

# DISCUSSING THE PHILOSOPHICAL STATUS OF *DAIVADASAKAM* BY SREE NARAYANA GURU

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**ABSTRACT:** *Sree Narayana Guru was the one of the prominent personality in the renaissance of Kerala. It is Guru who taught the people to see every one as humans avoiding the system of the caste and religion. His literary works, anthologies and other works are the reflections of his thoughts to the society. Daivadasakam is an important prayer song by guru, which can be used by people of whole society avoiding their caste, community and religion. This paper discusses the various social and philosophical dimensions of the short prayer song Daivadasakam by Guru.*

**Key Words:** *Adwaitasidhantham, Daivadasakam, Kerala Society, Renaissance, Shaivasidhantham,*

## 1.1 Introduction

Sree Narayana Guru is an important personality in the renaissance of Kerala. Guru had made many contributions and made sever changes in the norm of Kerala society in that period. His works are his reflection of his thoughts on his own philosophy. *Daivadasakam* is short prayer song written by Sree Narayana guru for his disciple avoiding the favour of any religion. It is a 40 lined poem written as 10 sloka. The prayer song even though small size, discusses various philosophical elements in regards to the society. The elements of *Adwaitasidhantham* and *Dwaitasindantha* can be traced in his prayer song. Various interpretations and observational studies had been made on this small prayer song by different scholars. The relationship between the devotee and the God, the concept of *Maayaa* and *Mahima* is also discussed in the song.

## 1.2 Daivadasakam by Sree Narayana Guru: Revolutionary Prayer of Renaissance

*Daivadasakam* is a prayer song written by Sree Narayana guru in 1914. It is one of the prayers that had been important and equally prominent for the past 104 years in the Malayalam literature. The prayer song is widely used for chanting by the lacks of Sree Narayana Guru's disciples. The golden jubilee of the prayer song had been celebrated as a grant programme in the state. More than hundreds of interpretations and studies had been made on the prayer song. It had also been translated into various languages. This paper examines the factors that made this 40 lined short prayer song to a great subject on various studies.

### 1.2.1 Background of *Daivadasakam*

Scholars accept that the prayer is written in the year 1914, but the place of its creation is still under dispute. Scholars like T. Baskaran, Geetha Suraj claim that it had been written by Guru at *Adwaitaasramam* in Aluva, Ernakulam District. While scholar G.Balakrishnan suggests that it was written at Sivagri, Kollam District. There is evidence of Guru's stay in both places in the year 1914. Children from every caste and religion was allowed to study and stay in Guru's hermitage. It had been a place where students from backward communities of *Ezhava*, *Paraya* and *Pulaya* were taught together before 1914s. The society of Kerala didn't promote this union of people from different religion, caste and community in that period. In 1917, it is the scholar Ayyapan who made a food feast which included people from all religion, community and caste. Guru's temples and hermitages where the only places that allowed people from all community and religion to unite together, to cook together and have meals together. They were also together in doing social services.

Guru had written the following words during his Siva idol consecration at Auviyppuram. "This is the model abode where everyone, will live in brotherhood, without animosity due to difference of caste and religion."

*Daivadasakam* was a prayer specially created to children disciples living at his place who claimed to be the untouchables and lower caste, to recite during the evening prayers. It was a prayer song that could be equally used by all the people living at his hermitage. The prayer song is a collection of ten slokas written in *Anushtuppu* meter. As the poem is a collection of 10 sloka adoring the god, it is named as *Daivadasakam*.

**1.2.2 Daivadasakam**

The translated version of *Daivadasakam* by Swami Muni Narayana Prasad is given below:

O, God, caringly protect us here  
 From over there, never  
 Letting loose your hold.  
 You are the navigator  
 In this ocean of becoming,  
 And the mighty steamer is  
 None other than your feet (word) 1.

Counting all the countables  
 One after another, and when  
 Everything is reckoned and finished with,  
 There after continues  
 To exist the perceiving mind.  
 In like manner, let this mind  
 Attain rest pulsation less in you 2

Food and clothes and all such,  
 Providing us with no lapse,  
 You make our lives generously blessed;  
 You are alone our sole Master 3

Like oceans, waves, wind and depth  
 Are ourselves, *maayaa*, your glory and you  
 Let us inwardly have  
 Such an awareness (of life's scheme) 4

You are the creation, the creator too,  
 As also myriads of created things  
 You again, O God, are the substance  
 Of which all creation is made. 5

You indeed are *maayaa*  
 The maker of *maayaa* too,  
 As also the enjoyer there of.  
 You are even the noble one who  
 Removes the very same *maayaa*  
 To grant us the state of supreme union 6

You are Existence, Consciousness and Value-Experience,  
 You are the present and the past;  
 And the future is no other than you.  
 Even these spoken words, well consider,  
 Are nothing but you 7

Completely filling both within and without  
 Is the state of your grandeur,  
 That states we hail!  
 O God, success be yours! 8

Success be yours, O Great Lord Divine,  
 Ever intent on saving those in mystery,  
 Success be yours, O the one.  
 Consciousness and Value-experience in essence  
 O the ocean of mercy,  
 Success be yours! 9

In the deep ocean of your Glory  
 Let us all become immersed,  
 There do dwell, dwell forever  
 In felicity supreme! 10

Various interpretation and lot of studies had been made on the short prayer of *Daivadasakam*. G. Balakrishnan Nair, M. H Shasthrikal, T. Baskaran, Muni Narayana Prasad, who had been the interpreters of guru's works had also made their own interpretation of *Daivadasakam*. Other than them, the interpretation made by Nithya Chaithanya Yathi, M.K Saanu, Geetha Suraj, N.K Harikumar is also quiet famous. The combined work of child edition of *Daivadasakam* by *Sivaswaroopananda* and *Saradhananda* is famous for its theme.

### 1.2.3 The philosophical effect of Daivadasakam

Firstly we could say that the prayer *Daivadasakam* philosophically follow the *Adwaita* theory. Beginning by depicting the dual concept of relationship between God and the devotee, step by step it progress to the concept of *Adwaita* theory that tell everything is one.

The first sloka tells the following 'God caringly protect us from over there and never let to lose your hold, you are the captain our ship who sails in the sea of life filled with the clouds and storm'.

The first line 'O, God, caringly protect us here from over there, never letting loose your hold' shows the prayer of devotee asking god who is above to protect them who are down here. This concept relates exactly to the Semitic concept of god. The concept of big ship coming for the survival depicts the ship in Puranaas during the flood, at the same time also reminds the Noha's ship mentioned in the Semitic religion. The word '*Daivam*' in the first sloka is a common name of reference to God in all religions of Kerala.

The second sloka gives the following meaning 'As how one get stable by understanding the world with his sense organs by realising that everything is in the world is unreal, similarly make you stable in our mind beyond all other things'.

The second poem of *Daivadasagam* traces the '*Theeni Theeni*' principle from Upanishads.

The third sloka tells that 'you are the only load and saviour who make us satisfied by providing necessary food, clothes and other things to sustain in this world'. Humans from ancient days onwards made the pray for daily bread along with the concept of God. We could trace its evidence of this method from '*Devasookthaas*' to 'Bible'.

The fourth sloka tells 'like the inter-relationship between the ocean, its waves, the wind that cause the wave and its depth make us aware about the invisible principle of relationship between you, your glory, your pride and us. The 'sea' mentioned here is a very common symbol in the *Adwaita* theory but the concept of 'glory' depict in the sloka is not in accordance with the concept of *Adwaita* theory.<sup>1</sup>

The fifth sloka states that 'God you are the creation and the creator, you the substance of which all creation is made, you are the myriads of created things'.

The sixth sloka says that 'God You indeed is the *maayaa*, You are the maker of *maayaa* and also the enjoyer of it. You are the noble one who removes the *maayaa* and the One who grants the state of supreme union.

The seventh sloka tells that 'You are the only truth existing immortal in the world, You are the only knowledge supreme to all other knowledge and the centre of extreme joy. You are the present, past and future, even these spoken words are none other than you'.

We could easily trace the concepts and principles of *Adwaita* theory from the fifth sloka to seventh sloka. The prayer beginning with the dual concept of God and devotee make a transition into deeper concepts of philosophy from the fourth sloka on wards. The picturisation of impartial quality and real quality of god is interesting in this sloka. The portraying of the presence of Holy Spirit apart from the concept of past, present and future is also shown in the prayer song. The sloka concludes by telling that this is what we name as *Bhrama* and that is *Sachidandha Swaroopa*. The following sloka are the praising of this idol.

The eighth sloka praise the Holy Spirit, claims that always victory will be of His. It also tells that 'it is His glory which is filled inside and outside of ours'. It is this spirit that is filled in our life and found in the whole things in the universe. Even though this universality is claimed to the concept of *bhrama* still the word *mahima* (glory) is combined along with it. Other than that the word Mahadeva is also used. The word mahasu seen in the tenth sloka is not in relation to *Shankaradwaita* but to *Shaivadwaita*.

The fourth, eighth and the tenth slokas of Sree Narayana Guru's prayer give and underlined proof to claim that, it is not the exact follow up of the *Sankaradevantha*.

The next sloka by Narayana Guru is his observation on society.

The ninth sloka is more like praising the God ‘ the great God of divine, let the success be yours, the great saviour of the brave one let the success be yours, the vast source of joy let the success be yours, the huge ocean of mercy let the success be always yours’. The metaphors that guru assign to the Holy Spirit is not of the qualities of punctuality, accuracy, joy and sorrow but of the one who saves us from the illness, the one with mercy.

Guru’s concept of God is the one who always will be the saviour of the brave ones and the one who is the sea of mercy. Guru’s God is of the concept who gives primary importance to the humanistic values of love, mercy, kind and it is this God which is found within us and his duty is to cure the illness and be the sea of mercy. He tells that this is the duty of each human who are the visible idols of this spirit.

With this statement we see that this prayer is suggest each human to be the sea of mercy and to become the herbs to wound. The last line is all about surrounding the Holy Spirit by becoming a part of this humanity.

The last sloka is of the content that tells us be immersed in the deep ocean of His glory and ask us to dwell there forever with all the joy.

This prayer here is all about getting immersed forever in the joy of the eternal glory of the Holy glory. The prayer is not with the aim telling us to completely get immersed and diminish ourselves in the eternal glory but to be constantly immersed in it and stay there for ever to enjoy the joy of spirit. Guru’s this idea on the concept of joy can be taken as a subject to study. A similar *soothra* called ‘*Sugaigathva*’ is visible in *sootra* format at guru’s work of *Gurudarshanam*.

### 1.3 Conclusion

Guru’s deep philosophy interpretations and representation of his own views in this simple prayer song are the elements which make it distinct from other prayer songs. The small prayer *Daivadasahagam* itself includes various philosophical thoughts and concept in it. Guru added the element of philosophical in his life and works is not in order to create a philosophical complication but to create platform of union. *Daivadasakam* is an example to this idea.

Guru’s visions are not a strict follow up of any theories in relation to Vedas but can be seen as a free and united coalition of various philosophies. This is a new path to the *Adwaita* theory. This can be the reason that made guru not to attempt to do interpretation or translations on the scholarly work; instead he made contribution of his own view and theories in the form of *sootraas* and named them as *Devandha soothraas*. Guru’s work starting from *Daivadasakam* to *Mopadeshasadagam* are brief forms of the philosophical thoughts by Narayana Guru. If the interpretation of guru’s work is done keeping in consideration this element of free existence by guru, we would be able to get an independent and vast view of the world from it. The small work of *Daivadasakam* is evident in this case.

### Foot Note

1. This parable is in favour to Saivasidhantha than the Adwaitasidhantha. It would have included in the Adwaita theory if it had mentioned as you, we and maayaa, but here the mentioning of the Mahima (glory) is not in accordance with the concept of Adwaita. Swami gives more focus to bring out the singularity in plurality (Baskaran T 235- 236)

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