
.. Artiharastotram ..

॥ आर्तिहरस्तोत्रम् ॥

Artiharastotram by Sri Sridhara Venkatesa.

This is a short poem consisting of nine verses. Herein the poet prays to Lord Siva to remove the afflictions of the devotee. He asks if it is alright for the Lord not to respond to his prayers when He is reputed to protect those who even think of Him. Then he says that he is just the opposite of the Lord who is omnipotent and omniscient in that he is a weakling and ignoramus. How is it, he asks, that Lord has not taken pity on him. These verses are very moving in their appeal. The poem is a precious gem and the reader would like to add it to the collection of hymns they recite during their prayer.

॥ अथ आर्तिहरस्तोत्रम् ॥

श्री शंभो मयि करुणाशिशिरां दृष्टिं दिशन् सुधावृष्टिम् ।
सन्तापमपाकुरुमे मन्तापरमेश तव दयायाः स्याम् ॥ १ ॥
अवसीदामि यदार्तिभिरनुगुणमिदमोकसोहसां खलु मे ।
तव सन्नवसीदामि यदन्तकशासन नतत्तवानुगुणम् ॥ २ ॥
देव स्मरन्ति तव येतेषां स्मरतोऽपि नार्तिरितिकीर्तिम् ।
कलयसि शिव पाहीतिक्रन्दन् सीदाम्यहं किमुचितमिदम् ॥ ३ ॥
आदिश्याघकृतौ मामन्तर्यामिन्नसावघात्मेति ।
आर्तिषुमज्जयसे मां किंब्रूयां तवकृपैकपात्रमहम् ॥ ४ ॥
मन्दाग्णीरहं तव मयि करुणां घटयितुं विबोनालम् ।
आकृष्टुं तान्तु बलादलमिह मदैन्यमिति समाश्वसिति ॥ ५ ॥
त्वं सर्वज्ञोऽहं पुनरज्ञोऽनीशोहमीश्वरत्वमसि ।
त्वं मयि दोषान् गणयसि किं कथये तुदति किं दया नत्वाम् ॥ ६ ॥
आश्रितमार्ततरं मामुपेक्षसे किमिति शिव न किं दयसे ।
श्रितगोप्ता दीनार्तिहृदिति खलु शंसन्ति जगति सन्तस्त्वाम् ॥ ७ ॥
प्रहराहरेतिवादी फणितमदाख्य इति पालितो भवता ।
शिव पाहीति वदोऽहं शृतो न किं क्वां कथं न पाल्यस्ते ॥ ८ ॥
शरणं ब्रज शिवमार्तीस्सतव हरेदिति सतां गिराऽहम् त्वाम् ।
शरणं गतोऽस्मि पालय खलमपि तेष्वीश पक्षपातान्माम् ॥ ९ ॥
इति श्री श्रीधरवेंकटेशार्यकृतिषु आर्तिहरस्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

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LIFE OF SRIDHARA VENKATESA

श्रीकण्ठमिव भास्वन्तं शिवनामपरायणम् ।
श्रीधरं वेङ्कटेशार्यं श्रेयसे गुरुमाश्रये ॥

Sridhara Venkatesa lived about 300 years ago in Tiruvisanallur, a village in Tanjavur district in Tamilnadu. He was called Tiruvisanallur Ayyaval (deeply respected person) out of great respect people held for him. Even today he is known by that name only. He was the son of Lingayaryar who was a minister to the Maharaja of Mysore. Even as a young boy Ayyaval was deeply religious and in particular had great devotion to Shiva but he made no distinction between Shiva and Vishnu. He studied Vedas, shastras and puranas and had a great desire to travel and spread the message of the puranas and in particular the glory of Lord's name among the people. After his father's death the Maharaja wanted him to take his father's job but he politely declined and left Mysore state with his wife and mother. He came to Tiruchirapalli in Tamilnadu and stayed for some time giving talks. He was supposed to have brought back to life a woman who had died by praying to the Lord. This attracted people who wanted him to solve their problems. Ayyaval did not like this and left the place. He proceeded to Tanjavur. It seems that King Shahaji (1684-1710.AD) who was ruling at that time in Tanjavur wanted him to stay in Tanjavur but Ayyaval wanted to lead a quiet life. King Shahaji was inviting scholarly brahmins to stay in his kingdom. He renamed the village Tiruvisanallur as Shahajirajapuram. One street was allotted for their stay. Ayyaval also stayed in a house there. Ayyaval was a proponent of the view that in this dark age Kali chanting the lord's name will ward off its evil effects. He was the senior contemporary of Bodhendra Swami who was the 59th pontiff of the Shankara Math at Kanchipuram and who was an ardent advocate of the glory of the lord's name. Ayyaval wrote a book भगवन्नामभूषणम् (Bagavannamabhushanam) on the subject which is sadly not available now. Bodhendra Swami had also written a book नामामृतरसायनम् (Namamritarasayanam) on the subject wherein he had made references to the work of Ayyaval. Once Ayyaval had to perform a sraddha ceremony in his house. Therein food is prepared and offered to the departed forefathers who are invoked in three brahmins invited for the occasion. When every thing was getting ready Ayyaval saw an outcaste with his family in a famished condition begging for food. His heart melted with compassion at their condition. Without any hesitation he offered them the food that was being prepared for the ceremony. He then had the house washed and prepared to conduct the ceremony again. But the brahmins in the village considered this act reprehensible and refused to conduct the ceremony again. Ayyaval pleaded with them quoting texts from the scriptures to support his action but the Brahmins were not convinced. He asked them what he should do to remedy the situation. They said that the only atonement was having a bath in the Ganges. But there was no time to go to Varanasi and return. So he prayed to Lord Shiva (in Gangashtakam) to release the waters of Ganga

from His matted hair as he did on an earlier occasion for Bhagiratha. Water started flowing out of the well in his house and flooded the streets of the village. The villagers got scared and prayed to Ayyaval to forgive them and stop the flood that was threatening the village. He accordingly prayed again to stop the flooding and requested her to appear in the well every year on that day. Even now people flock to that place every year on that day and take bath in the waters of the well in the belief that Ganga is present in the well on that day. Ayyaval had composed a number of works some of which are not yet been printed and some not available. Some of his works are listed below. (1) Bhagavannama Bhushanam. (2) Akhyashashti. (3) Daya satakam. (4) Matrubhtasatakam. (5) Stuti paddati. (6) Shivabhakthikalpalatha. (7) Shivabhaktha lakShanam. (8) Taravali stotram. (9) Artihara stotram. (10) Kuliresvarashtakam. (11) Jambhunathashtakam. (12) Doshapariharashtakam. (13) Krishnadwadasa manjari. (14) Achyuthashtakam. (15) Dola navarathnamala. (16) Padamanimanjari - a sanskrit dictionary. (17) Shahajiraja charitam.

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