
jihvE SrI-kRshNa-mantram japa japa satatam janma-sAphalya-mantram || 23

### MEANING

After praising the incomparable beauty of SrI kRshNa, KulaSEkharAzhvAr now turns to the holy SrI-kRshNa-mantram. He explains the significance of the mantram and the many blessings it confers on those who chant it repeatedly.

"SrI-kRshNa-mantram janma-sAphalya-mantram satatam japa" is the AzhvAr's recommendation. He asks us to recite the kRshNa-mantram which gives meaning and fruit to one's life. He explains the reasons for his recommendation since he knows from his experience that the mantram can offer all the following benefits:

1. Satru chEda Eka mantram : it is the one mantram which will destroy one's enemies.
2. Upanishad vAkhya sampUjya mantram : It is the mantram which has been identified as the most sacred by the upanishad vAkhyams.







3. SamsAra uttAra mantram : It is the mantram which gets us across the ocean of samsAra.
4. Samupacita tama: sangha niryANa mantram : It is the mantram which can banish the deep and dark clouds of ignorance and despair.
5. Sarva aiSvarya Eka mantram : It is the one mantram for attaining all kinds of wealth.
6. Vyasana bhujaga sandashTa santrANa mantram : It is the mantram which acts as a sure cure for the poisonous bites of serpents known as worldly afflictions.
7. Janma sAphalya mantram : the one mantram, recitation of which makes one's life worth living and fruitful.

SrI kulaSEkharar therefore asks us to recite constantly the holy mantram known as SrI-kRshNa-mantram for realizing all of the above benefits.





## VERSE 24

Hail to Sri KrishNa !

व्यामोहप्रशमौषधं मुनिमनोवृत्तिप्रवृत्त्यौषधं

दैत्येन्द्रार्तिकरौषधं त्रिजगतां सञ्जीवनैकौषधम् ।

भक्तात्यन्तहितौषधं भवभयप्रध्वंसनैकौषधं

श्रेयः प्राप्तिकरौषधं पिब मनश्श्रीकृष्णदिव्यौषधम् ॥ २४ ॥

vyAmOha-praSamaushadham muni-manO-vRtti-pravRttyaushadham  
daityEndrArti-karaushadham tri-jagatAm sanjIvanaikaushadham |  
bhaktAtyanta-hitaushadham bhava-bhaya-pradhvamsanaikaushadham  
SrEya: prApti-karaushadham piba manaS SrI-kRshNa-divyaushadham || 24

### MEANING

KulaSEkharar describes the SrI-kRshNa principle as the medicine for curing all the ills of the world and for destroying all the evil forces. He asks us to drink that beneficial medicine and to get well.

With us in mind, the AzhvAr is talking to his own mind and tells it to drink the divine medicine known as SrI kRshNa. Its benefits are as follows:

1. **VyamOha praSama aushadham** : It is a medicine that removes the delusions caused by chasing material and non-spiritual things.
2. **Muni mana: vRtti pravRtti aushadham** : It is a medicine that has the power to turn the minds of the sages towards SrI kRshNa ( i.e. ) , it can make them fall in love with SrI kRshNa.
3. **Daitya Indra Arti kara aushadham** : It is a medicine that can cause endless headache and panic to the chieftains of asura-s like kAlanEmi.
4. **Tri-jagatAm sanjIvana Eka aushadham** : It is a medicine essential for





rejuvenating the inhabitants of all the three worlds.

5. **BhaktA: atyanta hita aushadham** : It is a medicine that performs wonders and confers benedictions to the devotees of the Lord.
6. **Bhava bhaya pradhvamsana Eka aushadham** : It is a medicine that banishes the fears of samsAra .
7. **SrEya: prApti kara aushadham** : It is a key medicine that confers auspiciousness and happiness for its partakers.



**Lord KrishNa - DoddamaLLur**

Such a divine medicine is nothing other than the SrI-kRshNa-mantram and KulaSEkharar tell his mind (and ours) it should drink the SrI-kRshNa-mantram.





## VERSE 25

Futility of holy deeds without recitation of SrI Krishna Mantram !

आम्नायाभ्यसनान्यरण्यरुदितं वेदव्रतान्यन्वहं

मेदश्छेदफलानि पूर्तविधयः सर्वे हुतं भस्मनि ।

तीर्थानामवगाहनानि च गजस्नानं विना यत्पद-

द्वन्द्वाम्भोरुहसंस्मृतीः विजयते देवस्स नारायणः ॥ २५ ॥

AmnAyAbhyasanAni araNya-ruditam vEda-vratAny anv-aham  
mEdaS-chEda-phalAni pUrta-vidhaya: sarvE hutam bhasmani |  
tIrthAnAm avagAhanAni ca gaja-snAnam vinA yat-pada-  
dvandvAmbhOruha-samsmRtI: vijayatE dEvas sa nArAyaNa: || 25

### MEANING

In this verse, the AzhvAr explains the futility of all holy deeds if one does not recite the SrI-kRshNa-mantram or drink the medicine known as SrI kRshNa or think about HIM.

AzhvAr describes the futility of vEdic recitation, rituals like EkAdaSi fasting, giving money to charities, pilgrimage to sacred places or bathing in gangA river if one does not meditate on the Holy Feet of SrI kRshNa. This is because of the paling of all other so called sacred acts compared to the Supreme glory of SrI kRshNa who is the incarnation of SrIman-nArAyaNa.

With that conviction born out of his own experience, SrI kulaSEkharar declares the Supremacy of SrIman-nArAyaNa, with the statement

"sa dEva: nArAyaNa: vijayatE "

SrI KulaSEkhararAja gives three examples of inefficacious "sacred" deeds if performed without meditation on the Holy Feet of SrI kRshNa.





1. The first example is the recitation of the vEda-s. "AmnAya abhyasanAni araNya ruditam vEda" : the AzhvAr says that such recitations without recollection of the Lord's Lotus Feet are like screams and lamentations in the forest, where no one can come to help.
2. The second example is the daily practice of rituals sanctioned by the vEda-s. Such practices without the thought of the Lord can only dry up one's muscles and cannot yield any benefits to help bring the practitioners close to the Lord. AzhvAr describes these fruitless rituals as, " anu-aham vEda vratAni mEda: chEda phalAni iva".
3. The third example of futile rituals resulting from the pursuit of charitable deeds without faith in the Lord, are described as hOmam-s (ie pouring of the sacrificial ghee) performed on ashes. Our AzhvAr says: "sarvE pUrta-vidhaya: bhasmani hutam iva". Charitable deeds like digging ponds and building public facilities etc., devoid of kRshNa-bhakti are like pouring oblations unto ashes, according to SrI KulaSEkhara.

Even gangA-snAnam without meditation on SrI kRshNa is like "elephant's bath" and hence unsatisfactory. The AzhvAr wants us to remember the Holy Feet of Lord in all our deeds in order to get his full blessings.







## VERSE 26

AshtAkshara Mantra Japam for freedom from samsaric ills !

श्रीमन्नाम प्रोच्य नारायणाख्यं

के न प्राप्नुवाञ्छितं पापिनोऽपि ।

हा नः पूर्वं वाक्प्रवृत्ता न तस्मिन्

तेन प्राप्तं गर्भवासादिदुःखम् ॥ २६ ॥

SrIman-nAma prOcya nArAyaNAkhyam  
kE na prApu: vAnchitam pApinOpi |  
hA na: pUrvam vAk-pravRtta na tasmin  
tEna prAptam garbha-vAsAdi-du:kham || 26

### MEANING

In this verse King KulaSEkhara praises the benefits of reciting SrIman-nArAyaNa's ashTAKshara-mantram and the ills that befall one who does not recite it.

The AzhvAr reminds us of the many passages from tiru-vAi-mozhi where a number of other AzhvArs have reminded us about the good fortunes that come the way of those who recite the ashTAKshara-mantram in devotion. Some of these passages from tiru-vAi-mozhi extolling the blessings of ashTAKshara-mantra-japam are as follows:

"Kulan-taru~n-celvan-tandiDum-aDiyAr paDu-tuyar-Ayinar-ellAm,  
nilantara~n ceyyum nIL visumb-arulLum aruLoDu peru-nilam-aLikkum,  
valan-tarum maRRun-tandiDum peRRa-tAyinum-Ayina ceyyum,  
nalan-taru~n-collai nAn kaNDu-koNDEn nArAyaNA-vennum nAmam"

-- tiru-mangai AzhvAr







"Vaidu ninnai vallavA pazhittavarkum,  
mARil pOr seydu ninna ceRRat-tIyil-vendavarkkum,  
vandu unai-yeydalAgum-enbar"

-- tirumozhisai AzhvAr

"Moytta-valvinaiyuL ninRu-mUnRezhutt-uDaiya pErAl,  
kattirapandum-anRE parA'ngati kaNDu-koNDAn"

-- tonDar-aDi-poDi AzhvAr

Anticipating the above statements by the three AzhvAr-s who appeared after him, SrI KulaSEkhara AzhvAr says that there is no sinner who has not been redeemed by reciting the name of nArAyaNa. Similarly, those who did not shout the name of nArAyaNa ended tasting the ill fruits of samsAra with its endless cycles of birth and death.

SrI KulaSEkharar says:

"nArAyaNa-Akhyam SrIman-nAma prOcya  
kE pAPina: apai vA~nchitam na prAPu?"

The AzhvAr queries as to which sinner has not been blessed by reciting the name of SrIman-nArAyaNa. His answer is a resounding: "none". The AzhvAr implies that regardless of the magnitude of the sins, the sinner is blessed and saved by the Lord once HE hears the sinner invoke HIS name celebrated as nArAyaNa.

The AzhvAr also describes the plight of those who blabber about everything except reciting the name, nArAyaNa. He says that those people end up in endless cycles of samsAra and suffer. The portion of the verse containing this thought in anvaya-kramam is as follows: "pUrvam tasmin na pravRtta tEna garbha-vAsAdi du:kham hA! prAPtam".





## VERSE 27

The greatness of bhAgavatha kaimkaryam !

मज्जन्मनः फलमिदं मधुकैटभारे

मत्प्रार्थनीयमदनुग्रह एष एव ।

त्वद्भृत्यभृत्यपरिचारक भृत्यभृत्य

भृत्यस्य भृत्य इति मां स्मर लोकनाथ ॥ २७ ॥

maj-janmana: phalamidam madhu-kaiTabhArE

mat-prArthanIya-mad-anugraha Esha Eva |

tvad-bhRtya-bhRtya-paricAraka-bhRtya-bhRtya

bhRtyasya bhRtya iti mAm smara lOka-nAtha || 27

### MEANING

After highlighting the virtues of reciting the name of SrIman-nArAyaNa, SrI KulaSEkhara retreats into a humble prayer asking for the boon for becoming a servant of the servant who serves the servant of the servant attendant of the servant of SrIman-nArAyaNa. "Granting of this boon would fulfill my life's purpose" says SrI KulaSEkhara.

Here, in one of the moving prayers full of humility, the AzhvAr asks the Lord to accept him as the lowliest servant in His hierarchy of servants. This type of service is known as charamAvati-dAsyam. and SrI KulaSEkharAzhvAr follows his predecessor, SrI NammAzhvAr who asked for such a boon in his tiruvAi-mozhi verse as follows:

" aDiyAr-aDiyAr tamm-aDiyAr-aDiyAr-tamakku

aDiyAr-aDiyAr tam aDiyAr-aDiyO'ngaLE "



## VERSE 28

Sriman NArAyaNA is the only One who is worthy of adoration!

नाथे नः पुरुषोत्तमे त्रिजगतामेकाधिपे चेतसा

सेव्ये स्वस्य पदस्य दातरि सुरे नारायणे तिष्ठति ।

यं कञ्चित्पुरुषाधमं कतिपयग्रामेशमल्पार्थदं

सेवायै मृगयामहे नरमहो मूका वराका वयम् ॥ २८ ॥

nAthE na: purushOttamE tri-jagatAm EkAdhipE cEtasA  
sEvyE svasya padasya dAtari surE nArAyaNE tishThati |  
yam kancit purushAdhamam katipaya-grAmESam alpArthadam  
sEvAyai mRgayAmahE naramahO mUkA varAkA vayam || 28

### MEANINGS

In this verse, Sri KulaSEkharar wonders about the helplessness and inertia of human beings who do not take the initiative to seek SrIman-nArAyaNa's blessings, which is there just for the asking. When HE looms before us as the emperor of all the universes, KulaSEkhara cannot understand why humans chase after and worship insignificant entities strutting about in the shadow of the all powerful Lord.

"Are we human beings dumb (mUkA :) and useless (varAkA :) ones? Cannot we tell the difference between an emperor and a little landlord possessing a few square feet of land?", cries out our AcArya.

"How can we explain the obeisance by human beings to little chieftains, while the most merciful, all powerful Lord of the universe towers above them?" This is the wonder and dismay of SrI KulaSEkhara.

The Lord is the One Who can give the boon of residing beside Him in SrI-



vaikuNTham. (Svasya padasya dAtari)

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All entities strut under your shadow - Thiru kaLLapirAn - SriVaikuntam



He is the PurushOttaman and is the Supreme God of all the three universes.  
(tri-jagatAm Eka adhipa:)

"nArAyaNE surE na: nAthE tishThati" - While our Lord stands in that towering manner, how come we search for a human being who is a lowly possessor of insignificant wealth, to pay our respects ? When the AzhvAr thinks of the little human, praised by other humans, SrI KulaSEkhara's disgust overflows. The AzhvAr describes him as "katipaya-grAmESam", "alpa-arthidam", and "purusha adhamam".

The AzhvAr concludes by stating,

"yam ka~ncit purusha adhamam naram sEvAyai mRgayAmahE!  
ahO vayam mUkA: varAkA:"

"It is a wonder that we forsake the Lord and choose a lowly human being as our object of adoration and service! We must indeed be dumb and stupid", says SrI kulaSEkhara.







## VERSE 29

Reminding Manmathan of the power of the chakrAyudham !

मदन परिहर स्थितिं मदीये

मनसि मुकुन्दपदारविन्दधाम्नि ।

हरनयन कृशानुना कृशोऽसि

स्मरसि न चक्रपराक्रमं मुरारेः ॥ २९ ॥

madana! parihara sthitim madIyE

manasi mukunda-padAravinda-dhAmni |

hara-nayana kRSAnunA kruSOsi

smarasi na cakra-parAkramam murArE: || 29

### MEANING

In this verse KulaSEkharAzhvAr addresses Manmathan and asks him not to engage in mischief with the AzhvAr. AzhvAr asks Manmata to stay away from his mind which is already housing the Lotus Feet of SrI kRshNa bhagavAn.

AzhvAr reminds manmata of the terrible consequences he suffered when he tried his mischief on Lord Sivan. AzhvAr reminds manmata of the fact that he got reduced to ashes when the angry Sivan opened his third eye. So AzhvAr tells manmathan that the latter should even more wary of attempting any mischief with him, for manmathan would become the object of wrath of the mighty sudarSanam in the the Lord's Hand.

"Manmata, you already are known as ananga i.e. The one without a body, because of Siva's anger. Do you still want to incur the wrath of the powerful sudarSana AzhvAr in my Lord's Hand? ". KulaSEkharAzhvAr thus challenges Manmathan.





## VERSE 30

The greatness of reciting Hari nAmA !

तत्त्वं ब्रुवाणानि परं परस्मात्

मधु क्षरन्तीव सतां फलानि ।

प्रावतर्यं प्राञ्जलिरस्मि जिह्वे

नामानि नारायण गोचराणि ॥ ३० ॥

tattvam bruvANAni param parasmAt  
madhu ksharantIva satAm phalAni |  
prAvartaya prAnjali: asmi jihvE  
nAmAni nArAyaNa-gOcarANi || 30

### MEANING

Following the challenge to Manmata, SrI KulaSEkhara is still worried about any sneaky approach by him. To ward off any such adversity, SrI KulaSEkhara appeals to his tongue to repeat the names of SrIman-nArAyaNa and HIS glories for protection. He explains to his mind the benefits of reciting the names and stories of SrIman-nArAyaNa. He appeals to his mind with folded hands to recite the auspicious names of SrIman-nArAyaNa.

The AzhvAr says to his tongue that SrIman-nArAyaNa's names describe the Supreme beyond the supreme principle. (ParastAt param tattvam bruvANAni) and the Lord's names are like the honey generating fruit for the sages. (SatAm madhu ksharanti phalAni iva). Such are the wonderful traits of the names associated with SrIman-nArAyaNa's deeds. (SrIman nArAyaNa gOcarANi nAmAni)





## VERSE 31

Glory of SrI Krishna nAma samkeertanam !

इदं शरीरं परिणामपेशलं

पतत्यवश्यं श्लथसन्धिजर्जरम् ।

किमौषधैः क्लिश्यसि मूढ दुर्मते

निरामयं कृष्णरसायनं पिब ॥ ३१ ॥

idam SarIram pariNAma-pESalam  
patatyavaSyam Slatha-sandhi-jarjaram |  
kim aushadhai: kliSyasi mUDha durmatE  
nirAmayam kRshNa-rasAyanam piba || 31

### MEANING

In this verse, SrI KulaSEkhara asks ill people why they chase after all kinds of medication instead of just drinking the Supreme Medicine named "kRshNa" which can easily cure the cruel disease of samsAra. AzhvAr also reminds the anxiety-ridden men that all of our bodies will surely degenerate and decompose. So, knowing that inevitable fate, why do you chase drugs with limited potency while there is the miracle known as SrI kRshNa ?





## VERSE 32

The glories of SrIman NArAyaNA !

दारा वाराकरवरसुता ते तनूजो विरिञ्चिः

स्तोता वेदस्तव सुरगणो भृत्यवर्गः प्रसादः ।

मुक्तिर्माया जगदविकलं तावकी देवकी ते

माता मित्रं वलरिपुसुतस्त्वय्यतोऽन्यन्न जाने ॥ ३२ ॥

dArA vArAkara-vara-sutA tE tanUjO virinci:  
stOtA vEda: tava sura-gaNO bhRtya-varga: prasAda: |  
mukti: mAyA jagat avikalam tAvakI dEvakI tE  
mAtA mitram vala-ripu-suta: tvayi ata: anyat na jAnE || 32

### MEANING

Here SrI KulaSEkharar answers SrIman-nArAyaNa's question as to what he knows about His glories. The AzhvAr replies,

1. Your wife is the daughter of the Milky Ocean.
2. Your son is catur-mukha-brahma;
3. Your bards are the vEda-s;
4. Your servants are the dEva-s;
5. Your blessings yield mOksham;
6. All the worlds arise from Your prakriti;
7. Your mother is dEvakI;
8. Your friend is indra's son, arjuna;





Thus I do not know anyone other than You. ", ("ata: anyat tvayi na jAnE ")

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All worlds arise from your prakruti



## VERSE 33

### Salutations to Sri Krishna !

कृष्णो रक्षतु नो जगत्त्रयगुरुः कृष्णं नमस्याम्यहं

कृष्णेनामरशत्रवो विनिहताः कृष्णाय तुभ्यं नमः ।

कृष्णादेव समुत्थितं जगदिदं कृष्णस्य दासोऽस्म्यहं

कृष्णे तिष्ठति सर्वमेतदखिलं हे कृष्ण रक्षस्व माम् ॥ ३३ ॥

kRshNO rakshatu nO jagatraya-guru: kRshNam namasyAmyaham  
kRshNEna amaraSatravO vinihitA: kRshNaya tubhyam nama: |  
kRshNAd Eva samutthitam jagadidam kRshNasya dAsOsmyaham  
kRshNE tishThati sarvamEtadakhilam hE kRshNa rakshasva mAm || 33

#### MEANING

SrI KulaSEkhara offers his salutations to SrI kRshNa using all the eight noun-cases (vibhakti-s) of the sanskRt language.

kRshNa: rakshatu na: jagat-guru:


Through the Nominative case (subject of a verb, prathamA-vibhakti:), the AzhvAr prays, "May SrI kRshNa, the Supreme Lord of the three universes, protect us"

Aham kRshNam namasyAmi :

Through the Accusative case (dvitIyA-vibhakti: denotes object of a verb) the AzhvAr says, "I salute kRshNa".

kRshNEna amara-Satrava: vinihitA:

Using the Instrumental case (tRitIyA-vibhakti: denotes agent of an action; 'by', 'with'), kulaSEkharAzhvAr referes to the dushTa-nigraha quality of SrI



kRshNa: "By kRshNa, enemies were killed."

Tasmai kRshNAya Nama:

Using the Dative case (caturthI-vibhakti; denotes destination of an action = 'to'. denotes purpose of an action = 'for'), KulaSEkharAzhvAr says, "For that (dushTa-nigraha quality) I offer my worship in words To kRshNa".

kRshNa† Eva samutthitam idam jagat

Using the ablative case (pancamI-vibhakti; expresses the relation 'from';) the AzhvAr refers to the celebrated fact that the universes originated from kRshNa only.

Aham kRshNasya dasa: asmi

Using the Possessive/Gentive case (shashThI-vibhakti;; denotes possession - 'of') SrI KulaSEkhara says, "I am a servant of kRshNa".

Etat sarvam akhilam kRshNE tishThati

Using the Locative case (saptamI-vibhatI; denotes location-'in','at'...) SrI KulaSEkhara states that this whole universe is deeply rooted in kRshNa.

HE kRshNa! mAm samraksha

Finally overcome by the blissful thoughts on SrI kRshNa, (using the Denominative case or sambOdhanam) the AzhvAr begs humbly for the protection of the Lord.

This verse is not only a testimony to the poetic skills of SrI KulaSEkharar, but also an illustrious example of his Supreme kRshNa-bhakti.

## VERSE 34

Prayer to Sri KrishNA for protection !

तत्त्वं प्रसीद भगवन् कुरु मय्यनाथे

विष्णो कृपां परमकारुणिकः किल त्वम् ।

संसारसागरनिमग्नमनन्त दीनम्

उद्धर्तुमर्हसि हरे पुरुषोत्तमोऽसि ॥ ३४ ॥

sa tvam prasIda bhagavan kuru mayyanAthE  
vishNO kRupAm parama-kARuNika: kila tvam |  
samsAra-sAgara-nimagnam ananta! dInam  
uddhartum arhasi harE ! purushOttama: asi || 34

### MEANING

After praying for SrI kRshNa's protection in the previous verse (hE kRshNa mAm raksha), SrI KulaSEkhara is slightly worried that SrI kRshNa may not have been listening to him. So he amplifies his appeal for protection in this verse.

The AzhvAr addresses SrI kRshNa with these endearing names, "hE bhagavan, hE harE, hE vishNO, hE ananta".

By the name, "ananta" he implies that is impossible to determine the svarUpa-lakshaNam, location and His origin. HE is beyond space and time.

AzhvAr asks the viSva-vyApi (vishNu) to take pity on him and protect him. He says, "vishNO sa tvam anAthE mayi kRpAm kuru". ie "O sarva-antaryAmi, who is celebrated in the vEda-s! I am an orphan. Please have mercy on me who has no other recourse."

"HE bhagavan mayi prasIda!" is the next appeal by the AzhvAr. "O Lord, Who is full of kalyANa-guNa-s like balam, vIryam, tEjas etc., please show me Your compassionate face and bless me. You are the one who removes all the sorrows of your devotees."

"Tvam param kARuNika: kila?" - "Aren't You the One Who gives all boons, out of Your Big Heart? "



**You are the One with the big heart - Yathokthakari**

"dInam mAm uddhartum arhasi, tvam purushOttama: asi, sa tvam prasIda", prays the AzhvAr. "I am a feeble weakling struggling in the sea of samsAra. You are the Supreme Being. Therefore please ferry me across the fierce ocean of samsAra. You have all these attributes (SA: tvam). So please help me without hesitation." prays the AzhvAr here.



## VERSE 35

SrI Kulasekhara AzhvAr's threefold worship of

Sriman NArayaNA !

नमामि नारायण पादपङ्कजं

करोमि नारायण पूजनं सदा ।

वदामि नारायण नाम निर्मलं

स्मरामि नारायण तत्त्वमव्ययम् ॥ ३५ ॥

namAmi nArAyaNa-pAda-pankajam  
karOmi nArAyaNa-pUjanam sada |  
vadAmi nArAyaNa-nAma nirmalam  
smarAmi nArAyaNa-tattvam avyayam || 35

### MEANING

SrI KulaSEkhara says that he is engaged in the three-fold worship of SrIman nArAyaNa - through

1. manas (mind)
2. vAk (speech) and
3. kAyam (body)

The AzhvAr says that he worships the Lotus Feet of SrIman-nArAyaNa; he is performing tiruv-ArAdhanam for Him without any interruption; he is reciting His blemishless names and is constantly thinking about His eternal glories.







## VERSES 36, 37

The many beautiful names of SrIman NArAyaNA !

श्रीनाथ नारायण वासुदेव

श्रीकृष्ण भक्तप्रिय चक्रपाणे ।

श्री पद्मनाभाच्युत कैटभारे

श्रीराम पद्माक्ष हरे मुरारे ॥ ३६ ॥

SrI-nAtha nArAyaNa vAsudEva

SrI-kRshNa bhakta-priya cakra-pANE |

SrI-padmanAbhAcyuta kaiTabhArE

SrI-rAma padmAksha harE murArE || 36

अनन्त वैकुण्ठ मुकुन्द कृष्ण

गोविन्द दामोदर माधवेति ।

वक्तुं समर्थोऽपि न वक्ति कश्चित्

अहो जनानां व्यसनाभिमुख्यम् ॥ ३७ ॥

ananta vaikuNTha mukunda kRshNa

gOvinda dAmOdara mAdhavEti |

vaktum samartha: api na vakti kaScit

ahO janAnAm vyasanAbhimukhyam || 37

### MEANING

While the AzhvAr is reciting the nAma-nirmalam of SrIman-nArAyaNa, he is bemused by the unfortunate who do not engage in calling the many names of





SrIman-nArAyaNa such as:

1. SrI-nAtha (husband of lakshmI),
2. vAsudEva,
3. kRshNa,
4. bhakti-priya,
5. cakra-pANi,
6. padma-nAbha,
7. acyuta,
8. kaiTabhAri,
9. rAma,
10. padmAksha (the lotus-eyed),
11. hari,
12. murAri,
13. ananta (the One Who is not limited by time),
14. vaikuNTha,
15. mukunda,
16. gOvinda,
17. dAmOdara,
18. mAdhava.

The AzhvAr points out those human beings, although capable of reciting the wonderful names of SrIman-nArAyaNa, do not make an effort to do so; because, their minds are filled with pursuit of perishable pleasures of the world, which eventually result in sorrow only.





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Meditate on this Divya Dampathi



## VERSE 38

Meditation on SrIman NArAyaNa leads to SrI VaikuNTham !

ध्यायन्ति ये विष्णुमनन्तमव्ययं

हृत्पद्ममध्ये सततं व्यवस्थितम् ।

समाहितानां सतताभयप्रदं

ते यान्ति सिद्धिं परमाञ्च वैष्णवीम् ॥ ३८ ॥

dhyAyanti yE vishNum anantam avyayam  
hRt-padma-madhyE satatam vyavasthitam |  
samAhitAnAm satatAbhaya-pradam  
tE yAnti siddhim paramAnca vaishNavIm || 38

### MEANING



SrI KulaSEkhara describes the status of the minority who meditate on SrIman-nArAyaNa. He says that yOgi-s who meditate on SrIman-nArAyaNa with deep devotion attain the eternal place of vishNu, viz., SrI vaikuNTham.

The AzhvAr points out that those recite the nArAyaNa-gAyatrI, :

"nArAyaNaya vidmahE vAsudEvAya dhImahi |  
tannO vishNu: pracOdayAt || "

are mahA-yOgi-s.

Though the vishNu-gAyatrI-mantra-japam which means, "May we know nArAyaNaya! For that, may we meditate on vAsudEva! May vishNu impel us towards that knowledge ", mahA-yOgi-s have the good fortune of seeing Him in their heart lotuses. There they find Him seated with SrI-dEvI, in abhaya-mudra. Through such a fruitful meditation they reach the abode (parama-



padam) of SrIman-nArAyaNa, according to SrI kulaSEkhara.

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## VERSE 39

Salutations to KSheerAbdhi nAthan !

क्षीरसागर तरङ्गशीकरा-

सारतारकित चारुमूर्तये ।

भोगिभोग शयनीयशायिने

माधवाय मधुविद्विषे नमः ॥ ३९ ॥

kshIra-sAgara-taranga-SIkara-  
sAra-tArakita cAru-mUrtayE |  
bhOgi-bhOga-SayanIya-SAYinE  
mAdhavAya madhu-vidvishE nama: || 39

### MEANINGS

Here the AzhvAr visualizes the parama-pada-nAthan at His other abode - the Milky Ocean, as kshIrAbdi-nAthan. This association of vaikUNTha-nAthan resting on Adi-SEshan comes to AzhvAr's mind as he is standing before SrIRanga-nAtha at the bhU-IOka-vaikuNTha-kshETram.

He offers his praNAMam to that mangala-mUrti reclining on His serpent bed in the following way: "madhuvidvishE mAdhavAya nama:" He offers his salutation to the slayer-of-the-madhu demon, Who is none other than mAdhavan - the Lord of SrI-dEvI.

AzhvAr visualizes mAdhavan at SrI-ranga-kshETram as the One Who is resting on Adi-SEshan. While He is resting on Adi-SEshan in the Milky Ocean, sprinkles of milky waves fall on HIS body and glisten up as little stars! The sight of His beautiful blue-hued body with drops of milk resembling brilliant white star-specks thrills the AzhvAr and he cries out in ecstasy over that beautiful vision.





## VERSE 40

This Sri Sookti is composed by SrI Kulasekhara AzhvAr

यस्य प्रियौ श्रुतिधरौ कविलोकवीरौ

मित्रे द्विजन्मवरपद्म शरावभूताम् ।

तेनाम्बुजाक्ष चरणाम्बुज षट्पदेन

राज्ञा कृता कृतिरियं कुलशेखरेण ॥ ४० ॥

yasya-priyau Sruti-dharau kavi-IOka-vIrau  
mitrE dvi-janma vara-padma-SarAvabhUtAm |  
tEnAmbujAksha-caraNAmbuja-shaT-padEna  
rAjn~A krutA kRtiriyam kulaSEkharENa || 40

### MEANING

In this final and fortieth verse of mukunda-mAlA, SrI kulaSEkharar puts the stamp of his authorship and acknowledges his friendship to two brAhmin poets - Padman and Saran. This reference to his friends has cast doubts as to SrI KulaSEkharAzhvAr's authorship of mukunda-mAlA. There is a school of thought which believes that Mukunda-mAlA may be the work of another king by the same name KulaSEkhara who lived many years after the AzhvAr.

Many interpretations have been given for this part of the verse:

"mitrE dvijanma varapadmaSarAvabhUtAm".

Some have interpreted it as "dvijanmavaraSca padmavaraSca" meaning there were two dear friends of King kulaSEkhara whose names were "dvijanmavara" and "padmaSara".

Others have interpreted it as two noble brAhmaNa-s (dvijanmavara) whose





names were "padman" and "Saran".

Yet another interpretation is that King kulaSEkhara is paying tribute to nammAzhvAr and periyAzhvAr who appeared before and after kulaSEkharAzhvAr. In this interpretation, "dvijanma" refers to SrI periyAzhvAr who appeared in a brAhmaNa family. The term "padmaSara" refers to SrI nammAzhvAr since it means one with flower arrows in his hand. Since nammAzhvAr's name is "mARan SaThakOpan", by some stretch of imagination, one can equate the term, "padmaSaran" with SrI NammAzhvAr who preceded KulaSEkharAzhvAr.

In spite of these controversies it is generally conceded that SrI KulaSEkharAzhvAr is the true author of this splendid poem, Mukunda-mALA replete with parama-bhakti for SrI Ranga-nAtha.



Returning to the rest of the verse, SrI KulaSEkharAzhvAr describes himself as a bee (shaTpadam) that drinks the nectar of the Lotus Feet of SrI RanganAtha and it was he, known as KulaSEkhara-rAja who composed the mukunda-mALA.



**Aaraada Amudan - Saarangapaani**

SrI KulaSEkhara is one of the greatest proponents of nAma-siddhAnta and





nAma-bhajana approach for reaching the abode of the Lord. He overcame the ills of kali-yugam by closely following the route suggested by kali-santaranOpanishad passage quoted below:

"bhagavat Adi-purushasya nArAyaNaysa  
nAmOccAraNa mAtrENa nirdhUtakalirbhavati"

In the doctrine of nAma-siddhAntam described in kali-santaranOpanishad, SrI nArada asks brahma, "What is that name that enables one to cross the ocean of samsAra in kali-yuga?"

Brahma replies:

"harE rAma harE rAma, rAma rAma, harE harE |  
harE kRshNa harE kRshNa, kRshNa kRshNa, harE harE ||"

Brahma describes that the recital of the names - RAma, Hari and kRshNa will be the effective means to overcome the ills of kali-yuga.

SrI KulaSEkhara followed the advice of catur-mukha-brahma and sang with delight the names of mukunda in his mukunda-mALA and wondered, like the following Vishnu purANam verse, about the ignorance of human beings who do not understand the Supreme value of reciting the Lord's names:

"mA RcO mA yajustAta mA sAma paTha kincana |  
gOvindEti harEr-nAma gEyam gAyasva nityaSa: ||  
nArAyaNEti SabdO'sti vAgasti vaSavartinI |  
tathApi narakE ghorE patantItYEtad adbutam || "

--- vishNu-purANam

The above vishNu-purANam verse means:

"One need not recite passages from Rg, yajur, and sAma vEdam-s for salvation. One should recite the Lord's name. There are Lord's names; there is the tongue under one's control; in spite of that, men still fall into hell. What a wonder! "



In verse 37, SrI KulaSEkhara echoes the above vishNu-purANam text:

"gOvinda dAmOdara mAdhavEti vaktum samarthO'pi na vakti kaScit ahO  
janAnAm vyasanAbhimukhyam"

The futility of all "noble" activities without the nAma-japam of SrI kRshNa is also described by SrI kulaSEkhara in mukunda-mAlA verse 25:

"AmnAyAbhyasanAny araNya-ruditam vEda-vratAny anv-aham ..."

Though the beautiful and moving verses of Mukunda-mAlA, SrI KulaSEkhara instills bhagavad-bhakti in us and reminds us about the nine forms of bhakti described in the prahlAda-caritra section in the SrImad bhAgavata-purANam. When Hiranya-kasipu asks prahlAda as to what is the best lesson he learned in school, SrI PrahlAda replies:

"SravaNam kIrtanam vishNO: smaraNam pAda-sEvanam |  
arcanam vandanam dAsyam sakyam Atma-nivEdanam ||  
iti pumsArpitA vishNau bhaktiScEn-nava-lakshaNA |  
kriyatE bhagavatyaddhA tanmanyE'dhItamuttamam ||"

**Meaning:**

SrI PrahlAda says: " I consider as the best lesson, worthy of learning, is the nine characteristic forms a man practises his devotion to Lord vishNu:

1. Listening (SravaNam) to the songs and kalyANa-guNa-s of the Lord.
2. Singing (kIrtanam) about the Lord.
3. Meditation (smaraNam) on the Lord.
4. Worshipping His Lotus Feet. (PAda-sEvanam)
5. Saluting Him. (Vandanam)
6. Performing ArAdhanam with flowers and tulasI leaves. (Arcanam)
7. Offering services unto Him. (dAsyam)
8. Associating with Him as a friend. (Sakhyam) and,
9. Surrendering to Him totally. (Atma-nivEdanam) "







SrI KulaSEkhara's Mukunda-mAIA verses are illustrations of the nava-lakshaNa-bhakti described by SrI PrahlAda in SrImad bhAgavata-purANam. Verses like "jihvE kIrtaya kESavam..." are instructions by SrI KulaSEkhara to his limbs to follow the nava-lakshaNa-bhakti.

In another section, SrImad bhAgavatam says, "yatastadvishayAmapi" meaning when one keeps repeating the name of a thing, one develops affection for that name. For the very same reason, SrI KulaSEkhara asks that we repeat the ashTakshara-mantram without interruption:

"...namO nArAyaNAyEty amum mantram sa-praNavam praNAma-sahitam prAvartayadhvam muhu: " [verse 18]

SrI KulaSEkhara's requests to SrI RanganAtha for unfailing memory (smaraNam) of His Lotus Feet (pAda-sEvanam) in all janma-s are other examples of practising nava-lakshaNa-bhakti.

Also, SrI KulaSEkhara's shows his dAsya-bhakti in the famous verse:

"...tvad-bhRtya-bhRtya-paricAraka-bhRtya-bhRtya bhRtyasya bhRtya iti mAm smara lOkA-nAtha ||" (verse 27)

The AzhvAr indicates the kIrtanam aspect of his bhakti in the following passage:

"... PrAvartaya prAnjalirasmi jihvE nAmAni nArAyaNa-gOcarANi ||" [verse 30]

Thus, in the exquisitely moving verses of Sri KulaSEkharar, we witness his testimony to the nava-lakshaNa-bhakti celebrated in SrImad bhAgavata-purANam. SrI KulaSEkharar thus set the example for us by practicing the nine different kinds of bhakti so we can get closer to the Holy Feet of SrI vaikuNTha-nAthan.

SAMARPANAM:

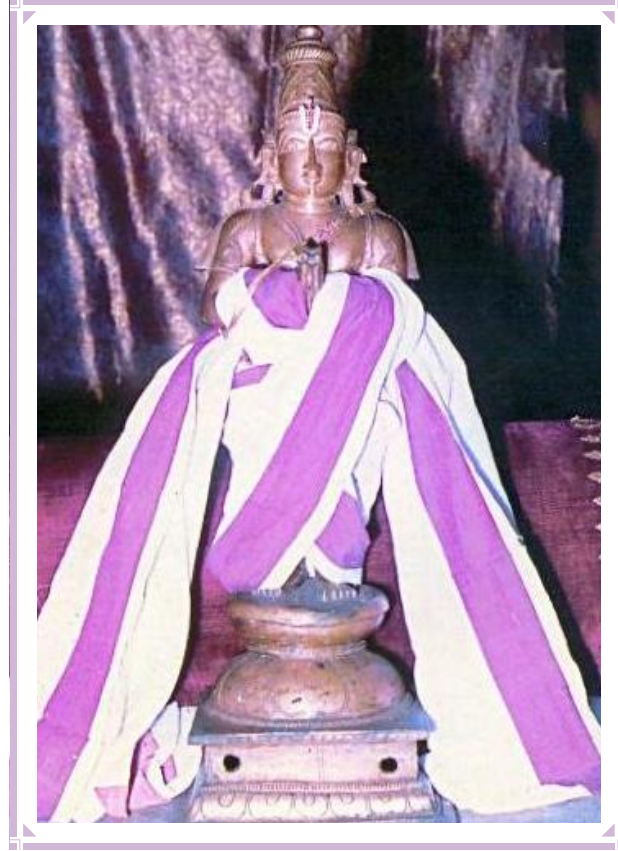
I consider myself fortunate that on a Vibhava, maasi punar-pUsam day I could





offer my humble praNAms and this commentary on the wonderful Mukunda MAIA as samarpaNam to the great AcArya SrI KulaSEkharAzhvAr, the author of the illustrious compositions known as Mukunda-mAIA and PerumAl-tiru-mozhi.

May the Divine Couple shower their choicest blessings on one and all!



KulasEkhara Perumaal thiruvadigale Saranam

||SrI kRshNArpaNamastu||

daasan, Oppiliappan kOil VaradAchAri SaThakOpan

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