

Śivaśakti Aikya Roopini (Laksha Chandi Discourse Series)

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Bhaskara Prakasha Ashram

||śrī sadgurucaraṇāravindābhyāṃ namaḥ ||

|| श्री: ||



śrī vimarśānandanāthaṃ satyāmbāsahitaṃ gurum |
hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||
śrī prakāśānandanāthaṃ vimarśāmbā sahitaṃ gurum |
hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||
śrī rāmānanda nāthaṃ rāmāmbā sahitaṃ gurum |
hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||

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Introduction

Sri Gurubhyo Namaha ||

śiṭram śiṭukālē vandunnai ccēvittu * un
poṭrāmarai aḍiyē pōṭrum poruḷ kēḷāy *
peṭram mēyttuṇṇum kulattil piṇandu * nī
kuṭrēval eṅgaḷai kkoḷḷāmal pōgādu *
iṭrai ppaṇai koḷvān anṟu kāṇ kōvindā ! *
eṭraikkum ēzēz piṇavikkum * un tannō -
ḍuṭrōmē āvōm unakkē nām āṭ ceyvōm *
maṭṭrai nam kāmaṅgaḷ māṭru (matrelaorempavai)
(tiruppāvai verse 29)

**gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ .
guruḥ sākṣāt parabrahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ ||**

Respected Elders of Bhaskara Prakasha Ashram, All of you are fortunate enough to be participating in this Laksha Chandi Maha Yagna. This moment, when we are thinking of Ambal who exists as “Śivaśakti Aikya Roopini”, is indeed happening because of her Kataksham. We praise Ambal as “Śivaśakti Aikiya Roopini” and as the announcer said, the Lalitha Sahasranama parayanam just concluded with the nama **ōṃ śivaśaktyaikyarūpiṇyai namaḥ**, and is so apt to start the discourse from this point.

Lalitha Sahasranama

Lalitha Sahasranama has one (important) big truth. How do we start the Sahasranama? – with “**ōṃ śrīmātrē namaḥ**”. We try to define or describe her in each nama. We say, “you are this, you are that” – for ex: you are **kularūpiṇi** or you are **kaivalyapadadāyini** (one who is capable of giving us Kaivalyam), you are **agnikuṇḍasambhūtāyai** (one who rose from the fire), you are **dēvakāryasamudyatāyai** (who is interested in helping devas) and so. This way we try to describe her in 1000 different ways!. When the realization dawns on us that we have still not been able to describe her fully, we raise our hands, surrender to her feet, with the feeling, “Amma, we have tried to describe you but without luck! And then conclude with **śivaśaktyaikyarūpiṇyai namaḥ** and **lalitāmbikāyai namaḥ**, and praying to her – “All we request is your Arul (grace) and Kataksham(conferring benefits)!.

Can Ambal be described? The answer is no!. If we are told to take as many words as we need, we will very soon realize that any number of words will fall short of describing her. Lalitha Sahasranamam is laid out in a great format. The tradition is that (vashinyadhi)Vak Devatas composed them. Only with Ambal's Anugraham, they were able to compose this. It starts with addressing her as mother, then positions her to royal mother (**śrīmahārājñai**), then goes on to address her as **śrīmatsiṃhāsanēśvaryai** (one who is in charge of the throne) (Sudha ji talks about exchanging the words for a different meaning. She does not want to go into the in depth meaning of the same due to paucity of time). From then on, till verse 999, we see Ambal described in so many different ways. We will take two specific phrases from this and let us go deep and remind ourselves of them again – **ōṃ pañchabrahmāsanasthitāyai namaḥ** (She who sits on the five brahmas) and **ōṃ pañchaprētāsanāsīnāyai namaḥ** (. She who sits on the seat of five dead bodies). What is the difference (rather what is the similarity) between these 2 verses when both of which look to contradict each other ?

Five Duties

In many temples, you would have seen a picture of Ambal, where Ambal is seen sitting on top of Śiva or Ambal sitting on a throne and where you see Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Sadāśiva supporting each leg of that throne respectively. Ambal goes by the name "**Sadāśiva paryanka nilayā**". When we look at these pictures, especially the first one, it may appear as if Ambal is ruling over śiva. Remember, a lot of these impressions come out of our laukika (worldly) experiences ("Look how Ambal is dominating Śiva!). If kids or teenagers ask a question around this, we don't know how to answer it. We just silence them by saying, : "That is how it is, that's it!". There is an interesting story related to this. Before we go into that story, let us revisit Lalitha Sahasranama's verses – **pañchakṛtyaparāyaṇā** (one who is engaged in the five duties / actions).

What are these five duties? Lord Nataraja's dance is also called as **pañchakṛtyanāṭyam**. We typically say that "Tri Murthis" takes care of three actions for the world. Actually there are five actions. We know three of them very well – srishti (creation), sthithi (existence), saṃhāram (dissolving). These are taken care of by the three murthis – we know and we understand also every living being goes through these three stages.

Tirodhānam

There is a fourth action which is a prerequisite for these three actions to happen. It is called **tirodhānam**. It means to cover or to conceal. We also know it as māyā. tirodhānam is not that hard to understand but what is hard is to transcend it!. Let us for example just take our mindset – just sometime back when we were all chanting Lalitha Sahasranama! – think about the kind of vibrations that we were in. If someone were to ask us, What do you need?, all of us would have

said, “Nothing at this moment, this moment in itself is just enough”. Now five minutes later, will we just continue to say, “this moment itself is enough”?!. We all know that none of the forts we get are permanent. Still every morning, don't we run to capture the forts for that day, as if they will stay with us forever?. We all know what is the ultimate reality. But our mind will say, “Yeah, but we all have duties to do ” – in the process quoting Lord Krishna! And quoting a lot of commentaries!. Even though we know and we understand that all of this(life) is impermanent, something in our mind propels us into leading our lives. How many times do we say, “All I need is this one thing and then I won't seek anything more? We start saying this at the age of 35 and at 55 years, we say, “All I need is for my son's marriage to be fixed” and at 65 years, we say “I feel very bad for my grandson who needs to be dropped at school... “ and this goes on and on... – That is māyā!. Isn't there a screen on us all? Even though we seem to understand, we still get lost in laukika(worldly) life – that is tirodhānam.

Without māyā, there is no world, there is no loka vyāpāraṁ!. Vyaparam means trade - a cycle of profit/loss. That is why we associate vyāpāraṁ with money as it never stays long and keeps moving. The circle of loka vyāpāraṁ – with birth, death is possible only with maya.

Remember, this cover of tirodhānam is not just for us – it exists for Brahma, Vishnu and also for Rudra. Let us for a second imagine what it would be like, if Brahma is not covered with tirodhānam!. He will say, “What is the purpose of my creation as all things will anyways get destroyed one day”. He may likely sit in a corner and refuse to do creation. If Lord Rudra thinks the same way, he will say, “Why should I destroy anything, as anyways, it will be born again”! And he may sit in another corner. On the same note, if Lord Vishnu thinks on similar lines, he may say “If everyone coming into this loka decides to stay, then there will be no space for everyone. But since every thing has to go through destruction, let me not do any protection!. From this we understand that tirodhānam applies to these three Murthys also.

Anugraham

While all beings go through this circle of birth and death under the veil of Maya, certain beings are able break from this circle. Ambal's ability and nature to unite these beings into herself is **Anugraham**. One who is capable of doing all these five duties is pañchakṛtyaparāyaṇā. How is she doing all of these: She is Brahmi, She is Goptri and She is Rudra roopini and you will see these names conclude with pañchakṛtyaparāyaṇā. When we say she takes care of these duties, it does not mean she is the one doing it all by herself. She exists as Para Shakthi at a higher plane.

Five Murthis

One day (let us not get into what one day for her means!) She decided that by doing these duties she can enable a path for all beings in this loka. She decided that she will split these five

duties as five portfolios to be overseen by five people. She called the first person in, asked his name to which he responded as Brahma. Parashakthi assigned Srishti to him. He offered his namaskarams and left. Called the next person, asked for his name which he responded as Vishnu, Since Vishnu means Vyapakam and the loka needs protection, she said, “you will take care of the Sthithi”. Third came Rudra who is the lord of Samahara. A fourth person then came. When asked for his name, he said, Maheswaran. Easwaran means lord or leader and Maheswaran means Great leader. Now Ambal feels a little uncomfortable, looking at the Śiva next to her!.

Let me tell you, what we call Śiva/Śivam is the Sakshat Parabrahmam (Paramporul). Śiva and Shakthi are completely inseparable. For our understanding and visualization sake, we think of them as an amalgamation of male and female forms – Śiva and Shakthi, Śiva also means Easwaran. Ambal felt a bit uncomfortable that the fourth person called himself Maha Easwaran!. She asked him to take charge of the Thirodhanam. Now the fifth person is coming. Ambal is already a little worried. Already the fourth person took the name Easwaran, what if this person says his name is Śiva? There will then be confusion between this shiva and the actual Śiva!. She immediately told him to keep any name other than Śiva!.

There is a story that Kanchi Periyava says related to this. Once there was a farm which had a Pannaiyar (owner of the farm). One day he came to the farm and he needed to talk to a person who was quite far from him. He just shouted out for him to come close. When he came, the pannaiyar asked for his name. He said, “Perumal”. The pannaiyar was surprised to hear it as his name is Perumal also. He asks the worker to change his name, so it will be easier to call him. The man refuses as it is the name given to him by his parents. The pannaiyar pleads with him to go to his parents and have them give him a different name, and is willing to pay anything for this to happen. The man agrees, goes to his village and comes back. Pannaiyar asked him if he changed his name. The man replies that after a lot of pleading with his parents, he managed to change his name to Petha Perumal (Big Perumal!). In a similar way, the fifth person that Ambal talked to, said, "My name is “Sadha Śivam!”.

So these five are the Adhikaris (officers) in charge of these five duties.

Four of them take the role of the legs of the Simhasanam. Anugraham is the ultimate – So if you imagine the peetam (base) of the Simhasanam, that is Anugraham and is supported by Sadha Śivam. That is why we call her Sadāśiva paryanka nilayā (one who sits on the top of the peetam). Now, if she does not give life to these five lords, they are just a corpse (prētā). That is why she is **pañcaprētāsanāsīnā**. She sits on the top of this panchasanam (gives life to the five lords)and is called **pañcabrahmasvaparūpini**. So, She is the one who gives life to this loka, all lokas around.

Śiva and Shakthi

Śivam indicates the absolute truth. Over the years we have associated tiger skin with Śivam!. The word Śivam means Mangalam (auspiciousness) – that which is good is Śivam. This absolute truth has two forms. If you go back and look at the history you will see – all those bhaktas of Śiva who composed songs on Śiva also composed on Shakthi and vice versa. Adi Shankaracharya started to sing on Ambal. But you will notice that in all those works, he also sang on Śiva as well. Similarly Abhirami bhattar started to sing on Ambal – he says, “**ungal thirumanak kolamum, sindhaiyulle**” (verse 18, Abhirami Andhadhi) meaning “both of your appearance in your wedding is in my consciousness”

Consider a mountain and imagine a waterfall falling off that mountain. Let us assume that there are hydrologic instruments that can measure the force of the water falling, and calculate the turbine forces that can generate the electricity. At the top of the hill assume there is a reservoir of water. If you watch it carefully, at the top of the hill, there is literally no movement. The experts will say that there is potential energy in the water at the top and that it has not become kinetic energy. So if you put the equation, the potential energy is 100 and kinetic energy is 0. If you add them, the net will come to 100.

Now consider the lowest point where the water had fallen. So if you put the equation, the potential energy is 0 and kinetic energy is 100. If you add them, the net is still 100. If people like us who want to test intermediate points, you will have some places with more potential energy, while some places may have more kinetic energy but the net is still 100 at all places – in some places Shakthi may appear more elevated. In some places Śiva may appear more elevated – what is constant is their amalgamation or union which is constant at all times, everywhere. That is why we call her Śiva Shakthi Aiyika Swaroopini. In fact you could say, whenever energy is needed, Shakthi is more pronounced.

We can see the greatness of our Sanatana Dharma when we gave a feminine form to the energy and elevated her to the highest level as Para Shakthi. When we want to do anything, we need energy. Even to think, we need energy. Our tradition gave a feminine form to this energy and masculine form to the one that precedes that energy. This is mainly to make it easy for ordinary people like us to understand.

Mahakavi Bharathiyar (a Tamil Poet who lived during India’s Independence Struggle) said. “Ambikayai Saran Pugunthall, Athika varam peralam (If you surrender to Ambal, you can get a lot of boons) – after all she is the mother, who will recommend our requests to the father. Just as we say Ambal is pañchakṛtyaparāyaṇā, she is also **abrahma kīta janani**. She is the mother of brahma, she is the mother of this universe, she is also the mother of the smallest worms that live out there. She does not discriminate. Just as for a mother, all her kids are the same. As she exists as a mother, she is also existing as “Śiva Shakthi”, as well.

Abhirami Andhathi

Let us revisit verse #13 from Abhirami Bhattar's Abhirami Andhathi, which indicates to us that she was carrying out the five duties and she still does to this time.

**Pooththavale, buvanam padhinaangaiyum pooththavannam
kaaththavale! pin karandhavale! Karaik kandanukku
mooththavale! Enrum moovaa mugundharku ilaiyavale! ...
(verse 13, Abhirami Andhathi)**

**She is a flower and its blossoming action,
She created the fourteen worlds,
She takes care of them,
She destroys them at the time of deluge,
She is Older than Siva who holds the poison in his throat,
She is the younger sister of Vishnu who looks after the worlds,...
(verse 13, Abhirami Andhathi)**

Each of these words are choice words by the Author. Poothavale does not mean she made the flower bloom – it means she underpins the flower that came out of her to bloom. Everything here in the world all originated from her. This phrase refers to Creation duty. The second phrase **kaaththavale** refers to Sustenance duty, **karandhavale** refers to duty of destruction. Thirothana is implicit as without the conceal these three cannot happen. Of course, Ambal will give Anugraham and take us out of this cycle of birth, death. Usually these two are not explicitly stated as the other three are what can be experienced by us and perceptible to the human eye.

Now let us look at the phrase, “**enrummoovaa mugundharku ilaiyavale**” – makes us wonder, what is Bhattar trying to say!. Mukundan is Krishna and She is being addressed as the Sister of Tirumal/Vishnu. What does **moovaa mugundha** mean? The ageless, ever young Mukunda and she being younger sister of Vishnu, she is forever young. Now let us look at the other phrase “**karaikkandanukku mooththavale**” — **karaikkandan** refers to that Śiva who took the halahala poison that is stuck in his throat and now Ambal is addressed as one who is elder to Śiva!. How can that be true?

Saundarya Lahiri

Don't we sense some mischief in Bhattar's words?. To answer this, we need to go to Bhagavapad Shankaracharya and listen to the conversation between him and Ambal (whom he addresses as Mother) in verse 28.

Ādi Śaṅkara: I have some questions for you, mother. Can I ask you?

Mother: Please do

Ādi Śaṅkara: What does amṛta do, Mother?

Mother: When someone drinks amṛta, they don't age and so they don't die.

Ādi Śaṅkara: Is that true?

Mother: Yes

Ādi Śaṅkara: I have one more doubt, Mother?

Mother: Please ask

Ādi Śaṅkara: The 33 crores of devatā had the amṛta. Correct?

Mother: Yes

Ādi Śaṅkara: One more doubt

Mother: Go ahead

Ādi Śaṅkara: Did Indra, Kubera, Vaayu, Agni all had the amṛta?

Mother: yes. They all had amṛta.

Ādi Śaṅkara: What happened to all them during the time of Pralayam? (end of the universe time). Everyone just disappeared. “**virīñchiḥ pañchatvam**”. Brahma who makes use of the Pancha tatvas himself is disintegrated, Lord Yama who decides the death for all beings, himself has died. So that means, even though they had amṛta, they all died during Pralaya time. I have one more doubt, Mother.

Mother: Ask

Ādi Śaṅkara: Mother, when all these people who had amṛta died during Pralayam, the person who swallowed poison is dancing during Pralayam. How is that possible?

Not one poison, Śiva swallowed two poisons!. (One was from Vasuki – when she was tightened as a rope, she was spewing poison. The other came out of the depths of the Ocean). All devatā are running away when the poison is gushing. So how come Śiva is dancing during the Pralayam time?

Sankaracharya himself gives the answer as well. “**tava janani tāṭaṅkamahimā**” (The power Ear Studs of Amba)(. Yes, it was a poison, when Śiva twirled it into a ball, it was a poison when he swallowed it, it was a poison when it reached his throat. *The moment, Ambal touched Śiva’s throat to hold the halahala poison in place, it became amṛta!. That means she has more energy than Śiva and hence she is elder to him!*. “**Karaik kandanukku mooththavale**”.

Ardhanārīśvara

Ambal is not just Shakthi or energy personified – She is also in constant union or integration with Śiva. Śiva and Shakthi will always appear as a pair. Devatās, Sages, Devotees go around and do namaskarams to them. But there are also a few who could not accept Śiva and Shakthi together. For example, we hear from the scriptures that Bhṛṅgī muni was a devotee of Śiva and would not worship any other god, including Shakti. He would only do the pradakshina or circumambulation of Lord Śiva only and not include Shakti in it. When Shakti joined with Śiva to form Ardhanārīśvara (half man half woman), it is said Bhṛṅgī muni assumed the form of a beetle and went in and came out through the navel effectively excluding Shakti from the pradakshina!.

Now these stories are not mere stories – there is a lot of hidden symbolism in there. If you leave them, out it will just be a story. Bringi means beetle – a black beetle. When you view Śiva,

Shakthi as one, the mind is pure. But when you start to discriminate between the two, the mind becomes impure and dark like black and that is what is symbolized in this story.

Tiruvannāmalai

Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva is capable of giving knowledge/wisdom and the light of wisdom to us. In fact we just recently had the Deepa Tiruvizha (Festival of Lights). There are two kinds of Deepams – Sarvālaya Deepam and Annamalai deepam. Quite often, they may come on the same day. This year the Annamalai deepam was lit a day before Sarvalaya Deepam. Sarvālaya Deepam is typically celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Kārtika (mid nov - mid dec) North India has this tradition of celebrating that day as Deva Deepvali – Deepavali celebrated by the devatās. Lamps are lit all around the house. This is just a symbolism for the light within us (because of our knowledge and wisdom). Annamalai deepam is lit when the Nakshatra is Krittika (in the month of Kārtika). There is a significance to Krittika nakshatra and this is related to the Bringi Muni story that we just talked about.

Ambal was sad after Bhṛṅgī muni discriminated against her in the Ardhanārīśvara form. So she came to Earth. There are related sub stories here — It is said Ambal closed the eyes of Śiva, causing darkness (again a symbolism for ignorance). Ambal came to Earth to do tapas to tide over this darkness of ignorance. She was in Mangādu as Kāmākshi and did tapas (She is called here as Tapas Kāmākshi) Then she went to Kānchipuram where she made a linga out of Sand and did Tapas. During that time, Śiva wanted to test her and caused floods in the Vegavati river. As the water was taking the sand away from Linga. She hugged the linga around tight with Her hands trembling(kampam in sanskrit means trembling). The Śiva to this day is called “**Ara Tazhuva kuzhainthaa**” (meaning He who melted in Her embrace in tamil). The river is called as Kampa river to signify Ambal’s trembling hands during the floods.

Ambal was not satisfied and wanted to be one with Śiva. Śiva himself showed her the way – directing her to do the penance at Tiruvannāmalai. Śiva appeared as a light on the day of Krittika nakshatra and Ambal merged into Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara on that day. This is what gets celebrated as Karthika Deepam at Annamalai. If you go to Tiruvannāmalai temple, you will see Venu gopal Sannidhi in the inner prākāram and Ardhanārīśvara Utsava murthi, close to Venu Gopal Sannidhi. 364 days in a year, Ardhanārīśvara never comes out. Just the day of Annamalai deepam, he gets decorated as Ardhanārīśvarar and brought in before the lamp is lit. As he comes, he is in so much joy (because of the sheer joy in the union of Śiva Shakthi) that he is moving from side to side, walking at great speed as well. Just exactly the moment he turns back in, the lamp will be lit in the hills as well as in the kopparai in the base – Ardhanārīśvara is the light.

Understanding the union of Śiva and Shakthi is the light of wisdom. That is why, in the Shakti Tantra, Ambal exists as Kundalini. We call her Kula Rupini. One meaning for Kula is “way”(path). She paves the way from Kundali upwards. She exists as Jeeva Shakthi in all of us. It is said

Ambal exists like a coiled snake with the head pointed down at the base of Mooladhara. Let us not get into depths of this now, as this is something you need to hear through your Guru.

Six Faces of Subramanya

In order to understand better the union of Śiva and Shakthi, let us see someone who is very dear to Ambal — Ganesha and Subramanya.. You know Ganesha is on one side and Subramanya on the other side. One day Ambal had a doubt (We all know that Ambal will not have a doubt. These stories are just there to make it easier for us to understand). Pointing to Subramanya, she asks Śiva, why does this kid have six faces? (we call him as Shanmukha as he has 6 faces). *Śiva replies, i have five faces, you have one and so he has six!*

The five faces of Śiva are **Sadyojāta** associated with creation, **Vāmadeva** associated with Protection or Sustenance, **Aghora** associated with Destruction, **Tatpuruṣa** associated with Thirodhanam and **Īshāna** associated with Anugraham. We could say, that while the five faces are facing outward, Ambal's face, the sixth face is the "**Adhomugam**" or the inner face. In practical life, if you look at people who succeeded in their lives, it is because all of them invariably looked inside – not just outside. *This introspection is what the sixth face (the ambal's face) provides.* Management techniques, Personality techniques all talk about introspection as a key method. Don't we hear these techniques that talk about "list all the things you did, think of the words you used ...?"

Now let us go back to the conversation between Śiva and Shakthi. While these five faces act outward, the sixth face has to go inward, the Jeeva within us has to realize the god, divinity within us which in turn will allow us to blossom completely. *In other words, only if we internalize the Śiva Shakthi as one, will our spiritual practice bloom fully.*

Goddess Kamalāmbha

Look at the way Goddess Kamalāmbha of Tiruvārur is listening to the Kamalāmbha kṛtis, composed by Muttuswami Dikshitar in praise of her, esp her leg posture. It is easy to put one leg over another and have one foot perpendicular to the other foot. But here, Ambal puts one foot over another such that the feet are in parallel!, which is just not an easy pose to be in. This posture is called **Śiva Raja Yogam**. Here we see Ambal in tapas while completely in union with Śiva, Only in this posture, she bestows us complete Anugraham.

Three Forms of Shakthi

Till the 10th century, if we look, there was no sannidhi for Ambal separately in the temples. Per Agama rules, Ambal is considered to exist in three forms. She is called "**manonmani**", where she is considered to be completely within the shiva lingam. You will see in some temples where a small Ambal is placed right next to the Śiva lingam. She is also called "**Piriya Vidai**" (meaning one who never leaves) This form is also called "**Yoga Shakthi**".

In some temples, you will see Ambal Vighraha in the Ardha Mandapam or right around the Ardha Mandapa Prakaram. She is called “**Bogha Shakthi**”. Bogham refers to things that can be experienced by us.

When Adharmic activities happen, there is a need to fight against them. It is not enough if there is potential energy. We need that energy to be exercised. So Ambal takes the form of **Vira Shakthi**, as she has a separate Sannidhi in the temples. As Vira Shakthi, she needs to wage wars. Whenever she engages in the wars, she is the ferocious one. Once she finishes in the war, she comes back to being the Shantha Swaripini. That is why, typically in the temples you will see the Ambal is facing South. Since she is Veera Shakthi, rulers from the 10th century including the great Chera/Chola/Pandya Rulers, considered Durga as their Kula Devata and built separate temples for her like the Patteeswaram Durga temple.

If you ask what is the origin for Bhoga Shakthi and Vira Shakthi, it is Yoga Shakthi!. Just based on the necessity, Ambal manifests in the other two shakthi, If there is no need, she just continues to be in union with Śiva as Yoga Shakthi.

In Ramayana, in Ashoka Vanam, Anjaneya, not able to take the Agony of Seetha, tells her, “Mother, Just sit on my shoulders. I will take you back to Rama”. (இன் தூயில் விளைக்க ஓர் இமைப்பின், இறை வைகும் குன்றிடை, உனைக் கொடு குதிப்பென்; இடை கொள்ளேன் – Sundara Kandam, Choodamani Padalam, verse 3)

**.. afterwards, Reach Rama and put out your sorrow,
Please get up on my shoulders quickly...
(Sundara Kandam, Choodamani Padalam, verse 3)**

Seetha smiles and tells Anjaneya that he is very much capable of doing what he is saying. (அரியது அன்று; நின் ஆற்றலுக்கு ஏற்றதே! – verse 12) but also tells Anjaneya, I can scorch the whole lanka with me saying a single word. But doing that will be a disgrace to the arrow of Rama. That is why I threw away that option. (எல்லை நீத்த உலகங்கள் யாவும், என் சொல்லினால் சுடுவேன்; அது, தூயவன் வில்லின் ஆற்றற்கு மாசு என்று, வீசினேன் – verse 18)

**... I could burn all the worlds,
Which go against Dharma by my words but I did not attempt to do it,
As I thought that it would be a stain to the strength of bow of Rama.
(Sundara Kandam, Choodamani Padalam, verse 18)**

Similarly Ambal is always in union and indistinguishable from Śiva. But when Adharmic activities increase or When Dharma needs to be established, she will come out. When there is no need, She continues to exist with Śiva.

(The episode stated above is an example of how Sakthi is silent depending on the context though capable of springing into action)

Glances of Ambal

In our country, we see the pandits and warriors were always Shakthi Upasakas. Starting with Śivaji, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, to Mahakavi Bharathi, the list is endless. We all know that Bharathi composed poems on Shakthi. He composed a poem about the October revolution when it ended in Russia.

**Mahakali Parasakthi cast her
sideward glance on Russia
And there arose, wondrously
An epochal revolution ...
(New Russia – The Fall of the Czar by Poet Subramania Bharathi)**

You know the paradox in this event? When this revolution happened, many people who participated were atheists. Yes, people arose, people exploded in anger, but where is the relation between Ambal's glance and the victory of this movement? How did she cast a glance on Russia? Why is Bharathiyar connecting Russia with Ambal, especially when many people there are atheists and don't believe in God. Don't think that Bharthiyar just said like that without any basis. There was a person before him who said similar things slightly differently!. That is the tradition of this land – The belief that the glance of Shakthi/Ambal is what makes a place flourish To answer this question, you need to go to the person, who composed,

**viśālā kalyāṇī sphuṭarucirayodhyā kuvalayaiḥ
kṛpādhārādhārā kimapi madhurābhogavatikā |
avantī dṛṣṭiste bahunagaravistāravijayā
dhruvaṁ tattannāmyavaharaṇayogyā vijayate || (verse 49, Saundarya Lahiri)**

Listing from viśālā, kalyāṇī, He mentions the glance of Ambal has traveled far and wide to so many cities (bahunagara vistāra vijayā). A beautiful song composed by Adi Shankarar!.

There is a city called Visala – there is also a kind of Ambal's vision called "Visala". A woman's glance is classified as eight categories – Viśālā – expansive, Kalyāṇī – dizzy and so on. Thus there are these eight glances of Ambal on one side and you have the eight cities also on the other side. Now the poem set in a **pun**, also known as **paronomasia**, is a form of word play that exploits multiple meanings of a term. Now these visions of Ambal have traveled far and wide to so many cities (bahunagara vistāra vijayā)!. Of this one of the glances is very special which is the sideway glance also called as Vijaya, which also means Victory. So the sideway glance of Ambal bestows Victory.

Now coming back to Bharathiar's words, we understand that Ambal's glance is capable of giving Dharma. It is a glance that goes everywhere for Dharma to flourish. If Śiva is Dharma, Shakthi is

one who establishes that code of dharma everywhere. That is why we cannot separate Shiva and Shakthi, They are in union. In the Meru at the Bindu spot, they are in union. The Śiva and Shakthi are always one. Just for our purposes, we think of them as two. *That is why Lalitha Sahasranama starts with Matha and then ends with Śiva Shakthi Aiyika Swaroopini. Lalithambika*

Lalithambika

Where did this Lalithambika originate from? What does she hold in her hand? Lalitha Sahasranama says, “**manōrūpēkṣu kōdandā pañcatanmātra sāyakā**”. One hand has a sugarcane as a bow, the other hand has 5 arrows. Where did she come from? – “**agni kunda sambhūtā dēvakārya samudyatā**”. She was born from the fire pit, to help Devatas. It is believed that Ambal came out of the fire pit on a golden plate as a 16 year old girl, to destroy Bhandāsura. Brahma got worried when Ambal was coming out like this – how will we find a suitable bride groom for this girl. Reading his mind, Ambal gave a smile. She knows if she is Kameshwari, Kameshwarar is waiting for her. We all know Indra constructed Srinagara for her. Ambal also went and stayed there. First half of Sahasranama describes all this.

To understand Śivaśakti Aikyam, we need to understand Bhandāsura. Let us remember the time when manmatha was burnt to ashes, right outside of Mount Kailash. We see a child come out (Lord Ganesha), playing with the ash. A doll comes out, and Ganesha takes it to Śiva. Śiva was so happy to see his son’s effort and instilled life into that doll. When the doll moved, all the Śivaganā blessed the doll as “banda”, “banda”, “banda”, “banda” meaning good. Bandan did tapas (he is the foster son of Śiva) and got boons.

Trouble started after that. Bandan became Bhandāsura – can a good person be bad, can a bad person be good?. Think about how we live currently – “part of the mind is filled with the divine, some with the devil”. Ambal took the form of Lalithambika to take on the might of Bhandāsura. If you keep reading that story, it is very interesting. The kind of weapons that he uses – Sleep, Tamas, Maya, Mayajaal - all of which represent some of our tendencies. Moha astra was the last one that Bhandāsura used against Ambal. Ambal responds with Amoha astra which also kills Bhandāsura. Bandan’s city is Sunya. Having nothing but pretending to have everything is the sunya nature.

Now let us go back and check where Ambal came from – That Agni kundam is not just that which exists outside during yajña. Maha Chandi homam is happening here currently. When we do the homam, praying to her, the mindset of completely surrendering to her has to be cultivated inside. People sometimes ask, is it necessary to put all those materials in the fire during the homam? Supposing, let us say I leave my glasses by mistake here and leave. If someone calls out and asks, if anyone left the glasses, I would come very quickly and get it. On the other hand, if i don’t have any more attachment to it, i will be just fine to leave it. It is the same bhava that comes in when we offer those materials in the fire – “I am not attached to these materials, all I hold onto is you, the mother” – it is with that mindset or bhāva, that we offer materials in the fire

during the homams. Think about it, if you continue to think of those materials as yours, you will not offer them. So yajña is the training ground to inculcate the habit of detachment, of not holding onto things.

Now this is homam happening outside. But Ambal emanates from the homam happening inside us in our mind as “CHIT agnii kundam”. So in that internal homam happening within us, what should we offer? – the notion of I, this is mine, ... Vakram, Jealousy, Anything bad. None of us can say we don't have anything bad in us – even a little shred may exist with us. If we throw them all into that internal fire, She will rise from that fire on a golden plate. The deva karya that she is helping with is not just the 33 crore devas outside. They exist within us as well. Whoever has the light of Gnanam within them are devas. There is no separate Deva clan and Asura clan – Kamsan was in the same family as Krishna. Weren't they related? Same is for Pandavas and Kauravas. Correct?

Someone went and asked a mahan, Krishna said, that whenever Adharma rises, he will be there. Now we see so much of Adharmic activities, How come he has not come? The Mahan looked him up and down and said, “In Krita yuga, all good people lived separately and all bad people lived separately in different worlds, So there was no conflict. In Treta yuga, in the same loka there were good and bad people. For example, Rama was born in one place and killed Ravana who lived in a different place. In Dwapara yuga, in the same family, you see good and bad people. Krishna was born as a relative to both Pandavas and Kauravas and took care of Dharma. Now in Kaliyuga, the big challenge for Bhagwan is that good and bad exist within one person itself! So he is confused and that is why he has not taken an Avatar!

So the concept of Devas or Deva karyam does not exist outside. It exists within us. The deva karyam is Dharmam. For Dharmam to flourish, she takes avatar within us. What does she hold in her hand? ”manōrūpēkṣu kōdandā“ – Our mind is the sugarcane, the panchabana are our senses, Pañcatanmātra sāyakā (we don't say Panchendriya sāyakā, that would mean, she is the eye, she is the nose ... Does the eye see? Does only the eye see?

Remember the times you keep an item on the table, look everywhere and cannot find it and finally when you see, we say, ‘ I somehow missed seeing here!’. Sometimes we walk on the road and miss seeing someone. Why? What we see does not register. Why? The mind is wandering somewhere else, so even if the eye sees, the mind does not perceive it. That is tanmātra. It is not the mere act of seeing. It is the act of perceiving what is being seen. So all we have to do is to surrender the mind and the five senses to her, She will make this Jeeva as Śiva. That is Śivaśakti Aikyam.

So she always exists as the Agni in our consciousness (chith), always ready to take the Jeevan in us and integrate with the Śiva — that Lalithambakai who is so soft, that Ambal, no naama can do justice to explaining her completely. All we have to do is to call her as Amma, and she will just run towards us.

Conclusion

I am very fortunate to be able to think about Ambal with all of you today. It is the blessings of Mahashodashi which made this happen. With the prayer for the well being of everyone, I conclude this speech. Vanakkam.