

FROM OUR SAMPRADA:YA

(Part-3)

In the last issue we have learnt that *Mumukshuppadi* clearly explains the meaning of the three *Vaishnava* manthras i.e. *Thirumanthram*, *Dvayam* and *Charama slo:kam*. Let us try to concisely know the greatness of these manthras before making an attempt to understand their meanings. The term Mantra is defined as “*Mantha:ram thra:yathe iti Manthraha.*” That means the incantation that saves a person who steadily contemplates on it is a Mantra. There are several manthras mentioned in the Vedas. Different manthras are prescribed to attain different ends.

Sri Pillai Loka:charya has broadly classified the manthras into two i.e. *Vya:paka* and *Avyapaka* manthras. *Vya:paka* manthras clearly elucidate the omnipresent nature of the Supreme Lord whereas the *Avyapaka* manthras are limited to a particular parameter or few parameters. Thereby the *Avyapaka* manthras highlight only one or a few of the innumerable auspicious traits of the Lord. Hence the *Vya:paka* manthras are considered to be greater than

the *Avyapaka* manthras. There are only three *Vyapaka* manthras. They are:-

- 1) *Ashta:kshari* i.e. *O:M NAMO: . NA:RA:YANA:YA*
- 2) *Vishnu Shada:kshari* i.e. *O:M VISHNAVE: NAMAHA* and
- 3) *Dwadasa:kshari* i.e. *O:M NAMO: BHAGAVATHE VA:SUDE:VA:YA*

The *Ashta:kshari* mantra is considered to be the most excellent among the *Vya:paka* manthras due to the following reasons.

- 1) The *Pranava* i.e. *O:M* and the term *Namaha* that indicates the *Jiva:thma's* (soul's) constitutional nature of servility towards the Lord, are not naturally present in the other two manthras.
- 2) The *Vishnu Shada:kshari* describes only the All pervasive nature of the Lord. The *Dwadasa:kshari* describes the all pervasive attribute and also six other auspicious qualities of the Lord, with the term *Bhagava:n*. They

- are wealth, fame, strength, beauty, knowledge and power. Whereas the *Ashta:kshari* mantra describes Him as the One who supports and regulates everything with the term *Na:ra:yaṇa*. Thereby it describes all the qualities of the Lord.
- 3) It is shorter and easier to contemplate or meditate when compared to *Dwadasa:kshari* mantra.
- 4) Supreme Lord *Na:ra:yaṇa* Himself has revealed this mantra. According to *Srimad-Bha:gvatham*, He incarnated as the son of *Praja:pathi* 'Dharma' and *Ma:thamurti* to reveal this mantra for the benefit of the universe at large. He revealed it to Nara, at the all sanctifying *Badrinath* (in Himalayas). It is also said in the scriptures that the Supreme Lord *Na:ra:yaṇa* Himself along with Nara is contemplating on this mantra even in our days, in the form of mountains, in *Badrinath*.
- 5) It reveals the *Nava-vidha-sambandha* (nine types of relationships that exist between a soul and the Lord).
- 6) It explains *Arttha panchakam*. *Arttha panchakam* means the following five realities that are to be known by the aspirant of liberation.
- a) *Sva-swaru:pam* i.e. the true nature of one's Self.
- b) *Para-swaru:pam* i.e. the nature of the Lord who is the ultimate goal of all spiritual pursuits.
- c) *Upa:ya-swaru:pam* i.e. the means to attain the goal.
- d) *Viro:dhi-swaru:pam* i.e. the impediments in attaining one's goal and
- e) *Phala-swaru:pam* i.e. the nature of the bliss that one would attain by attaining the goal.
- 7) There are many mantras prescribed in *Ve:das* to achieve different desired ends, However *Ashta:kshari* Mantra is the only Mantra that can gratify all kinds of desires of the person who contemplates on it and also grant liberation from this material world, hence, it is called as *Maha:Mantra* (greatest Mantra).

To be continued...