

॥ ॐ श्री गणेशाय नमः ॥

SRIMAD NARAYANEYAM

DASAKAM - 1.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD

DEDICATED TO ARDENT SERVICE AT THE LOTUS FEET OF LORD Narayana, the presiding deity of Guruvayoor, Brahmasri Melpathur Narayana Bhattatiri, who gave to the world this great devotional hymn, Srimad Naryaneeyam, was a great Sanskrit scholar, well-versed in Vedas, free from all attachments, and a great devotee of the Lord.

Through this work, SRIMAD NARAYANEYAM, the author enters the path of unshakable devotion to the Lord. Being concerned with and affectionate to his fellow-beings, he wants to reveal to them, the greatness and superiority of his self-chosen path of devotion to the Lord so that they are also encouraged to adopt the same path to God-realisation. Inspired by an incessant flow of devotion to the Lord, the poet's thoughts and feelings find eloquent expression in these holy verses or slokas in praise of His sportive incarnations. Srimad Narayaneeyam is nothing but a condensation of Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, a much more detailed account of the stories of Lord Mahavishnu. It has, however, marvellously captured the essence of the latter. The Supreme Power, which is the prime cause for the creation of this Universe, referred to as "Brahman", is the subject matter of the intended work. In the very beginning of his work, the author introduces the subject to readers by establishing the identity of Lord Guruvayoorappan with Brahman, and invokes that Supreme Power for the successful completion of the difficult task of composing this hymn, remembering It in all Its auspiciousness.

Thus, in the opening chapter, the author gives a vivid description of the greatness and glory of the Supreme Brahman. The author brings out clearly that it is Lord Vishnu who is shining resplendently in the divine and charming image in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple at Guruvayoor while portraying the origin, composition, the all-surpassing beauty of His form, His affection towards His devotees, His readiness to grant their desires, even unasked, His superiority over other Gods, and finally, how He alone is entitled to the epithet of "Bhagavan".

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

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॥ ॐ श्रीगुरुपवनपुराधीशाय श्रीकृष्णाय परब्रह्मणे नमः ॥

D1S1	सान्द्रानन्दावबोधात्मकं अनुपमितं कालदेशावधिभ्यां निर्मुक्तं नित्यमुक्तं निगमशतसहस्रेण निर्भास्यमानम् । अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरुपुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्म तत्त्वं तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ॥१॥
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*Sāndrānandāvabōdhātmakam Anupamitam Kāladēśāvadhībhīyān
Nirmuktam Nityamuktam Nigamaśatasahasrēṇa Nirbhāsyamānam.
Aspaṣṭam Dṛṣṭamātrē Punarurupuruṣārthātmakam Brahma tattvam
Tattāvadbhāti Sākṣādgurupavanapurē Hanta Bhāgyam Janānām..1..*

अन्वयः- सान्द्रानन्दावबोधात्मकं तत्त्वं अनुपमितं कालदेशावधिभ्यां निर्मुक्तं निगम-शत-सहस्रेण निर्भास्यमानं अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनः उरुपुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्म यत् तत् तावत् गुरुपवनपुरे साक्षात् भाति । जनानाम् भाग्यं हन्त ! ॥१॥

Meaning:

यत् ब्रह्म	That, which is Brahman,
सान्द्रानन्दावबोधात्मकं	the embodiment of Infinite Bliss and Pure Consciousness
तत्त्वं अनुपमितं	which is real and has no comparison,
निर्मुक्तं कालदेशावधिभ्यां	which is totally free from limitations of time and space,
निर्भास्यमानं	well-expounded, (but with difficulty)
निगमशतसहस्रेण	by innumerable expositions in the scriptures,
अस्पष्टं	which is indistinct, (but)
उरुपुरुषार्थात्मकं	(becomes) the manifestation of Moksha, or Salvation, the ultimate of the four objects of human life (Purusharthas)
दृष्टमात्रे पुनः	immediately on realisation, (as one's own self)
नित्यमुक्तं	liberated perpetually (from the illusion of Maya), and
तत् तावत् साक्षात् भाति	that shines verily, right in front of our eyes,
गुरुपवनपुरे	in (the shrine of) Guruvayoor.
हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् !	Wonderful indeed, is the fortune of mankind !

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ।-----

Commentary D1S1

Yes! Mankind is fortunate indeed, for having been blessed with the shrine of Guruvayoor, and the Lord, in the form of Guruvayoorappan, ever willing to grant the glorious vision of His charming form to, and shower His blessings on the multitude of ardent devotees who throng the shrine every day, some with desires to be fulfilled, many, thanking Him for favours already granted, and a few without any such thoughts, just to offer their humble prostrations. And when this bewitching image of the Lord has been presented at the behest of the Lord Himself for the benefit of mankind in the Kali-yuga, is not that mankind fortunate?

The questions frequently asked by our own children are, “What is God?”, “Where is He?”, “Does God have a form and what does He look like?”, and so on. These are indeed, very difficult questions to answer, and easy at the same time, as “Narayaneeyam” contains all the answers. *The Supreme Power, which is the source of all energy, the prime cause for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the Universe, the driving force for all activity, seen and unseen, the life-force of all living beings, and which is capable of doing, not doing and doing things in a different way, we call that power, as God.* People call it by many different names. It is not the name that matters. It is the concept. We have come to call that Supreme Power by the name of “God”, or “Brahman”, “Para-brahman”, “Paramatman”, “Supreme Consciousness”, “Supreme Spirit” and the like. Let us refer to it here as “Brahman”.

The various attributes given in the sloka above describe “Brahman”. Brahman is present everywhere at the same time (omnipresent). But one cannot directly see it, feel it or hear it. Brahman is the embodiment of Eternal Bliss and Supreme Knowledge. Philosophers say that Brahman is the only thing that is real and eternal. It has no beginning and no end, has no dimensions, is very indistinct, is beyond time and space, has no comparison, is beyond all worldly illusions (Maya), is very difficult to describe, and is the bestower of Moksha or salvation to anyone who is able to “realise” or understand Its true nature. Brahman is, in short, God Almighty without form. In spiritual language, Brahman is “God, Unmanifested”.

If this is so, how can we think of, worship or meditate on an imaginary object that has no shape, form or any other attributes?

The author says, *it is this same invisible and imperceptible Brahman That shines right in front of our eyes, in the form of an image inside the shrine of Guruvayoor, displaying Itself to the devotees, with the sole objective of showering blessings on them.* It is repeated time and again in the later slokas that the divine image of the Lord, moulded out of pure Sattva-guna (the essence

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of all that is good and subtle) and the “unmanifested” or “Impersonal” God (God without form) are one and the same. But how can a person, who doesn’t have even the basic knowledge of what is “unmanifested”, appreciate these two entities?

In this sloka and those which follow in this dasakam, the concept of worshipping Brahman in the “manifested” (with form) and “unmanifested” (without form) states has been expounded. First, the Supreme Being or Brahman is described by various epithets listed in the sloka. The description would suggest that Brahman is the ‘Impersonal Absolute God’ Who is not capable of inspiring love and devotion, but this idea is immediately rectified by the explanations in the succeeding slokas, that He is simultaneously Personal too (sloka 4). This Divine Person is identified with Lord Mahavishnu who has incarnated with all His powers (Poorna-avatara) and attributes as Sri Krishna (sa-guna, with gunas or attributes) and this very Lord Sri Krishna is conceived as manifest in His image at the temple of Guruvayoor.

Therefore, the author starts the epic with the expression “सान्द्रानन्दावबोधात्मकं”, which describes Brahman as the embodiment of never ending bliss “आनन्दः” (Eternal Bliss or ever-lasting happiness) and “अवबोधः” (Supreme Knowledge or *Pure Consciousness*.)

In what way is this Eternal Bliss different from the other happiness or sensual pleasure we enjoy every day? The happiness derived from sensual pleasures is but ephemeral (transient or short-lived) in effect. As we all know, our body has five sense organs, viz. the eyes, the tongue, the nose, the skin and the ears, which, when united with the corresponding *sense-objects*, viz., form, taste, smell, touch and sound respectively, give rise to certain pleasures. But these pleasures last only so long as such relationship exists. For instance, the eyes see a beautiful “form” or visual object and send the message to the brain which constitutes the “senses” (mind). The mind enjoys it. The same happens when we hear some sweet music or experience a fragrant smell. These are known as sensual pleasures, as they are related to the senses. But the moment such external object, the source of that pleasure is removed, the pleasure also goes. This is true of all the five sense-organs. Hence it is said that all such sensual pleasures are transient or temporary in nature. ***In contrast, the “आनन्दः” (bliss) which is not due to the contact of the sense organs and their respective sense-objects, and which is unmixed with sorrow, is the very nature of Brahman and it is eternal.*** But how does one get to it?

The first and foremost qualification required for understanding God is purity of mind. Our great seers have taught us that by cultivating indifference to the

transient worldly pleasures and exercising effective control on the sense-organs and the mind, and performing one's duty with no desire for the fruits thereof over a long period of time, one attains purity of mind. If one focuses this pure mind on God, without being polluted by other thoughts (with single-minded devotion) and meditates on Him with undivided attention, one can realise¹ one's identity with God, the Supreme Brahman, the embodiment of Bliss. By repeatedly concentrating one's mind on God, the sense-organs and the mind come under perfect control. In course of time, one's good deeds bear fruit, and one experiences Brahman. The Bliss one gets at that time is beyond words. In that state, all types of impulses for mundane pleasures are completely destroyed. Therefore, sorrow, the enemy of joy can never gain entry into his mind. As the illusion that the body is the Self has been exterminated, there is no break in the enjoyment of bliss. Once such a realisation dawns, one merges with the Eternal Bliss.

The expression, “सान्द्रानन्दावबोधोत्सुकं” brings out the nature of Brahman clearly, reflecting the Vedic description, “नित्यं ज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म” (Brahman is nothing but Eternal Bliss and Supreme Knowledge).

When it is known that Brahman is Supreme Bliss, it is but natural that even the layman could get tempted to attain this state. It would be easier for all to grasp the meaning of Brahman and work towards the same, if it can be described that the Brahman is “like this” or “like that” by comparison, with examples. But the impossibility of this is brought out by the use of the word, “अनुपमितं”, meaning that such comparison is not possible, because, nothing comparable, even similar to it in character, is in existence. Our scriptures declare “एकमेव अद्वितीयं ब्रह्म” Ch. Up. 6-2/1. (Brahman is only one, there is no second equal to it). As there is no other object which is eternal, pure and limitless, with the characteristics of Pure Consciousness and Eternal Bliss, within or without its own kind, Brahman is unique and incomparable. However, when we hear about the two entities “Jivatman” (the individual soul enshrined in the body and which is responsible for giving life) and “Paramatman” (Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness), this leads some to ask how Brahman is without a second. Upanishads declare that while Paramatman is omniscient and the embodiment of Eternal Bliss, Jivatman is always torn asunder with innumerable sufferings, and is full of imperfect knowledge. Hence it could be argued as to how these two entities are one and the same, when their properties are diametrically opposite. It should be understood that they are treated differently only in customary practice, but, in

¹This experience is referred to as “आत्म-साक्षात्कारः”(Self-realisation.) or spiritual enlightenment. This will be dealt with in detail in chapters to come, mainly in Dasakam 4.

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reality, they are just one and the same. *Similar to the image of an object in the mirror, Jivatman is nothing but the reflection of the Supreme Consciousness on the mental faculties, which happen to be shrouded by the veil of ignorance. Once this veil is destroyed and replaced by Supreme Knowledge, the image merges with the object- so also Jivatman with Paramatman, thereby proving the oneness of these two apparently different entities. Therefore, Brahman is, unique, without a second.*

Now let us view it from a different angle. All objects within the reach of our perception are bound by time and space. So, on this basis, if we try to locate Brahman in a particular place at a particular time, so as to experience it, it would be impossible, as, Brahman is beyond time and space (कालदेशावधिभ्यां निर्मुक्तं). It has neither beginning nor end. As It is eternal and all-pervading, one cannot say that It exists only for a particular time in a particular area, or when It was born or when It would end. As Brahman has no birth, continuance, growth, transformation, decay, death or any other similar attributes, and is not limited by space, it follows that Brahman is only one, non-dual and Eternal Bliss itself.

Thus, there exists Brahman, having no distinguishing marks, features or properties, totally contradicting our mundane experience. On what authority can we believe that Brahman exists? The poet brings out the authority by saying “निगमशतसहस्रेण निर्भास्यमानम्” (expounded repeatedly by numerous explanations in the scriptures). The words “शत” (hundred) and “सहस्र” (thousand) are just meant to convey the sense of “innumerable” and do not have any numerical significance. “एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा”: Sv.Up. 6/11 (the one effulgent Being is hidden in all creatures; He is all-pervading and is the in-dwelling Self of all.) “तरति शोकमात्मवित्” Ch.Up.7-1/3 (A knower of the Atman goes beyond grief). “तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति । नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ।” Sv.Up. 6/15 (By knowing that Brahman alone, one goes beyond death; there is no other way to the ultimate goal):. *These quotations from the Vedas and Upanishads establish beyond doubt that there is one and only one reality and that is called Brahman.* The knowledge or realisation of Brahman, in other words, the so-called “enlightenment” alone, is the ultimate panacea for all sufferings and the raft to cross the “Ocean of Samsara”, otherwise called “संसार-सागरः”, (the unending cycle of births and deaths the Jiva is made to undergo; also known as trans-migration or metem-psychosis).

In spiritual matters, the Vedas which are words uttered by God and the credible pronouncements of great saints are the best authorities.

It is no understatement that although we hear these debates over and over again, we mortals are not able to perceive Brahman through our sensory organs. All the same, if one doubts that it is not in our practice to accept things, just on the basis of hearsay, this question is answered by the expression “अस्पष्टं” (Unclear, blurred) for, the majority of the aspirants continue to remain unenlightened, shrouded by the veil of unlimited ignorance, and are going through millions of birth-death cycles. *They sink deeper and deeper into the quagmire of this worldly existence, viz. Samsara, repeating the same sins, day in and day out, getting more and more attached to the egoistic mind and feeling of ownership, like “I do”, “I enjoy”, “my children”, “my wife”, “my house”, etc.*

The incidence of good and evil in this universe is governed by three constituents of nature, called “Gunas”². There are three gunas, viz., Sattva (all that is good and subtle), Rajas (intense activity) and Tamas (inertia). Predominance of Rajas and Tamas results in vitiation of the senses, and sinful deeds will follow. Such people will not be able to experience the presence of Brahman. At the same time, *those who have predominance of Sattva-guna refrain from committing such sinful deeds and do not engage themselves in worldly pursuits ending in transient pleasures. They perform their duties without getting motivated by selfish desires, and dedicate all their actions to the Almighty, unconcerned regarding the fruits thereof. They do good just for the sake of doing good. In the process, they get their senses cleansed of all evil and gain purity of mind.* After receiving the proper initiation from the right preceptor, they meditate on the Almighty with a high level of concentration, with the concept of oneness with the Supreme Consciousness. Regular practice of this leads them to enlightenment, when the Brahman becomes “स्पष्टं”= (clear). For all others, it will continue to be “अस्पष्टं” =Unclear, blurred. The words of this section of the sloka can also be logically rearranged as “निगम-शत-सहस्रेण अस्पष्टं निर्भास्यमानं ” meaning, “even thousands of elucidations in the Vedas and Upanishads have described Brahman only vaguely and indistinctly “यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह,”: Tait. Up. 2/4. (Words fail to reach Brahman and together with the mind return baffled!): “चकितचकितमभिधत्ते श्रुतिरपि”: (Even Vedas, not being very clear about it, say about Brahman only with a certain amount of fear and awe!)

² The explanation about the Three GUNAS is given in detail under Sloka 3 of this dasakam.
-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

Even Vedas do not describe Brahman unequivocally. They describe Brahman indirectly in three or four ways. Eliminate all known materials and the remainder is Brahman! or, “सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म”: Ch. Up. 3.14.1 (whatever we see or hear is Brahman) or even, “यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते”: Tait. Up. 3/1. (That from which the five elements are born).

It therefore follows that it is extremely difficult to understand Brahman. It cannot be perceived by the unenlightened ones. Can the enlightened souls like Siddhas who have experienced Brahman describe it to us? This is also not possible as explained by “दृष्टमात्रे पुनः उरुपुरुषार्थात्मकं”– *as soon as they are enlightened, they are granted Liberation and they merge with Brahman. There is no question of their returning to this world to communicate with us. It is comparable to a doll made of salt enlivened and sent to measure the depth of the ocean! The doll dissolves in the ocean and loses its identity. The same way, the enlightened souls merge with the Infinite and attain ever-lasting bliss.* This is brought out by the word “नित्यमुक्तं”. Brahman is totally separated from worldly objects like the body and sensory experiences like sickness, pleasure, pain etc. Brahman creates these illusory things by its power of illusion, just as a magician creates things by sleight of his hand. Brahman is not connected with the worldly matters, just as the magician is not connected with the things he apparently creates.

The word Brahman is derived from the root “बृह् ” which means, “to grow, expand, cause to grow, nourish, etc. “बृंहति इति ब्रह्मन्”. What causes to grow is Brahman. Brahman associated with Maya, has become this universe consisting of gross and subtle objects, and hence the name. Brahman is described in this sloka without any of its attributes, i.e., as Nirguna-Brahman, (the Impersonal Absolute). As said earlier, it is the same Brahman that shines effulgently with all its attributes in the shrine of Guruvayoor. Such difference between सगुण (full of attributes, manifested) and निर्गुण (devoid of any attributes, unmanifested) is only due to the involvement of Maya. “मनसैवानुद्गष्टव्यं नैह नानास्ति किञ्चन। मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति।।” : Br.Up. 4.4.19. (Brahman is to be known through the mind alone according to the instructions of a teacher; there is no diversity whatsoever in it; he who sees diversity, as it were, in it, goes from death to death.) Whatever diversity is perceived in it is only apparent, being super-imposed on it by ignorance.

Brahman is beyond words and mental perception, and is hardly accessible to even those seekers of emancipation, who keep practising all the rituals incessantly and flawlessly with great devotional fervour. At the same time, It is easily available for the mere asking, explicitly present, shining effulgently,

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right in front of our eyes, without any discrimination, in the great shrine of Guruvayoor! This hard realisation of the infinite truth and the consequent sense of happiness overflowing from the mind of the poet is reflected in the spontaneous outburst, “हन्त ! भाग्यं जनानाम् ! (Lo! How fortunate mankind is!)

Such easy accessibility to Brahman without undertaking any pains or going through rituals, as stated earlier, is indeed, the result of the merit the devotees have acquired during their previous births. What else can be said?

Even those devotees who visit the shrine for the first time, concede their experiencing the benign presence of a Divine Vitality (Divya-chaithanyam) not felt in other temples. This proves the Divine origin of the image, as told in the legendary history of Guruvayoor (given under D38S7). ***The idol is said to have been created by Brahma and worshipped by Vasudeva and Devaki for three generations and later by Lord Krishna Himself at Dwaraka. So there is nothing surprising in devotees experiencing this extra-ordinary divine sensation! It is also pointed out here that just as the Lord fulfils the mundane desires of His devotees, the Lord also bestows salvation on those who worship Him as Brahman with a desire for emancipation.*** In the case of our great poet, he came to the great Guruvayoor temple with the firm belief that worship of the Lord was the supreme medicine for getting cured of his physical ailment which he had voluntarily accepted from his preceptor. *It looks as though he composed this great devotional hymn, an abridgement of Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, sitting in front of the deity in the temple, to demonstrate to and advise the common people, through his own example, that the Lord's worship alone could abate their pains and sufferings, both physical and mental.*

The word “Guru-pavana-pura” means the town of Guruvayoor. If split into two words Guru and Pavana-pura, the word Guru becomes an adjective qualifying the noun Brahman and Pavana-pura will mean the body, supporting the five vital airs. When we equate this with the expression “गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म” as given in the Vedas, it follows that Brahman is the Supreme Preceptor for the whole Universe. Again, if we look at the derivation of the word गुरु, “गुकारस्तु अन्धकारत्वात् रुकारः तन्निरोधकः अन्धकारनिरोधत्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ।” (the letter “Gu” means the darkness of ignorance and the letter “ru” means the self-effulgent Knowledge that destroys the ignorance. As Brahman bestows the knowledge of the Self on those with purified intellects and destroys their ignorance, Brahman is the Supreme Preceptor. The very same Brahman shines as individual soul (Jiva or Jivatman) enshrined in the body of each one of the living beings, which is the abode of the five life-winds or vital airs, or Pavana-

pura. The concept of the Upanishads, “अविनाशी वा अरे ! अयमात्मा तत्त्वमसि !” (You fool! Brahman is indestructible and is devoid of birth-death cycles. You, the Jivatman, and the Paramatman or Brahman are one and the same !) is also reflected. **Therefore, one need not go to the solitude of the caves or undertake difficult pilgrimages seeking God and Salvation, but discover the Paramatman enshrined in one’s own lotus-heart (हृदयपुण्डरीकं), irrespective of caste, creed, religion or nationality.** He can also be worshipped at any time, at any place, without any restrictions! “हन्त ! भाग्यं जनानाम् !” (How fortunate mankind is!)

In this opening sloka itself, the poet has indicated by using the expression, “सान्द्रानन्दावबोधात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वं” that it is “Brahman”, the Supreme Consciousness-Bliss, the subject matter of discussion, by the word “उरुपुरुषार्थात्मकं”, that “Moksha” or Salvation is the ultimate goal, and by “हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्”, that the fortunate readers are the Adhikarins, the participants. After making this formal introduction of the work he has undertaken, the author now goes into further details to elucidate the points he has already made.

The next sloka deals with the importance of worshipping Guruvayoorappan and the needlessness of seeking help from smaller deities.

D1S2 एवं दुर्लभ्यवस्तुन्यपि सुलभतया हस्तलब्धे यदन्यत्
तन्वा वाचा धिया वा भजति बत जनः क्षुद्रतैव स्फुटेयम् ।
एते तावद्वयं तु स्थिरतरमनसा विश्वपीडापहत्यै
निश्शेषात्मानमेनं गुरुपवनपुराधीशमेवाश्रयामः ॥२॥

*Ēvaṃ Durlabhyavastunyapi Sulabhatayā Hastalabdhē Yadanyat
Tanvā Vācā Dhiyā Vā Bhajati Bata Janaḥ Kṣudrataiva Sphuṭēyam..
Ētē Tāvadvayaṃ Tu Sthirataramanasā Viśvapīḍāpahatyai
Niśśēṣātmānamēnaṃ Gurupavanapurādhīśamēvāśrayāmaḥ..2..*

अन्वयः- एवं दुर्लभ्य-वस्तुनि सुलभतया हस्त-लब्धे अपि, जनः अन्यत् तन्वा वाचा धिया वा भजति (इति यत्), इयं स्पष्टा क्षुद्रता एव । तु, एते वयं तावत्, विश्व-पीडापहत्यै स्थिरतर-मनसा निश्शेषात्मानं एनं गुरुपवनपुराधीशं एव आश्रयामः ॥२॥

Meaning:

एवं दुर्लभ्यवस्तुनि	Thus, when this object {(1)Brahman, (2) Human birth, (3) Bhakti-yoga, (4) Bhagavatam} which is rare to get,
हस्तलब्धे सुलभतया	is made available at hand with considerable ease,

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ॥-----

अपि जनः भजति	even then, man (1)worships (2) pursues
तन्वा वाचा धिया वा	with (his) body, words, or even mind,
अन्यत्।	other (1) deities, (2)worldly objects, (3)Yogas, (4) books.
(इति यत्)	Such a thing (to happen),
इयं स्पष्टा क्षुद्रता एव।	this is but base nature indeed!
तु एते वयं तावत्	But here, we, on our part,
स्थिरतरमनसा	with a firmly focussed mind,
आश्रयामः एनं	do seek refuge in this (God),
गुरुपवनपुराधीशं एव	the Lord of Guruvayoor alone (!)
निश्शेषात्मानं	Who is immanent (the in-dweller) in all beings,
विश्वपीडापहत्यै।	for eradication of all woes. (all woes of the Universe!)

Commentary D1S2

The author says that even when rare objects are made available right on the palm of the hand unasked, as aforesaid, people do not make the best use of the opportunity, but unfortunately, keep pursuing other base objects, betraying their lack of discrimination.

There are four rare objects considered here. 1. Brahman, 2. Birth as a human being, 3. Bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion) and 4. Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana. Let us consider each one of these separately:

1. Rare object - Brahman. In order to attain the state of realisation of Brahman as detailed in the previous sloka, one has to go through a very difficult process. First of all, one has to master the four-fold sadhanas (sadhana-chathushtayam)³. Then, under the guidance of a knowledgeable preceptor, (Guru), he has to practice meditation on Paramatman without allowing the mind to wander. This procedure may have to be continued for long before the actual realisation takes place. We know that this is a very hard and long-drawn process. At the same time, we know that this Supreme Consciousness or Divine Vitality is available just for the asking in the shrine of Guruvayoor. In spite of all this, it is a pity

³ The four-fold sadhanas or preliminary qualifications, the means to the attainment of knowledge, are: 1. Vairagya (dispassion or detachment), 2. Viveka (discrimination),

3. Shat-sampatthis (six treasures) and 4. Mumukshuthwam (yearning for liberation.).

The six treasures under item 3 above, are, Sama (abandonment of desires), Dama (restraint of the external functions of the organs), Upaarati (turning away from all sense-objects), Titiksha (patient endurance of sorrow and pain), Sraddha (faith in the words of Vedas and teachers), and Samadhana (Concentration of the mind on the only object "SAT" (Brahman).

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

that ignorance continues to haunt people, driving them to other deities, (why, to demi-gods or petty deities like Yakshis, sylphs, and even to evil spirits,) asking for small favours. In the process, they perform all sorts of rituals, say, physical, ---circumambulations and prostrations, verbal---chanting, reciting, singing their names, mental---meditation, and the like. But we, (the author and other like-minded devotees) being convinced that worship of Lord Guruvayoorappan is far superior to worship of all other deities, have withdrawn our minds from all mundane pursuits and fixed them firmly on His Lotus Feet. We pray with ardent devotion for eradication of the three-fold miseries⁴ we are subject to, and to grant us the ultimate goal of salvation. *What the author is trying to project is that the pains one takes to propitiate other deities, if directed towards Guruvayoorappan, would be more effective and would bring more long-lasting and tangible results.* Our prayers are not devoted to secure fruits to ourselves alone, but also for the eradication of the three-fold miseries of the inhabitants of the entire Universe. This is conveyed by the expression “विश्वपीडापहत्यै”.

It should be noted that those aspirants who meditate on God with “Nishkama-bhakti ” or devotion free from desires are the foremost or of the highest order among devotees (Utthama-adhikarins), those who worship for the fulfilment of desires, the mediocre ones (Madhyama-adhikarins), and those who approach the smaller deities for fulfilment of base desires, the lowest type (Adhama-adhikarins).

2. Rare object - मनुष्यजन्म, (Manushya-janma)---- Birth as a human being.

Being born as a human being can be considered the greatest achievement in the birth-death cycle of any individual soul (the Jivatman). The present birth as a human being is the net result of all the merits acquired over millions of incarnations the Jivatman has undergone, not to speak of the good and bad actions and the results thereof. *It is the natural order of things that every Jivatman tries to improve its performance birth after birth so that it can finally get promoted to the human cadre. Man is the only living being which is endowed with the power of discrimination. Hence birth as a human being is considered the rarest gift of God and the stepping stone to Self-realisation and the final beatitude or salvation.*

⁴ “ तापत्रयं ” the three types of miseries afflicting man are,

(i) अध्यात्मिकं (Addhyatmika), relating to the body, like sickness,

(ii) आधिदैविकं (Adhideivika), caused by natural calamities like flood, earth-quake, etc., and

(iii) आधिभौतिकं (Adhibhouthikam) by other living beings.

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मिकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

Although a golden opportunity to worship the embodiment of Eternal Bliss and Supreme Knowledge is given right in the palm of the hand, in the form of the Lord of Guruvayoor, people are, apparently due to ignorance, incapable of using their power of discretion to realise how precious the opportunity is. It is indeed unfortunate that they continue to spend their time and energy in pursuing other trifling worldly objects physically, orally and mentally! The real cause for this is their ignorance, caused by the predominance of the gunas, Rajas and Tamas. They deserve to be pitied.

3. Rare object – Bhakti-yoga. (the path of devotion)

The superiority of Bhakti-yoga to other paths like Karma-yoga (the path of action, duty) and Jnana-yoga (the path of Knowledge) is emphasised here. The aspect of Bhakti-yoga, being much easier to practise when compared to the other Yogas, by listening to the stories of the Lord, by singing His glory, by repeating His names, etc., has been expounded in this work, again and again, by the author. One who thinks of the Lord all the time and keeps worshipping Him without being prompted by desires, stands the chance of reaching His Lotus Feet and attaining Salvation at the end of the present birth itself !

When such an easy route to salvation by practising the path of devotion is available to us, is it not ridiculous to spend our time and energy resorting to other thorny paths like Karma-yoga and Jnana-yoga? Is it not like eating a bitter pill when a piece of candy can do the trick?

4. Rare object – The Bhagavata Maha Puranam.

Being the last of the eighteen Mahapuranas written by Veda Vyasa, who himself is said to be an incarnation of Lord Narayana, this is the only major work which describes, in detail, the stories of the sportive incarnations of the Lord. It is said that this Holy Book was handed over by the Lord Himself to His trusted lieutenant, Uddhava just before His divine ascent to Vaikunta at the end of Dwapara-yuga, with the solemn assurance that this Holy Book would be a substitute for His physical presence and would serve as the panacea for all miseries of Kali-yuga. ***It is believed that Lord Sri Krishna resides in this book.***

“ श्रीमद्भागवताख्योयं प्रत्यक्षः कृष्ण एव हि । स्वीकृतोऽसि मया नाथ मुक्त्यर्थं भवसागरे ॥ ” Bhag. Ma: 6/30. (Here is Sri Krishna Himself, manifest before us under the name of Srimad Bhagavatam; I have sought You, O Lord! for being rescued from the ocean of mundane existence!). Such a great treasure, rare indeed to obtain, has reached us through millions of generations starting from Brahma, through sage Narada and the like. When such rare material, capable of redressing all our woes and emancipating us, is available at hand, why are we,

instead of making use of it, reading other books ? Hence true devotees of the Lord keep reading portions of the book ritualistically every day or at least whenever they can. ***It is said that he who reads a chapter, or if not, a sloka, half a sloka or even a quarter of it every day will receive the Lord's blessings and attain salvation.***

“श्लोकार्धं श्लोकपादं वा नित्यं भागवतोद्भवम् । पठस्व स्वमुखेनैव यदीच्छसि परां गतिम् ॥ : Bhag. Ma. 3/33. (If you seek the highest destiny, read even yourself ⁵, everyday, one half, or even a quarter of a sloka from Srimad Bhagavatam).

Implied meaning of this sloka: The words of this sloka may also be rearranged logically in a slightly different manner. “वयं तु आश्रयामः गुरुपवनपुराधीशं एनं एव तन्वा वाचा निशेषात्मानं धिया स्थिरतरमनसा विश्वपीडापहत्यै” meaning that “we (वयं तु) continue to worship (आश्रयामः) Guruvayoorappan, that Lord present in this book Srimad Bhagavatam, (गुरुपवनपुराधीशं एनं एव) using the abridged (तन्वा वाचा) version (meaning Narayaneeyam), in its entirety, all the 18,000 slokas of Srimad Bhagavatam condensed into 1036 slokas, taking into account, all the ten attributes of a Puranam without leaving anything behind (निशेषात्मानं), authored by a very intelligent person with full application of the faculties of a very highly intellectual mind with great devotional fervour, in crisp and profound language, without losing the real gist of it, (धिया स्थिरतरमनसा), thereby giving us the indication that Srimad Narayaneeyam is nothing but an epitome of Srimad Bhagavatam. Why is this being done ? The answer is, ‘विश्वपीडापहत्यै’, meaning “for the sake of eradication of the woes of the entire Universe, both mental and physical!”

It must be borne in mind that reading and understanding the 18, 000 slokas of Srimad Bhagavata Mahapuram, especially by the uneducated masses, is no easy task. For such people, is this not a blessing?

This sloka contains the figure of speech called “श्लेषः”⁶.

⁵ “ श्लोकार्धं श्लोकपादं वा नित्यं भागवतोद्भवम् । पठस्व स्वमुखेनैव यदीच्छसि परां गतिम् ॥ : Bhag. Ma. 3/33. The accent is on the word स्वमुखेनैव which is reading using one's own faculties. Hearing somebody else reading is given only secondary importance. There is nothing like reading by oneself ! Note the importance of daily Parayanam of Bhagavatam, that too, by oneself!.

⁶ नानार्थसंश्रयः श्लेषः, double entendre, susceptibility of a word or sentence to yield two or more interpretations (regarded as a figure of speech and very commonly used by poets, in this case, the word “दुर्लभ्यवस्तु ” meaning four different things, Brahman, human birth, Bhakti-yoga and Srimad Bhagavata Mahapuram.

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ।-----

This sloka contains the gist of the third sloka in Srimad Bhagavatam which reads thus: “निगमकल्पतरोर्गलितं फलं शुकमुखादमृतद्रवसंयुतम्। पिबत भागवतं रसमालयं मुहुरहो रसिकाः भुवि भावुकाः।।” (O Devotees, who have a taste for divine joy! Drink the nectar of this Supreme Bliss which is the essence of the fruit, by name “Bhagavatam” of the wish-yielding tree of the Vedas, fallen off on the earth, from the mouth of the parrot-like Sage, Suka. Go on drinking this divine nectar again and again, till there is consciousness left in you!)

From the standpoint of literary workmanship, we can say that this sloka has contributed to render this work, a Kavya⁷ of ‘class one’ stature.

The author now goes about giving us a picturesque description of the composition of the Divine, sweet and charming image of the Lord, to aid meditation on His form.

D1S3 सत्त्वं यत्तत् पराभ्यां अपरिकलनतो निर्मलं तेन तावद्-
भूतैर्भूतेन्द्रियैस्ते वपुरिति बहुशः श्रूयते व्यासवाक्यम्।
तत् स्वच्छत्वाद्यदच्छादितपरसुखचिद्गर्भनिर्भासरूपम्
तस्मिन् धन्या रमन्ते श्रुतिमतिमधुरे सुग्रहे विग्रहे ते।।३।।

*Satvaṃ Yattat Parābhyām Aparikalanatō Nirmalam Tēna Tāvad-
Bhūtairbhūtēndriyaistē Vapuriti Bahuḥ Śrūyatē Vyāsavākyaṃ.
Tat Svacchatvādyadacchādītaparasukhacidgarbhanirbhāsarūpam
Tasmin Dhanyā Ramantē Śrutimatimadhurē Sugrahē Vigrahē Tē..3..*

अन्वयः- तत् पराभ्यां अपरिकलनतः निर्मलं सत्त्वं यत्, तेन तावत् भूतैः भूतेन्द्रियैः, ते वपुः इति व्यासवाक्यं बहुशः श्रूयते। स्वच्छत्वात् अच्छादित-परसुख-चिद्गर्भ-निर्भास-रूपं तत् (वपुः) यत् श्रुति-मति-मधुरे सुग्रहे ते तस्मिन् विग्रहे धन्याः रमन्ते।।३।।

⁷ .The master sentiment depicted is Bhakti. A lasting or permanent feeling (Sthayee-bhava) is provided by the great attachment to the Lord due to the merits acquired during the previous births or on account of any other reason. Then there are other qualities (Bhavas) like Vibhavas, viz., Alambana (supportive), eg., the Lord Himself, and Uddeepaka (inflaming), eg., listening to the Lord’s stories, Anubhavas (external manifestations) eg., experiences like sweda (perspiration) and Romancha (hair standing on end) and Vyabichari-bhavas (diversions) like disgust, loathing, humiliation, etc. “वाक्यं रसात्मकम् काव्यं ” (A Kavya is nothing but inspired words.)

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

Meaning:

व्यासवाक्यं श्रूयते	“The words of Sage Veda-vyasa are being heard
बहुशः ते वपुः इति	many times, that Your divine image is (constituted) of
भूतेन्द्रियैः यत्	the (five) elements and the (eleven) organs,
तेन तावत् भूतैः	which originated from
तत् सत्त्वं निर्मलं	that (called) Sattva-guna, which is of pristine purity,
अपरिकलनतः पराभ्यां	being unmixed with the other two (Rajas and Tamas).
तस्मिन् विग्रहे ते यत्	In that image of Yours, the form of which is
अच्छादितपरसुख- चिद्गर्भनिर्भासरूपं	extremely effulgent, having the Supreme Conscious- ness- Bliss underlying within, which is unobstructed
तत् स्वच्छत्वात्	on account of its(of Sattva) pristine purity, and which is
श्रुतिमतिमधुरे सुग्रहे	all sweetness to the ears and the mind, and easy to grasp,
धन्याः रमन्ते ।	the blessed devotees do revel.”

Commentary D1S3

This sloka eulogises the qualities of Sattva-guna (the constituent of nature, which is the essence of all that is good and subtle) which is embodied in the divine attributes of the Lord. An exposition of all the three Gunas is essential to appreciate the meaning of this sloka.

To start with, "Maya", which is the root cause for the existence of this entire universe and the creations therein, is an admixture of all the three Gunas, (constituents of Prakriti, nature) Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The differences in behaviour we see from creation to creation, man to man and creature to creature are entirely due to differences in the distribution of these three Gunas or constituents.

Sattva-guna. Of these three Gunas (constituents of nature), Sattva-guna is pure, flawless, clear and transparent, self-effulgent and incapable of doing any harm. It creates desire to acquire knowledge and seek happiness, even in a totally “detached” person. But, the moment such a person gets interested in any object, he becomes "attached" and consequently bonded to it. A person who is so attached, solely by virtue of the effect of Sattva-guna, tends to perform more and more virtuous deeds without expectation of rewards and worships deities without any discrimination, as that guna manifests in him in increasing measure. He is humble by nature, respects and worships Gods, good and learned people with special regard to his preceptors, is soft-spoken and does not cause any harm to anyone. He consumes only limited quantities of food acquired without

causing any harm to anyone, and that too, just to give himself adequate energy to sustain life. He would be keenly interested in controlling the sense-organs and learning the scriptures, ever willing to practise charity, to follow religious paths, to view everything with equanimity, to give up vasanas (impressions left in the mind on account of past experiences) like Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (avarice), Moha (pride, infatuation), Mada (arrogance, intoxication) and Matsarya (jealousy), to lead a contented life, to work towards universal happiness, and be the breeding ground for good qualities like Sama, Dama, Kshama, Sathya, Ahimsa, etc. Such people will become more and more concentrated in Sattva-guna, and ultimately become one with Paramatman.

Rajo-guna and Tamo-guna however, manifest frequently in an effort to contaminate, malign and pull down even that very eminent desirable quality, namely, Sattva-guna and its associated results.

Rajo-guna is desire and action oriented. It creates all sorts of desires in the human mind and prompts action to achieve the end result. The person having a preponderance of Rajo-guna gets more and more attached to worldly objects and becomes a slave of the six vasanas, stated above. In order to achieve his objective, he propitiates spirits, demi-gods and petty deities like Yakshas and the like. He eats enormous quantities of food, comprising of meat and savouries, highly saltish, sour and pungent. All his actions are directed away from the righteous path, governed by desire, nay, avarice, contrived to acquire riches by hook or by crook, even stooping down to the level of robbing and cheating. If he gives anything to anyone, it is not willingly, but only with the intention of gaining more in the long run. He pretends to do good things like Yagas etc., with the sole intention of gaining respectability in society. Such people, depending upon the concentration of Rajo-guna, become perpetrators of many crimes, and are forced to take innumerable number of births necessary to endure the fruits of their actions. Chances are there for such men to get uplifted due to the association of Sattva-guna, or downgraded due to that of Tamo-guna.

Tamo-guna is the worst and most dreadful of the three Gunas. Creating ignorance, it tends to promote carelessness, lethargy, stupor, etc., and prompts the subject to untruth, anger and violence. He worships the devil, fiends and other evil spirits, has a peculiar affinity to putrid and offensive food. If at all he does anything good, it is not with devotion or attention, but just to gain cheap popularity. All such actions are really targeted to cause harm to others. He performs unrighteous acts all the time and continues endlessly in the birth-death cycle to endure the results of all his sins.

As aforesaid, the character, behaviour and activities of all human beings can be traced to the distribution pattern of the three gunas. In general, preponderance
 -----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मिकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

of rajo-guna and tamo-guna results in atheism, corruption, untruth, wickedness and evil, all enemies of sane good virtues.

It is in order to uproot evil and injustice and re-establish righteousness that the Lord has assumed different incarnations, as stated by the Lord Himself in Bhagavat Gita, “परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृतां । धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ।।” Bg: 4/8. (For the protection of the virtuous, destruction of the evil and re-establishment of righteousness, I shall be born from age to age.) It is the net result of all actions of the previous births that forces us to bind ourselves with the three Gunas and accept the form suitable for the role we have to play in the succeeding birth. *But the Lord's incarnation is very much different from the rebirth of man because He is not bound by the actions of the previous incarnations and their results. In that case, how does He get bound by Maya? As His role is fixed, He has to take the form that rightly fits that role, essential to dispel evil and re-establish righteousness --- an exemplary form, which is also the embodiment of the pristine purity and divinity of Sattva-guna to match the function of attracting and leading the devotees to the path of devotion, and ultimately to salvation.* Unadulterated Sattva-guna alone has contributed to the origin of the five elements, the five organs of perception, the five organs of action and the mind, for the formation of His charming image at the temple of Guruvayoor. The repeated statements of Veda-vyasa, who is the Lord's own incarnation and whose words are therefore trustworthy, have been loudly proclaiming these facts through the eighteen Puranams.

“Lord! A crystal, on account of its clarity and transparency transmits the effulgence of the sun clearly without raising the slightest doubt of being an inert substance without having any lustre by itself. The innate nature of Brahmic Bliss, (the Brahma-bhava), the quintessence of Supreme Consciousness, clearly shines effulgently in that charming and sportive idol of Yours, at the shrine of Guruvayur, constituted out of the five elements which are themselves born out of pure Sattva-guna (Suddha-sattva), without any taint of the other two gunas, and free from all impurities. Even the knowledge that it is made of the five elements, is forgotten; the joy is such, that it is beyond words, when one listens to or even thinks about Your lustrous divine image, the embodiment of auspiciousness! No need to say that such a lovely, blissful and charming form which has assumed the state of “Saguna-brahman”, is also within easy comprehension of even laymen. Fortunate ones alone are able to develop love and devotion to this form of Yours. In other words, those who develop love and devotion to Your charming form and enjoy Its sweetness are fortunate indeed!”

After establishing the purely Sattvic nature of the Divine image, the poet now goes on to show its identity with the unmanifested Absolute Brahman.

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ।।-----

D1S4	निष्कम्पे नित्यपूर्णे निरवधिपरमानन्दपीयूषरूपे निर्लीनानेकमुक्तावलिसुभगतमे निर्मलब्रह्मसिन्धौ । कल्लोलोल्लासतुल्यं खलु विमलतरं सत्त्वमाहुस्तदात्मा कस्मान्नो निष्कलस्त्वं सकल इति वचस्त्वत्कलास्वेव भूमन् ॥४॥
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*Niṣkampē Nityapūrṇē Niravadhiparamānandapīyūṣarūpē
Nirīnānēkamuktāvalisubhagatamē Nirmalabrahmasindhau.
Kallōlōllāsatulyaṃ Khalu Vimalataraṃ Satvamāhustadātmā
Kasmānno Niṣkalastvaṃ Sakala Iti Vacastvatkalāsvēva Bhūman..4..*

अन्वयः-निष्कम्पे नित्य-पूर्णे निरवधि-परमानन्द-पीयूषरूपे निर्लीनानेक-मुक्तावलि-सुभगतमे निर्मल-ब्रह्म-सिन्धौ विमलतरं सत्त्वं कल्लोलोल्लास-तुल्यं खलु इति आहुः । तदात्मा त्वं कस्मात् नो निष्कलः । हे! भूमन्! सकलः इति वचः त्वत्कलासु एव ॥४॥

Meaning:

(ऋषयः) आहुः इति	(Great sages) have said thus:-
निर्मल-ब्रह्म-सिन्धौ	“In the pure ocean of ‘Brahman’ that is
निष्कम्पे नित्यपूर्णे	(1) <i>action-free</i> (2) deep and inscrutable , and always full
निरवधि-परमानन्द-पीयूषरूपे	(1) <i>of a form that is the embodiment of the ambrosia of eternal bliss</i> , (2) which is the source of real ambrosia that bestows absolute happiness (on those who taste it)
निर्लीनानेक-मुक्तावलि-सुभगतमे	(1) <i>supremely pleasing to the mind on account of the countless number of liberated souls merged therein</i> , (2) rendered attractive by the colonies of pearls lying hidden therein ,
सत्त्वं विमलतरं	Sattva-guna which is even more pristine pure,
कल्लोलोल्लासतुल्यं खलु	is similar to the frolicsome waves indeed!”
हे, भूमन्! तदात्मा त्वं	“O Infinite and complete One! Of such nature, as You are,
कस्मात् नो निष्कलः ।	why are You not (termed as) “Nishkala” ?(whole and indivisible) (In fact You are, being of Pure Sattva-guna !)
सकलः इति वचः	The expression that you are “Sakala” or divisible,
त्वत्कलासु एव ।	is (true of You) only in Your partial incarnations.

Note: Words in italics are to be read together; also ones in bold letters. Others are common.

Commentary D1S4.

“The first half of the sloka compares Brahman to a vast ocean. The first four expressions, "निष्कम्पे", "नित्यपूर्णे" "निरवधि-परमानन्द-पीयूषरूपे", "निर्लीनानेक-मुक्तावलि-सुभगतमे" are similarly applicable to both. Brahman is unshakable and

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ।।-----

free from turbulence. The ocean, owing to its size, greatness and dignified nature, cannot be muddled up even by the greatest turmoil. "नित्यपूर्ण " conveys the meaning of being ever full, or complete in all respects. The ocean is always full, maintaining the same level, whether it be rain or shine. Brahman is ever full and omnipresent.

"निरवधि-परमानन्द-पीयूषरूपे" meaning limitless, undivided by parameters like time and space and that which bestows unlimited happiness and pleasure. The ocean has immense wealth buried under the deep waters, not to speak of the treasure of pearls (described in the next epithet), and is the origin of numerous articles of luxury. Hence, it is the progenitor of happiness. As for Brahman, it bestows unlimited happiness in the form of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, extremely relished by devotees as though it is Amritam or Ambrosia.

"निर्लीनानेक-मुक्तावलि-सुभगतमे", when referred to the ocean, means, "rendered extremely beautiful on account of the immense wealth of pearls lying dormant under the depths". When applied to Brahman, it means "extremely alluring" in view of the assemblage of liberated souls who are in the process of perpetually dissolving into the ocean of Brahman described in the next epithet, "निर्मल-ब्रह्म-सिन्धौ".

It has been declared by our great sages that in the ocean of pure and unadulterated Brahman, separated from Maya-related limitations, the self-effulgent and pure Sattva-guna is similar to the playful sports of the waves. Although the ocean and the waves appear to be separate entities, in reality, there is no difference between them, as they are inseparable from one another, there being no wave without the ocean, and no ocean without waves. It is the same relationship that applies to the Ocean of Brahman and the waves of Sattva-guna, as implied by the metaphor. Hence the question asked is, "Why is it that You, comprising of the form of Pure Sattva-guna (Suddha-sattva) not called 'Nishkala' or the One, 'Whole and Indivisible?' In other words, there is no doubt that You are, Nishkala, the Whole and Indivisible One indeed.

There is no doubt that the Brahman described above with the attributes like 'निष्कल्पे', 'नित्यपूर्ण', 'निरवधि-परमानन्द-पीयूषरूपे', 'निर्लीनानेक-मुक्तावलि-सुभगतमे' is 'Nishkala-brahman' and is composed of Pure Sattva-guna (Suddha-sattva). You are also the embodiment of Suddha-sattva. Therefore, is there anything wrong in addressing You as "Nishkala" ? If so, one need not doubt that the word "Sakala" may become meaningless! "सकल इति वचस्त्वत्कलास्वेव भूमन् !? You can be referred to as "सकलः" only when You are in Your Amsa-

avatharas".⁸ (partial incarnations). This incarnation of Yours as Sri Krishna, who is a complete person, is certainly, a Poorna-avatara, an incarnation, complete in all respects. On that account too, You are Nishkala, no doubt. You and the 'निष्कल-ब्रह्मन्' are one and the same."

Having described the composition of the Divine form, the author now proceeds to enlighten us regarding the origin of this manifestation.

D1S5 निर्व्यापारोऽपि निष्कारणमज भजसे यत्क्रियामीक्षणाख्यां
तेनैवोदेति लीना प्रकृतिरसतिकल्पाऽपि कल्पादिकाले ।
तस्याः संशुद्धमंशं कमपि तमतिरोधायकं सत्त्वरूपं
स त्वं धृत्वा दधासि स्वमहिमविभवाकुण्ठ वैकुण्ठ रूपम् ॥५॥

Nirvyāpārō'pi Niṣkāraṇamaja Bhajasē Yatkriyāmīkṣaṇākhyāṃ

Tēnaivōdēti Līnā Prakṛtirasatikalpā'pi Kalpādikālē.

Tasyāḥ saṃśuddhamāṃśaṃ Kamapi Tamatirōdhāyakaṃ Satvarūpam

Sa Tvaṃ Dhṛtvā Dadhāsi Svamahimavibhavākuṇṭha Vaikuṇṭha Rūpam. .5..

अन्वयः- हे! अज! त्वं निर्व्यापारः अपि ईक्षणाख्यां क्रियां निष्कारणं भजसे इति यत् तेन एव लीना असतिकल्पा अपि प्रकृतिः कल्पादिकाले उदेति। स्वमहिमविभवाकुण्ठ! हे वैकुण्ठ! सः त्वं संशुद्धं अतिरोधायकं सत्त्वरूपं तं तस्याः कमपि अंशं धृत्वा रूपं दधासि। ॥५॥

Meaning:

हे! अज!	“O Lord! One who has neither beginning nor end!
इति यत् भजसे क्रियां	That (You) thus, engage yourself with the work
ईक्षणाख्यां निष्कारणं	of casting a glance (on Maya) without any reason,
अपि त्वं निर्व्यापारः	though You are (said to be) devoid of (mandatory) action,
तेन एव प्रकृतिः लीना	for that very reason, Maya who had merged in you
अपि असतिकल्पा	(and therefore) though appears to be non-existent,
उदेति कल्पादिकाले ।	activates (herself) at the commencement of creation.
हे वैकुण्ठ! स्वमहिमविभवाकुण्ठ!	O Lord! One who is never slack, but always alert in pursuing Your functions! One whose intellect is never hindered due to the greatness of Your divine faculties!

⁸ Among the Dasavataras, the ten major incarnations of the Lord, the incarnation of Krishna alone is termed Poorna-avathara (Complete incarnation) and all others, Amsa-avatharas or partial incarnations.

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

धृत्वा कमपि अंशं तस्याः	Adopting an infinitesimal part of her,
त्वं सः दधासि तं रूपं	You, of such nature, assume that (sportive) form
संशुद्धं अतिरोधायकं	of pristine purity, transparent, and
सत्त्वरूपं ।	the embodiment of Sattva-guna.”

Commentary D1S5

"हे !अज !", "Oh! Limitless One!" Addressing the Lord in this fashion signifies the total absence of the six attributes, viz., birth, growth, sustenance, old age, decay and death in the Lord, One without beginning or end and beyond time and space. "By being limitless, You are not necessarily bound by a duty to be performed, like human beings who have to eke out a living. You are, by nature, devoid of any action! As such, it is something inexplicable that You cast Your divine glance on Maya, the spirit of illusion, thereby activating the cycle of creation. The reason for this act of Yours continues to be unknown, and is a mystery to all.

O Lord of Guruvayoor! Maya, prompted by Your divine glance, manifests herself. It is a well-known fact that during the Brahma-pralaya, the great Deluge, all living beings (Jivatmans) merge with You, the Paramatman, when the five-fold creations merge into the five elements,⁹ which, in turn, merge into the five Tanmatras, the Tanmatras into Ahamkara (egoism, the inner sense), Ahamkara into the Mahat-tattva, Mahat-tattva into Maya, and Maya into Paramatman. At this point of time, it is very difficult to say whether Maya is in existence or not, and hence the expression, 'असत्' (Non-existent). Just triggered by Your glance, this Maya (Prakrti) becomes "सत्", (existent), and springs into action, manifesting itself into multifarious creations. Hence, at this stage, the dividing line between the non-existence and existence of Maya is very thin. In case Maya is considered as existent, it would mean that the entire universe which is a manifestation of Maya becomes "real", and if so, Brahman will lose its attribute of non-duality (Advaita). If it is considered non-existent, it cannot have the power to manifest itself into the creations of the universe in different forms.

Thus, it is difficult to say whether Maya is real or unreal. But we all know that there is something called "Maya", which is not separate from Brahman. It is like fire and heat, the latter being a manifestation of the former, and both, inseparable from each other. Similarly, Maya, which is a power (Sakti) of the Paramatman is inseparable from Paramatman. As said earlier, during the time

⁹ This process of dissolution and re-creation is described in detail in Dasakam 5.

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

of the Great Deluge, everything, including Maya, which becomes non-functional, dissolves into the Paramatman and hence everything other than Paramatman is apparently non-existent. Merely by a glance of the Lord, Maya springs into creative activity, and, simultaneously on the very same day, Brahma, the Creator is also born. Here, "मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् मायिनं तु महेश्वरं", Sv. Up. 4/10 (Prakriti or nature should be understood as Maya or illusion and Purusha or the Supreme being, the Mayi or Mayavi, the conjuror).

“O Vaikunta!” - the term Vaikunta meaning the Lord of Vaikunta-loka, and also One who is devoid of lethargy, One who is constantly alert and prompt in performing one’s duties. He is also referred to as " निर्व्यापारः", (devoid of action), these two descriptions running contrary to each other! It can be compared to a magnet, which, although static and devoid of any physical activity, all the same, attracts iron particles by its very presence - the presence of its magnetic field. Likewise, by Your presence, You have prompted the threefold Maya into activity, have separated Sattva-guna in its purest form and taken upon yourself, an infinitesimal part of Maya, to form this Leela-vigraha (sportive Personal form), this charming image we see in front of us, solely for the sake of providing a suitable object for focussing the mind of those who have not yet been able to acquire sufficient purity of mind to concentrate upon Your impersonal or unmanifested form, and helping and guiding us to achieve the four Purusharthas. Yet, You are devoid of attachments, in view of the fact that Your physique consists of pure Sattva-guna and is therefore, "अतिरोधायकं", meaning absolutely transparent and does not conceal the Brahma-Chaitanyam or the Brahmik divine glory. Compare the human body with the Lord's form. Our physique is made up of the five elements born out of the combination of the three gunas, based upon our past actions and hence, we are endowed with the “I”-sense and egoistic thinking and *qualities like greed, anger, selfishness etc., resulting in ignorance which overshadows and conceals the spark of Divine Consciousness present in each one of us.* But, for the Lord who is Infinite and without attributes, there are no past actions or their effects.

Brahma-chaitanyam or Divine Vitality is ever shining in this sportive form of the Lord, as He, without getting infatuated by, and at the same, conquering Maya, has assumed this pure Sattvic form on His own accord, exclusively to shower His benign grace on His devotees. Pure Sattva-guna (Suddha-sattva), being extremely transparent, has no power to conceal. The power of concealment is the quality belonging only to Rajo- and Tamo-gunans and when the Lord has assumed a form comprising only pure Sattva-guna without being maligned by even traces of the other two gunans, His effulgence is only further enhanced. Moreover, in the absence of ego and “I”-sense, He is also totally free

from bondage, unlike the other Jivas. It is this idea that is conveyed by the expression "स्वमहिमविभवाकुण्ठ वैकुण्ठ रूपम्".

The next two slokas describe the beauty of the Divine form.

D1S6	तत्ते प्रत्यग्रधाराधरललितकलायावलीकेलिकारं लावण्यस्यैकसारं सुकृतिजनदृशां पूर्णपुण्यावतारम्। लक्ष्मीनिशङ्कलीलानिलयनममृतस्यन्दसन्दोहमन्तः सिञ्चत्संचिन्तकानां वपुरनुकलये मारुतागारनाथ ॥६॥
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*Tattē Pratyagrādhārādharalalitakalāyāvālikēlikāraṃ
 Lāvanyasyaikasāraṃ Sukṛtijaṇadṛśāṃ Pūrṇapuṇyāvātāraṃ.
 Lakṣmīniśaṅkalīlānilayanamamṛtasyandāsandōhamantaḥ
 Siñcatsañcintakānāṃ Vapurānukalayē Mārutāgāranātha..6..*

अन्वयः--हे ! मारुतागारनाथ ! प्रत्यग्र-धारा-धर-ललित-कलाया-वली-केलिकारं लावण्यस्य एकसारं सुकृति-जन-दृशाम् पूर्ण-पुण्यावतारं लक्ष्मी-निशङ्क-लीला-निलयनं सञ्चिन्तकानां अन्तः अमृत-स्यन्द-सन्दोहं सिञ्चत् तत् ते वपुः अनुकलये ॥६॥

Meaning:

हे ! मारुतागारनाथ !	“O Lord of Guruvayoor!
अनुकलये ते तत् वपुः	I continuously meditate on Your (divine) form,
प्रत्यग्र-धारा-धर-ललित-कलाया-वली-केलिकारं	immensely beautiful as the fresh rain-bearing clouds and playful as a bunch of freshly bloomed kalaya flowers,
एकसारं लावण्यस्य	the quintessence of all that is lovely and
पूर्ण-पुण्यावतारं	a complete manifestation of all that is holy
सुकृति-जन-दृशाम्	for the eyes of the blessed ones,
लक्ष्मी-निशङ्क-लीला-निलयनं,	the play-house for Goddess Lakshmi’s uninhibited sportive ventures, and
सिञ्चत् अमृत-स्यन्द-सन्दोहं	drenching with a deluge of immortal bliss,
सञ्चिन्तकानां अन्तः ।	the hearts, of those who meditate upon it.”

Commentary D1S6

The exquisite choice of words and scintillating expressions overflowing with Bhakti in this sloka render it one of the main "Prarthana-slokas" (prayer-hymns), regularly chanted by many a devotee.

“O Lord of Guruvayoor! I always keep concentrating on Your Leela-vigraha, the sportive form which is nothing but an embodiment of Suddha-sattva (pure

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ॥-----

Sattva-guna).” The expression "मारुतागारनाथ" implies the lordship of the body that houses the five Pranas, out of which, "मारुत" or Life-wind is the most important. Comparable to a charioteer who has perfect control of his horses and keeps the movement of the vehicle safe and in the right direction, it is the Atman who, after giving a spark of life to this body, controls the five Pranas, the revolt of even one of which, can lead to "Vatha-roga" or rheumatism, the ailment of the author. That all-pervading Consciousness is none but YOU. ***As the owner of a house has every right to correct the tenants who damage the house, and put the house back to order, so also, the Lord corrects the erring one of the five winds of the body (Pancha-pranas) and keeps the body in a healthy state. No doubt, ardent prayer to the Lord alone, is the panacea for any ailment*** including rheumatism, for which, the poet himself was a living example.

"मारुतागारनाथ" can also mean “the Lord of the heart which is the seat of the life-wind”. You are the Lord of the lotus heart of every devotee (Hridaya-pundareekam) where You are always shining. There is nothing which cannot be done in the house when the Lord of the house himself is permanently residing there. Likewise, ***there is nothing which cannot be achieved if we continuously offer our sincere prayers to the Lord who is permanently residing in our hearts. This interpretation also gives an insight into the fact that the all-pervading and omnipresent Lord who always keeps shining in our hearts, is available to us at all times at the nearest location. To discover the Lord within, (the Hridaya-pundarikam) and concentrate upon Him would be the easiest way to approach Him.***

“The beauty of Your physique surpasses everything else in this world, reminding one of the ‘fetching blue’ of the dark rain-bearing cloud and a bunch of freshly-blossomed Kalaya flowers. The clouds shed their water, bringing rain and plenty, and in consequence, immense happiness to mankind and all other living beings, relieving them of all their sufferings. The kalaya flowers, on account of their fragrance, attract swarms of bees which feast sumptuously on the honey exuded by them and keep happily buzzing about. *Your charming image attracts crowds of ardent devotees who really "bee-line" to the sanctum sanctorum to have Your coveted vision and offer prayers.* You shower Your Divine Grace on them and relieve them from their sufferings, and ultimately, at the end of the tenure of their life, absorb them into You, granting them, the much-desired Moksha or salvation.”

The expression "लावण्यस्य एकसारं " means the quintessence of all loveliness in the world put together. When a person enjoys the sweetness and beauty of Your

charming form, the rest of the world has nothing to offer him, inasmuch as a person enjoying sugarcane juice has no attraction for the bagasse which is nothing more than a waste material. This situation is further explained by the expression, "सुकृति-जन-दशाम् ", (only for those who are really fortunate enough to come and have Darsanam). ***It should be noted that it is not the proximity to the shrine or physical capability that counts, but the desire to visit the temple. There are many who reside within the precincts of Guruvayoor, but do not care to visit the temple, whereas, those who live thousands of miles away, but are really fortunate, get the ardent desire to come and have Darsanam, irrespective of their physical condition.*** In fact, there are more sick people than healthy ones who come all the way and offer worship. Such people are referred to as " सुकृति-जनाः" or "blessed ones". Even many of those who take pains to visit the temple, come there mechanically and see only the "stone" in the idol of the deity, failing to appreciate the Divine Presence, as they have not yet attained the purity of mind, sincerity and devotion, which, they will be able to acquire only in course of time, after repeated visits and undergoing the process of mental purification. ***Above all, Divine Grace is a must to develop that state of mind, which also comes about only after the mind is conditioned for performing actions without desires.*** It may even be said that the Lord Himself is the complete incarnation of the merits accumulated on account of the good deeds performed by the eyes of those fortunate ones over the innumerable birth-death cycles they have gone through. The benign presence of Divinity and the effulgence of a reverberating Vitality we are able to perceive at Guruvayoor temple, is but the embodiment of all the merits of those fortunate eyes! "सुकृति-जन-दशाम् पूर्ण-पुण्यावतारं! " Such blessed ones alone have the good fortune of having the darsanam of the Lord.

“लक्ष्मी-निशङ्क-लीला-निलयनं सञ्चिन्तकानां” : “O Lord of Guruvayoor! It is said in general that women are fickle by nature. This adage is quite true of Your consort, Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of auspiciousness, affluence and beauty, as wealth does not stay continuously with any devotee, a prince becoming a pauper overnight and vice versa. Even such a fickle Goddess Lakshmi stays permanently only with You, since she is full of immense love and attachment to You, Your charming physique being Her sporting ground. ***In spite of all this, it is a pity that many persons do not develop the sincerity and sense of devotion to worship You, by which they can win the blessings of both!***”

Will such worship bestow only transient pecuniary benefits? No. "सञ्चिन्तकानां अन्तः अमृत-स्यन्द-सन्दोहं सिञ्चत्"= those who concentrate their minds and -----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

meditate on Him with the concept that Guruvayoorappan is one and the same as the Eternal Consciousness-Bliss, (Sat-chid-ananda-moorthy), will be blessed with a deluge of the nectar of eternal bliss (अमृत), meaning immortality, (i.e., emancipation from this cycle of births and deaths), after ridding them of all the three types of woes.

This greatness of Lord Guruvayoorappan is unique and I pray to Him with all sincerity.

D1S7 कष्टा ते सृष्टिचेष्टा बहुतरभवखेदावहा जीवभाजां
इत्येवं पूर्वमालोचितं अजित मया नैवमद्याभिजाने ।
नो चेज्जीवाः कथं वा मधुरतरमिदं त्वद्वपुश्चिद्रसार्द्रं
नेत्रैः श्रोत्रैश्च पीत्वा परमरस-सुधांभोधिपूरे रमेरन् ॥७॥

*Kaṣṭā Tē Sṛṣṭicēṣṭā Bahutara-Bhavakhēdāvahā Jīvabhājāṃ
Ityēvam Pūrvamālōcitam-ajita Mayā Naivamadyābhijānē.
Nō Cējjīvāḥ Katham Vā Madhurataramidam Tvadvapu-Ścidrasārdram
Nētraiḥ Śrōtraīśca Pītvā Paramarasa-Sudhāmbhōdhipūrē Ramēran..7..*

अन्वयः--हे! अजित! ते सृष्टि-चेष्टा कष्टा यतः सा जीवभाजां बहुतर-भव-खेदावहा इति एवं मया पूर्व आलोचितं । अद्य एवं न अभिजाने । नो चेत् जीवाः चिद्रसार्द्रं मधुरतरं इदं ते वपुः नेत्रैः श्रोत्रैः च पीत्वा परम-रस-सुधाम्भोधि-पूरे कथं वा रमेरन् ॥७॥

Meaning:

हे! अजित!	“O Lord, who are beyond the spell of Maya!
आलोचितं मया पूर्व एवं	It was considered by me earlier that
ते सृष्टिचेष्टा कष्टा इति यतः	Your creative activity is a difficult one in that,
सा बहुतर-भव-खेदावहा	it is causative of exceedingly great misery
जीवभाजां ।	to living beings.
अद्य एवं न अभिजाने नो चेत्	(But) now, I do not think so, for, otherwise,
कथम् वा जीवाः रमेरन्	how could those living beings be revelling
परम-रस-सुधाम्भोधि-पूरे	in the nectarine ocean of Infinite Bliss,
पीत्वा नेत्रैः श्रोत्रैः च	after consuming, by eyes and ears,
इदं वपुः ते	this form of Yours,
चिद्रसार्द्रं	flooded with the essence of Brahmic Consciousness
मधुरतरं ।	and immensely sweet in all respects!”

Commentary D1S7

“O Invincible One! Your own creation, Maya, which encompasses the whole Universe, has no temptation for You. Hence, You are one who is beyond the realm of Maya. All those who want to be free from the temptations of Maya should therefore worship You. Your prowess is so great that great warriors like Ravana found themselves to be totally helpless while confronting You. Mythology is replete with Your sportive adventures and I used to wonder how difficult this activity is, and whether it is necessary at all! Sport for You turns out to be suffering for somebody else! O Lord! Your sport of creating this vast universe and an array of living beings therein, and subjecting them to the untold miseries of Samsara going through millions of birth-death cycles looked puzzling to me. Is it not atrocious on Your part to indulge in a sadistic game like this? No wonder! If only You had undergone even a fraction of their woes, You would not have ventured into this tragic sport!”

“ न हि वन्ध्या विजानाति गुर्वी प्रसववेदनां”: P.S. (A barren woman does not know the intensity of Labour pains). So how can You, who do not submit Yourself to the realm of Maya, understand what is misery ?” Even during the incarnations as Sri Rama, Sri Krishna and the like, although the Lord has assumed a body consisting of Suddha-sattva, there is no lack of, or concealment of the "Nishkala-Brahma-Chaithanyam" (the divine vitality of Brahman, Impersonal and Absolute.). In each of these incarnations, it looks as though He has really undergone a mundane existence, displaying attributes like birth, growth, death, etc., behaving like any other human being, and giving expression to feelings, sentiments, etc., whereas, in reality, it was all a make-believe, like a super-star acting in a drama ! I had felt that this injustice was committed by You, as You have not understood others' feelings!” The address as "अजित!" echoes this idea.

“But, my Lord! I realise now, after having had the vision of Your divine image and having enjoyed the nectar of the Supreme Consciousness-Bliss present in You, that it was indeed, immature on my part to have entertained such thoughts about You. This job of Creation is not at all difficult for you. Extremely fond of Your devotees, as You are, what You have done is a great favour indeed! *For, if You had not indulged in this activity and created these living beings, and this beautiful universe too for their enjoyment, how could they have had the pleasure of feasting through their eyes and ears respectively, on the vision of Your charming form and the wonderful stories of Your incarnations and sports to their hearts' content, and getting immersed in the ocean of Infinite Bliss?* In fact, the entire mankind should be thankful to You for creating them and providing them with unlimited opportunities for satiating their thirst for You !”

No doubt, the Lord's creative activity brings about misery to the ignorant and immense pleasure to the enlightened. By this sloka, the poet impresses upon the readers, the incessant need to worship Lord Guruvayoorappan with all sincerity and devotion.

Now the poet tells us how the Lord is superior to other deities in granting the wishes of His devotees.

D1S8 नम्राणां सन्निधत्से सततमपि पुरस्तैरनभ्यर्थितानपि
अर्थान् कामानजस्रं वितरसि परमानन्दसान्द्रां गतिं च ।
इत्थं निशशेषलभ्यो निरवधिकफलः पारिजातो हरे त्वं
क्षुद्रं तं शक्रवाटीद्रुममभिलषति व्यर्थमर्थिव्रजोऽयम् ॥८॥

*Namrāṇāṃ Sannidhatsē Satatamapi Purastairanabhyarthitānapi
Arthān Kāmānajasraṃ Vitarasi Paramānandasāndrāṃ Gatiṃ Ca
Ittham Niśaśēṣalabhyō Niravadhikaphalaḥ Pārijātō Harē Tvaṃ
Kṣudraṃ Taṃ Śakravāṭīdrumamabhilaṣati Vyarthamarthivrajō'yam..8..*

अन्वयः- (त्वं) नम्राणां अपि पुरः सततं सन्निधत्से । तैः अनभ्यर्थितान् अपि कामान्
अर्थान् अजस्रं वितरसि । परमानन्द-सान्द्रां गतिं च वितरसि । हे! हरे! त्वं इत्थं
निशशेष-लभ्यः निरवधिक-फलः पारिजातः । अयं अर्थि-व्रजः क्षुद्रं तं शक्रवाटी-द्रुमं व्यर्थ
अभिलषति ॥८॥

Meaning:

(त्वं) सततं सन्निधत्से	“You always manifest (Yourself)
पुरः नम्राणां ।	before those who offer prostrations.
अपि अजस्रं वितरसि	(You) also constantly grant (to them),
कामान् अर्थान्	the desired Purusharthas (fulfilments of life)
अपि अनभ्यर्थितान् तैः	although not asked for by them, and
च गतिं परमानन्दसान्द्रां ।	also the state of eternal happiness, (abundantly).
हे! हरे! इत्थं त्वं (असि)	O Lord Hari! Destroyer of woes! Thus You are
पारिजातः निशशेषलभ्यः	the ‘Parijata’ tree accessible to every one,
निरवधिकफलः च ।	and the bestower of unlimited rewards too!
अयं अर्थिव्रजः	This crowd of men, full of desires
अभिलषति व्यर्थं	craves in vain, for
तं क्षुद्रं शक्रवाटीद्रुमं ।	that trifling of a shrub (Parijata) in Indra’s garden! ”

Commentary D1S8

“O Hari! destroyer of woes! You are kind by nature and immensely fond of Your devotees. To those who just offer prostrations to You, You always make Your divine presence felt before them and grant them whatever wishes they ask for. Even for those who do not ask for anything, (those who worship without desiring anything, Nishkama Bhaktas) You grant all the fulfilments of life, including the greatest Purushartha, the eternal bliss of salvation. You are within the reach of everyone. You are, therefore, the real “Parijata”, the wish-yielding tree, much superior to the mythological Kalpaka tree that grows in the garden of Indra !” . पारिजायन्ते अस्मात् इति पारिजातः । (the source of all gifts is Parijata).

“O Lord! The entire universe and the beings therein have their origin in You. So You are the real Parijata, whereas the other one is only for name's sake. One can aspire to gain entry to Heaven (Indra-loka) and other Punya-lokas only after performing the prescribed religious rites flawlessly and correctly according to laid down procedures. Even if a person qualifies himself after undergoing all these rituals, there is no guarantee that he will be allowed to see the Kalpaka tree, as it is reserved for a select few and that too, for a very short time. Unlike You who manifest Yourself in front of devotees whenever they are in distress, the Kalpaka tree does not present itself before the aspirants. Moreover, compared to the divine Bliss one is able to enjoy in communion with You, my Lord, the pleasures one can get in the so-called Heaven are petty, like the company of celestial beauties like Rambha and the like. These pleasures are so short-lived that once the value of the Punya or merit is exhausted, the person has to come back to the earth, again into the birth-death cycle. "क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति" Bg: 9/21. (When the merits accruing from their deeds are exhausted, they enter the world of mortals again.) You are indeed accessible to one and all irrespective of caste, creed or religion, devotion being the only criterion." अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते । तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ।।": Bg 9/22 (Those devotees, who, having no other refuge, constantly think of me and worship me in a steadfast manner, I protect them, and personally take care of all their needs.) With You, always eager to come to their rescue, it is a pity that this group of supplicants (those who are always anxious to gain something) keeps desiring for that cheap shrub, the so-called Kalpaka tree growing in Indra's garden, and that, too, in vain!”

Brahma, Rudra and other Gods are also different aspects of Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness, and are, no doubt, capable of bestowing on devotees whatever they desire. The poet now clears all doubts regarding the superiority of Lord Guruvayoorappan over other Gods.

D1S9

कारुण्यात् काममन्यं ददति खलु परे स्वात्मदस्त्वं विशेषात्
 ऐश्वर्यादीशतेऽन्ये जगति परजने स्वात्मनोऽपीश्वरस्त्वम् ।
 त्वय्युच्चैरारमन्ति प्रतिपदमधुरे चेतनाः स्फीतभाग्याः
 त्वं चात्माराम एवेत्यतुलगुणगणाधार शौरे नमस्ते ॥९॥

*Kāruṇyāt Kāmamanyam Dadati Khalu Parē Svātmadastvaṃ Viśēṣāt
 aiśvaryā-Dīśatē'nyē Jagati Parajanē Svātmanō'pīśvarastvam.
 Tvayyuccairāramanti Pratipadamadhurē Cētanāḥ Sphītabhāgyāḥ-
 Tvaṃ Cātmārāma Ēvētyatulagunaṅaṅadhāra Śaurē Namastē..9..*

अन्वयः- परे कारुण्यात् अन्यं कामं खलु ददति । त्वं विशेषात् स्वात्मदः । किं च अन्ये
 ऐश्वर्यात् जगति परजने ईशते । त्वं तु स्वात्मनः अपि ईश्वरः । स्फीत-भाग्याः चेतनाः
 प्रतिपद-मधुरे त्वयि उच्चैः आरमन्ति । त्वं च आत्मारामः एव । इति अतुल-गुण-गणाधार !
 हे ! शौरे ! ते नमः ॥९॥

Meanings:

परे ददति अन्यं कामं	“The other Gods grant other desires (except Mukti)
कारुण्यात् खलु	out of sheer compassion indeed!
त्वं विशेषात् स्वात्मदः ।	(But) You, being unique, give away even Yourself.
किं च अन्ये ऐश्वर्यात्	Moreover, others, in view of their invested powers,
ईशते परजने जगति ।	hold sway over everyone else in the world.
त्वं तु ईश्वरः स्वात्मनः अपि ।	But You are Supreme Lord of even Yourself.
चेतनाः स्फीतभाग्याः	Those living beings, who are extremely fortunate,
उच्चैः आरमन्ति त्वयि	take immense delight in You
प्रतिपदमधुरे ।	who impart more joy with every step nearer to you.
त्वं च आत्मारामः एव ।	You are one who takes delight even in Yourself.
इति अतुलगुणगणाधार !	Being so, O repository of immeasurable virtues!
हे ! शौरे ! नमः ते ।	O Scion of Surasena! Salutations to You.”

Commentary D1S9

“Lord! You are the supreme of all deities! When all other Gods shower their blessings on devotees out of sheer benevolence, You are the only one, who, over and above showering Your benign grace, are capable of bestowing on devotees the most coveted and excellent of Purusharthas, namely Moksha, freedom from the birth-death cycle. Moreover, You are so fond of Your devotees, that You give away Yourself---the form of Eternal Bliss, Moksha or Liberation-- to them by merging them with You. This is possible for You

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ।।-----

alone, as You are the God of all Gods and, hence, wield the unquestionable power to use Your discretion and do whatever You want, unlike others, who have to obey Your command. You can even punish Yourself by transforming Yourself into the form of Jivatman, pushing Yourself into the ocean of Samsara or favour Yourself by emancipating suffering souls, merging them with You, and enabling them to enjoy Eternal Bliss.”

The second half of the sloka relates the consequences of the Lord giving Himself away to His devotees.

“O Lord! You, being the embodiment of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, are identical with Moksha, the ultimate of Purusharthas. The cumulative effect of all the merits earned over the countless number of earlier births enables a person to develop Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (Knowledge) and Vairagya (detachment). Such exceptionally fortunate people ultimately merge with You and revel in You more and more, as You are ‘Atma-rama’, capable of merging with and reveling in Your own self. You are the source of immense happiness to Yourself, other Gods and ardent devotees, and ‘प्रतिपदमधुर’, tasting sweeter and sweeter, progressively with every step taken while approaching You, as You do keep showering more and more of the nectar of happiness.

“O Lord! Repository of ever so many superior divine qualities! You have taken this incarnation in the lineage of King Surasena to destroy evil and protect righteousness. My salutations to You! I am incapable of doing anything other than offering my humble prostrations to You!”

The poet now enumerates the points to establish the exalted stature¹⁰, of Guruvayoorappan in relation to other Gods.

D1S10	ऐश्वर्यं शङ्करादीश्वरविनियमनं विश्वतेजोहराणां तेजस्संहारि वीर्यं विमलमपि यशो निस्पृहैश्चोपगीतम् । अङ्गासङ्गा सदा श्रीरखिलविदसि न क्वापि ते सङ्गवार्ता तद्वातागारवासिन् मुरहर भगवच्छब्दमुख्याश्रयोऽसि ॥१०॥
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¹⁰ This should not be understood as meaning any disrespect to other Gods or imply that other Gods are inferior to Lord Krishna. What is meant is that Lord Krishna is the Supreme Brahman Himself, the Soul of all beings and is capable of granting even the utmost of Purusharthas, i.e., liberation from the birth-death cycle. The other Gods are also different aspects of Brahman who is formless and can be conceived in any form for worship which appeals to the devotee most, as is described in the later part of this hymn, in Dasakam 92.

-----अस्पृष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम् ।।-----

*Aiśvaryaṃ Śaṅkarādīśvaraviniyamanam Viśvatējōharāṇām
Tējassamhāri Vīryaṃ Vimalamapi Yaśō Nispr̥haiścōpagītam.
Aṅgāsaṅgā Sadā Śrīrakhilavidasi Na Kvāpi Tē Saṅgavārtā
Tadvātāgāravāsin Murahara Bhagavacchabdāmukhyāśrayō'si.. 10..*

अन्वयः- हे भगवन्! ते ऐश्वर्यं शङ्करादीश्वर-विनियमनं । ते वीर्यं विश्व-तेजोहराणां तेजस्संहारि । अपि च ते यशः विमलं निस्पृहैः उपगीतं च । श्रीः सदा ते अङ्गासङ्गा । त्वं अखिलवित् असि । ते क्व अपि सङ्गवार्ता न । तत् वातागारवासिन्! मुरहर! त्वं भगवच्छब्द-मुख्याश्रयः असि ॥१०॥

Meaning:

हे भगवन्! हे मुरहर!	O Supreme Lord! O Destroyer of Mura!
ते ऐश्वर्यं	Your supremacy
शङ्करादीश्वर-विनियमनं ।	is in controlling all other Gods beginning with Sankara.
ते वीर्यं तेजस्संहारि	Your prowess predominates over the valour of
विश्व-तेजोहराणां ।	all others who excel in valour in the whole Universe.
अपि च ते यशः विमलं	Moreover, Your glory is flawless and
उपगीतं च निस्पृहैः ।	sung even by those (sages) who are totally detached.
श्रीः सदा ते अङ्गासङ्गा ।	Goddess Lakshmi, (the deity for affluence) is always associated with Your body.
त्वं अखिलवित् असि ।	You are omniscient (in the know of everything).
ते क्व अपि सङ्गवार्ता न ।	About You, there is not even the slightest trace of attachment.
तत् वातागारवासिन्! त्वं	Therefore, Lord of Guruvayoor! You are
भगवच्छब्दमुख्याश्रयःअसि ।	the fittest One for the title of "Bhagavan."

Commentary D1S10

“हे! वातागारवासिन्! हे! मुरहर!” Mura was the trusted lieutenant of Narakasura. By addressing the Lord as “Murahara ” or “ the destroyer of Mura”, it is implied that the Lord, the slayer of Narakasura as well as Mura, is capable of destroying the sins of those who are consigned to “Naraka” or Hell. By addressing Him as “वातागारवासिन्”, the in-dweller of “Vatagara” or the human body in the form of Jivatman, the poet signifies that there is no doubt that it is the very same Lord who is the life-force (Jivatman) throbbing in the human body (वातागार) as well. In other words, the author is trying to emphasise the identity of the Jivatman with Paramatman.

-----अस्पष्टं दृष्टमात्रे पुनरुरु-पुरुषार्थात्मकं ब्रह्मतत्त्वम् ।-----तत्तावद्भाति साक्षाद्-गुरुपवनपुरे हन्त भाग्यं जनानाम्।।-----

“O Lord! It is Your Godliness ‘ ऐश्वर्य ’, the state of being ‘ ईश्वरः ’, (the Supreme Power) that has been responsible for allocating different portfolios to other Gods like Brahma, Sankara, etc. Brahma is the Creator and Lord Sankara is the destroyer as per Your command. In other words, You are the Supreme Commander and other Gods are but Your subordinates. Therefore, Your Godliness has the highest authority and is complete in all respects.”

“Your ‘ वीर्य ’ (might, prowess, or heroic lustre) surpasses every other God's. It is said that Gods like Brahma conquer others and subjugate others' energies, but before Your lustre, theirs is like that of a firefly in the presence of a thousand suns.”

“Your ‘ यशः ’ (fame, glory, reputation) is incomparable to others' in view of the fact that it is as snow-white and transparent as Suddha-sattva by which You are made of. Your divine qualities and actions are so flawless that Your glory is equally clean and even superior to that of other Gods like Brahma and Sankara who are embodiments of the Rajo- and Tamo-gunas respectively. A close examination of the exploits of other Gods in mythology would point out certain flaws, for example, ‘ प्रजापतिः स्वां दुहितरं दृष्ट्वा तद्रूपधर्षितः: Bhag. III-31/36’. and ‘ वाचं दुहितरं तन्वीं स्वयम्भूः हरतीं मनः”: Bhag: III-12/28. (Brahma, seeing the beautiful form of his own daughter, was afflicted by lust!). Such and many other negative traits could be pointed out in respect of the other Gods. But Your pristine pure glory is indeed flawless and is being sung without exaggeration by one and all, including those yogis who are totally detached and have nothing material to gain, being prompted only by Your divine and noble qualities.”

“Goddess Lakshmi, whose name is synonymous with ‘ श्रीः ’, (Beauty, affluence, auspiciousness) and who is normally associated with unsteadiness, has made her abode in Your bosom, thereby rendering You, the real abode of her virtues too!”

“Your ‘ ज्ञानं ’, knowledge is far superior to all other Gods'. You are omniscient, in the know of everything. The very fact that the other gods are not fully aware of what You are and You are fully aware of what they are, goes to prove the point that Your knowledge is far superior to that of all others.”

“In the trait of ‘ वैराग्यं ’ (renunciation, detachment), You are peerless. Totally detached in Your creative activity, there is absolutely no talk about your having any special relationships or worldly ties with anyone,’ ‘ ऐश्वर्यस्य समग्रस्य वीर्यस्य यशसः श्रियः । ज्ञानवैराग्ययोश्चैव षण्णां भग इतीरणा ।। ’ : V.P. VI-5/74.

Therefore, my Lord, You are, in view of satisfying all the six conditions stated above, namely, 1. 'ऐश्वर्यं', (Aiswaryam or Godliness), 2. 'वीर्यं', (Veeryam or prowess) 3. 'यशः' (Yasas or Glory), 4. 'श्रीः' (Sree, or Beauty, affluence, auspiciousness), 5. 'ज्ञानं' (Jnanam or Knowledge) and 6. 'वैराग्यं' (Vairagya or renunciation) all these qualities collectively called 'भगः' (Bhaga), the only God qualifying to be referred to as 'भगवान्' (Bhagavan).'

In practice, the term "Bhagavan" is commonly used in connection with most of the gods, irrespective of whether they qualify fully or not. Although not technically correct, it has come into common usage. At the same time, there must be someone fully and unreservedly entitled for the same. That is Lord Vishnu and Vishnu alone.

“O Lord Guruvayoorappa! Of such greatness are You! Humanity is indeed blessed with Your benign presence, the divine vitality of Pure Sattva-guna protecting the whole Universe, residing at the shrine of Guruvayoor, attracting the devotees and showering blessings on them! Do destroy my ailments!”

THUS ENDS DSAKAM ONE ENTITLED
“THE GLORY OF THE LORD”
OF SRIMAD NARAYANEYAM,
THE QUINTESSENCE OF
SRIMAD BHAGAVATA MAHAPURANAM.

O