

PRESENTS

Lakshmi Shobhane Haadu

BY

Prasanna Tadipatri

Shri Vadirajaru has written many works in Sanskrit and Kannada. One that is commonly recited in marriages is the Lakshmi Shobhana Haadu.

It is long, but I would like to post a translation and commentary on it.

There was a marriage in the house of an Arasappa nayaka. The groom however was bitten by a snake. It so happened that Shri Vadirajaru was passing by and Nayaka begged him to save the groom. Placing the groom on his lap, Shri Vadirajaru sprinkled water on him and recited the Shobhane Haadu. The poison went away and the groom sat up, back to normal. This is the power of the Shri Vadiraja Teertha's composition, and more importantly the power of Lord Narayana and Shri Lakshmi's blessings.

Some people think that Sri Vadirajaru showed disrespect towards Shiva in calling him "maruLagihyanu", "kaaminige sOta", etc. in the Shobhane Haadu. However, this certainly cannot be the case, as Sri Vadirajaru has composed several devotional songs on Shiva, like "dhavaLa gangeya gangaadhara mahaalinga". In this song, the final verse has "shrI hayavadanannu anudina nenevante mADO", where shri Vadirajaru uses his ankita (every Haridasa has a signature, which is really the name of Lord Vishnu at the end of the verse. For Shri Vadirajaru it is Hayavadana), to ask Shiva to make him think of Vishnu every day. Why would he compose devotional songs on Shiva if he was disrespectful towards Shiva? It does not make sense.

The Shobhane Haadu is not some ordinary composition - it was used to revive a groom that people thought had died. This shows the power of not only the song, but also the composer. Where did Shri Vadirajaru get this strength from? His philosophy is one and the same as that of Sri Rayaru.

The power behind both their miracles is revealed in the Rayaru Ashtottara - "shrI raaghavendro hari paadakanja niShevaNaallabdha samastasampat" - by serving the feet of Lord Vishnu, they acquired everything.

The Shobhane Haadu, like many of their other works, brings out the greatness of Vishnu. As Lakshmi goes through a sort of process of elimination pointing out the flaws of various devatas, we can see that Vishnu does not possess such defects. The point is

not to criticize other devatas (as we saw "tanna makkaLa kunda taane pELuvudakke mannadi naachi"...Lakshmi was shy to point out the flaws of her children), but to establish one of the principles that both Shri Vadirajaru and Sri Rayaru believed in - that of Vishnu sarvottamatva and sampUrNatva: the idea that Vishnu alone is above everything else, is perfect, and free from defects.

He did not lose his body like Manmatha, wasn't weakened by Brahmahatya dosha like Indra, and did not enter a frenzied state like Shiva did when Sati died. Whereas devatas like Shiva depend on someone else for their position, Vishnu does not. All other devatas besides Vishnu and Lakshmi are appointed to their position at the beginning of the kalpa and when they achieve Moksha (yes, it may sound surprising, but Brahma, Indra, Shiva, etc. are striving for Moksha), another devata fills their place.

The description of Shiva's behavior seems to bother people and perhaps requires a bit more clarification. The story goes that when Sati consumes her body, Shiva gets so enraged that he beheads Daksha prajapati, his father-in-law. This is shocking in a number of ways. Shiva's behavior does not get Sati back, he beheads his own father-in-law who is a devata, and most importantly, he could not foresee or prevent this from happening.

Can the same thing be said of Rama for example? No, because the very reason that Vishnu took birth as a man was to kill Ravana. Ravana's abduction of Sita increased his sin and led to his own demise. But even then, Ravana was given a chance. Had he returned Sita, Rama would have head back, so Rama was not in some sort of frenzied state to kill Ravana.

Furthermore, though Rama acted as though he was upset at the loss of Sita, she is eternally with Rama. Lakshmi is known as "nitya aviyogini", eternally inseparable from Vishnu. Ravana cannot touch, let alone abduct the real Lakshmi devi, who is the presiding deity of matter itself.

When Shiva is criticized for killing his father-in-law, what about Krishna killing his cousin Shishupala and his uncle Kamsa? The difference here is that Daksha Prajapati is a devata, who is good by nature.

Shishupala and Kamsa were wicked. As Krishna points out in his Gita upadesha to Arjuna, it is a kshatriya's duty to punish those who are wicked. Though Vishnu has no obligation, had he left them alone because they were his relatives, he would not be setting a good example for the world and would be going against his own teachings. Far from acting out of vengeance, Krishna, honoring the promise made to his aunt, forgives Shishupala 100 times. "Enu karuNanidhiyo..."

What about Vishnu, as Parashurama avatara, killing his own mother? He does so on his father's orders, and more importantly is able to immediately bring her back to life. Though Daksha Prajapati eventually is brought back to life, Shiva killed him out of vengeance, not with the intention of bringing him back to life. And of course, he could not do anything to restore Sati Devi's body.

So in conclusion, it is important to understand why Sri Vadirajaru and Sri Rayaru propounded the view that Vishnu alone is supreme, not Shiva. But that does not mean that he is not to be worshipped. Quite the contrary, Shiva should be worshipped, but as a devotee of Vishnu, as the saying goes "vaiShNavaanaam yathaa shambho"

Here is the Mangalacharane shloka.

**shObhanavennire suraroLu subhaganige
shObhanavenni suguNanige
shObhanavennire trivikramaraayage
shObhanavenni surapriyage**

This is quite an appropriate Mangalacharane shloka, because the word "shobhana" means mangaLa, or auspicious. When used for elders, the word "shobhana" is a form of stuti, for those younger it is a blessing. By describing Lord Narayana, the bimba (the original), as shobhana, we, as pratibimbas (reflections of Him) receive his blessing. This bimba-pratibimba bhaava is the essence of Shri Madhvacharya's philosophy.

Subhaga also means auspicious & bringing good fortune. Lord Narayana has saubhagyavati Lakshmi as his consort. He is the personification of auspiciousness, so we must bear in mind that it is not because of Lakshmi that he is auspicious. The devatas (suraru) bring auspiciousness, but Lord Vishnu is not only the most auspicious among all the devatas, but he is within all of them, enabling them to bring us good fortune.

SuguNa means good qualities. The Lord is full of good qualities. He is sarvaguNa sampUrNaH sarva dosha vivarjita: free from all flaws.

Trivikrama refers to the Vamana avatara, where Lord Narayana covered the 3 worlds with his 3 steps. He is the real "raaya" or king.

Surapriya means dear to the other Devatas. It was Narayana who, in the form of Mohini gave devatas Amruta, allowing them to vanquish the asuras. He supported Mandara parvata in the churning of the ocean that produced the Amruta. Furthermore, as Krishna stated - "aham Adirhi devaanaam" --he is the one who created the other devatas. So he is dear to them from many different angles.

If we analyze this Mangalacharana shloka carefully we can see a reference to the deshataH, kaalataH, gunataH vyaapti of the Lord (completeness with respect to space, time, and qualities). As "trivikrama", he shows his vyaapti in terms of space, since with one mere step he covered the entire world. He is "suguna", full of positive qualities, so guNataH vyaapti has been shown as well. What about kaalataH vyaapti? When it is said that he is "suraroLu subhaga", countless devatas have come and will come, and he is subhaga among all of them. It is not just that he surpasses the devatas in this kalpa, but in previous kalpas and future kalpas as well. Whereas other devatas, Brahma, Shiva, Indra, etc. acquire that padavi/position and eventually someone else acquires it, that is not true of Vishnu. So who else should we describe as "shobhana" but the auspicious Lord Vishnu, who is surapriya from time immemorial and will always be surapriya?

**lakShmInaaraayaNara charaNakke sharaNembe pakShivaahannageraguve
pakShivaahannageraguve anudina rakShisali namma vadhuvarara || 1 ||**

Shri Vadirajaru says here that he surrenders to the feet (charaNa) of Shri Lakshmi and Shri Narayana. When reciting this, we too must have the anusandhana (mindset) that we are doing sharaNaagati to their feet.

Pakshivahana means having a bird as his vehicle. Lord Vishnu is Garudavahana. Why is he described as such here? If we recall the circumstances under which this was recited, the groom was poisoned by the bite of a snake. Garuda is often described as naagaari (the enemy of snakes). As Shri Madhvacharya put it beautifully in the Dvadasha Stotra:

**naagaarirugrabalapauruSha Apa viShnuvaahatvam uttamajavo |
yadapAngaleshamAshritya shakra mukhadevagaNairachintyaM |**

shrIryatkaTaakSha balavyajitam namaami || The enemy of the snakes, the powerful Garuda, has the distinction of being the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. Indra and the other devatas cannot even conceive of the greatness of Garuda. This is all due to the grace of Shri Lakshmi, who is powerful due to a mere side-glance of the undefeatable Lord Narayana. I bow to that "ajita -naamaka paramaatma".

Lord Narayana protects from the poison that is samsara, so where is the surprise in his saving the groom from the bite of a mere ordinary snake? In saying "eraguve", Shri Vadirajaru is bowing to the Lord, not only once, but "anudina", day after day.

Paksha can also mean arm, and if we think of Hanuman who lifted sanjeevani with one hand, pakshi can refer to the powerful Vayu devaru. Pakshivahana can thus also mean Lord Vishnu, having Vayu as his vehicle. Just as in English, where vehicle can mean that through which we accomplish something, Vayu devaru can be considered a vehicle of the Lord in this sense. Vayu, in his forms of Hanuma, Bhima, and Madhva, is "Bhagavatkaarya sadhaka" - he performs duties of and for Lord Vishnu.

We can take "rakshisali" as both a praarthane (a request) and aashirvada (a blessing). Shri Vadirajaru is requesting the Lord to protect the bride & groom, and those who recite this will have His blessing.

The union of Lakshmi-Narayana is the ideal union. In marriage, the bride's father should have the mindset that he is giving the indwelling Lakshmi to Narayana dwelling in son-in-law. With this mindset, a married couple will have the blessings of Lord Narayana & Lakshmi and have a blissful marriage.

**pAlasAgaravannu Illeya kaDeyalu |
baale mahalakShumi udisidaLu |
baale mahalakShumi udisidaLaa dEvi |
pAlisali namma vadhuvarara || 2 ||**

pAlasAgara - the milky ocean
Illeya - with ease, as a sort of play
kaDeyalu - when churned
baale mahalakShumi- the youthful Goddess Lakshmi
udisidaLu - sprang forth

pAlisali - may she (and Narayana within her) protect
vadhuvārara - the bride & groom.

When the milky ocean was churned by Lord Narayana in a playful manner, the youthful Goddess Lakshmi sprang forth (but wasn't born). May both of them protect our bride & groom.

We normally say that the devas & asuras churned the milky ocean, but really it was Lord Narayana who supported the Mandara parvata, in the form of Kurma. When the devatas & asuras struggled to bring the mountain, it was Lord Narayana who effortlessly placed it on Garuda and brought it to the ocean. It was Lord Narayana who resided in them, giving them the strength to churn the ocean.

Another point to clarify is that many people think Shiva first drank the Halahala poison that came from the churning. However, it was Vayu devaru, who, under the command of Lord Narayana who drank most of it, which had no effect on him. The little portion that was left was consumed by Shiva, who swooned from it, and also became "nIlakaNTha", having a bluish throat. So we can see from this that Vayu deva is far above Shiva, and of course Narayana is far above both.

For Narayana, who is pUrnAnanda, all this is mere play, that is why "Ilēya kaDeyalu" is used. The choice of words used by Vadiraja is very important. Lakshmi was not born then (not janisidaLu), but udisidaLu, the analogy being the sun. When we say surya-udaya happened, it does not mean the sun comes into existence every day, but rather makes itself visible to us then. Likewise, Lakshmi, who is beginningless and has no birth makes herself visible during the churning of the ocean. Also, just because she is beginningless we must not think that she looks old. Rather she is "baale", having youthful beauty. She is prakRti abhimani, so whereas materialistic things decay over time, because she is non-material, she is not affected by things like aging.

For someone like Goddess Lakshmi, we can see that no one else except Lord Narayana, not even other devatas who acquire material bodies, is a match.

bommana praLayadali tannarasiyoDagUDi |
summaneyaagi malagippa |
namma nArAYaNagu I rammegaDigaDigu |
janmaveMbudu avatAra || 3 ||

bommana praLayadali - When Brahma gets destroyed
tanna arasiyoDa kUDi - seated with his (Narayana's) consort Lakshmi
summaneyaagi - carefree
malagippa - he lay
namma nArAYaNagu I ramEgu - Both Narayana and Lakshmi
aDigaDigu - at each step of the way
janmaveMbudu - are "born" only in the sense that

avataara - they take avatara (manifest themselves)

After pralaya(destruction) of Brahma, and before the next creation, Narayana lies (on Aladadele, a leaf), with his consort Lakshmi. He is carefree, in that there is nothing for him to achieve. For both Narayana & Lakshmi, whenever it is said they "take birth", they only manifest themselves. It is only an avatara, and they are not born.

As mentioned earlier, for Narayana & Ramaa (Lakshmi), birth is only a manifestation, since both are beginningless and have no destruction. Though no jIva undergoes birth or death (as stated in the 2nd chapter of the Gita), all other beings have birth in the sense of acquiring bodies, and death, in that their bodies get destroyed, even for Brahma.

To get an idea of Brahma's lifespan, 1 human year is 1 day for the devatas. 4 320 000 000 human years, or 12 million years for the devatas, equals one day of Brahma. He lives for 100 years, and then pralaya occurs. Whereas some beings may still keep their bodies from one day of Brahma to the next, after the pralaya at the end of Brahma's lifetime, nothing remains manifest (though we mustn't forget that there is no destruction for any of the jIvas, just their bodies).

At this time Narayana takes the form of a magnificent newborn child, lying on a leaf, which is the form Lakshmi takes. She also takes the form of various ornaments on the Lord. Between pralaya & the next srshti, Narayana does not perform any tasks that he did during Brahma's lifetime.

We can also take "summaneyaagi malagippa" in the sense that Narayana does not have karmabandhana, he is not tied down by his actions. Whereas we take birth because of our past karma, for Narayana and Lakshmi, it is only because of their own wish that they take avatara.

Ramaa means one who rejoices. Lakshmi rejoices in the form of Lord Narayana. One meaning of Narayana is he whose abode is the ocean. In this case, it is the pralayajala - the ocean that exists between one cycle of creation and the next, on which Narayana resides taking the form of a newborn. Lakshmi (Ramaa) rejoices in being close to Lord Narayana both in the form of the leaf and the ornaments decorating Him. Narayana has many other meanings, such as being free from 'ara' or flaws. We have already seen that he is free from flaws like karmabandha and acquiring a body that undergoes destruction. We shall see more of this later on in the Shobhane Haadu, but first Lakshmi is described in the next few verses.

Before proceeding with the next few verses, look at the 2nd letter (as written in an Indian language) in each of the lines for each verse. Shri Vadirajaru has shown his poetic skill by using the same letter.

kaMbukaNThada sutta kaTTida mangaLasUtra |
aMbujaveraDu karayugadi |

aMbujaveraDu karayugadi dharisi pI - |
taaMbaravuTTu meredaLu || 4 ||

kaMbukaNThada sutta - Around her conch-like neck
kaTTida mangaLasutra - the mangalasutra (wedding necklace) was tied.
eraDu karayugadi - in each of her 2 hands.
ambuja - A lotus flower
dharisi - was held
uTTu - Wearing
pItambara - a yellow/white dress
meredaLu - she walked about.

Shri Lakshmi's neck which produces sounds as beautiful as a conch had the Mangalasutra tied around it. Her 2 hands each held a lotus flower. She walked about wearing a yellow (or white) dress.

Lakshmi is the goddess of mangalya, or good fortune, so she would certainly appear with her Mangalasutra. But normally, the Mangalasutra is tied at the time of marriage, yet at this time (the churning of the ocean), she has not yet chosen Lord Narayana. How can she already have Mangalasutra? Her union with Lord Narayana is eternal, since time immemorial. So she always has Mangalasutra. Also, the form of both Lakshmi and Narayana is aprakrita, non-material, so when clothes, ornaments are described on them, they are not physical material objects. The mangalasutra, pItambara, etc. are part of their very form.

So if Lakshmi & Narayana are always united, what is the purpose of their svayamvara & marriage ceremony? It is only a sort of play, to give pleasure to other devatas and their devotees.

Two of Lakshmi's arms are described in this verse, the other two in the next verse. There is a deeper significance to the lotus. Brahma was born out of the lotus, and so is bhaavi Brahma, that is Vayu devaru. Garuda is said to be the abhimani (controlling deity) for pItambara.

The order in which the form of Lakshmi is described is important. First and foremost, by pointing out her Mangalasutra, it shows her dependence on Lord Narayana, and her eternal union with Him. Next, describing the lotuses, it symbolizes the fact that she is the mother of the highest among the jIvas - Brahma & Vayu. This is followed by Garuda (symbolized by Pitambara) and other devatas. Again, as pointed out earlier, Narayana & Lakshmi are unique, whereas for other devatas, like Brahma, Vayu, etc, it is simply a position they occupy during a kalpa. Other devatas acquire that position, then achieve Moksha, and another devata will occupy that position (for example, in the next kalpa, Shiva will become Shesha, then Garuda, then achieve Moksha).

ondu karadinda abhayavanIvaLe ma |
ttondu kaiyinda varagaLa |
kundilladaananda sandOha uNisuva |
indire namma salahali || 5 ||

ondu karadinda - with one hand
IvaLe - she gives
abhayavannu - freedom from fear
mattondu kaiyinda - with another hand
varagaLu - she grants wishes
indire - That Indira devi, Lakshmi, who
uNisuva - gives us
sandoha =samUha - a lot of
kundillada - flawless
aananda - joy
salahali - may she protect
namma - us

Indira devi (that is Lakshmi) gives freedom from fear(abhaya) with one hand. With the other she grants our wishes. She gives us flawless happiness (not just in this world, but also Moksha). May she protect us.

Once again there is a rationale behind the order which Shri Vadirajaru describes Goddess Lakshmi. First she grants abhaya, then varagaLa. What use is wealth to someone who always lives in fear? What do we fear? We fear our enemies. Who are our worst enemies? The ariShad (6 enemies) are not outside, but internal: kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (delusion), mada (arrogance), matsarya (jealousy). We need Lakshmi's and Narayana's blessing to protect us from all this.

After conquering these 6 internal enemies, we won't be asking for wishes out of greed, nor will we be asking out of jealousy ("my neighbor has xyz and I want that as well"). Free from delusion, we will ask for what will really deliver us from Samsara: jnana (knowledge), bhakti (devotion), & vairagya (dispassion toward material pursuits). This is the type of "vara" that Kanakadasaru asks in the "Isha ninna charaNa bhajane":

"jnAna bhakti koTTu, ninna dhyaanadalli iTTu,
enna hIna buddhi biDiso munna, Janardhana"

What does flawless happiness mean(kundillada aananda)? Those joys which are dharmic, not against dharma are flawless. The joy that one gets by doing good deeds is real joy, not some twisted pleasure from hurting others.

But there is a deeper meaning. Happiness we get while in samsara is fleeting. Whereas moksha, which is the enjoyment of our own innate happiness is eternal. It is this eternal happiness, freedom from the bondage of samsara that is the real happiness to seek from Sri Lakshmi & Narayana.

Finally when we say protect us, we should always have the mindset that it is because of her blessings (and antaryami Narayana) that we are enjoying prosperity, and thus show them our gratitude.

**poLeva kAnchiya dAma uliva kiMkiNigaLu|
naliva kaalanduge phalukenalu |
naLanaLisuva muddumOgada cheluve lakShmi | salahali namma vadhuvarara || 6 ||**

poLeva - shining (hoLeyuva)
kanchiya daama - golden belt
uliva kinkiNigaLu - jingling bells on her feet naliva kaalanduge - ankle bracelets are rejoicing.
phaluk enalu - made a "phaluk" sound
naLanaLisuva muddumOgada - she who has an attractive face shining with effulgence
cheluve lakShmi - may that beautiful Lakshmi salahali - protect namma vadhuvarara- our bride & groom

The beautiful Goddess Lakshmi is adorned with a shining golden belt, with jingling bells on her feet. Her ankle bracelets are rejoicing and making a "phaluk" sound. May that Lakshmi, with an attractive face shining with effulgence, protect our bride & groom.

Lakshmi's ornaments are described in two ways. Either they are jaDa objects, made by Vishwakarma, or they are part of Lakshmi's very svarupa. If it's Lakshmi's svarupa, it is chetana (sentient), so we can talk of the bracelets (=Lakshmi) enjoying herself. Or if we take it as jaDa (material object), it can reflect Lakshmi's personality, so it seems like it's enjoying itself. If we take it as Lakshmi svarupa, the sound it makes praises Vishnu. It is not only all words that describe Vishnu (in their primary sense), but even ordinary sounds describe Vishnu. Of course, ordinary humans do not have the capability to see this, but for such a high being as Goddess Lakshmi, she can see how even these sounds describe Lord Vishnu.

**rannada molegaTTu chinnadaabharaNagaLa | chenne mahalakShumi dharisidaLe |
chenne mahalakShumi dharisadaLaa dEvi | tanna manneya vadhuvarara salahali ||
7**

rannada - adorned with jewels (ratnada)
molegaTTu - strung together
chinnada - and golden
aabharaNagaLa - ornaments
dharisadaLe - were held by
chenne mahalakShumi - the beautiful Lakshmi dEvi - may that goddess salahali - protect
tanna manneya - her household (maneya has double n for poetic reasons)
vadhuvarara- our bride & groom

The beautiful Goddess Lakshmi was adorned with jewels strung together.
May that Mahalakshmi devi, bearing golden ornaments, protect her household bride & groom.

Lakshmi is described as wearing golden ornaments in many places, including the Shri Sukta.

hiraNya varNaaM hariNIM suvarNarajatasrajaaM | chandrAM hiraNmayIM lakShmIm
jAtavedO ma aavaha ||

O Jaataveda (Vishnu), bring Sri Lakshmi to me, that Lakshmi who has the complexion of a golden deer, adorned with golden & silver garlands, who shines like the moon and who has a golden form.

There are many meanings for Jataveda, but one meaning is that it is he who knows everyone's births. This can't apply to any other devata, because anyone below Brahma is born at some point (the jIva is not born, but they acquire bodies). Some people mistakenly think that it refers to Agni, but how can Agni bring someone much higher than him like Goddess Lakshmi?

Another point to note in this verse is the use of "tanna maneya". One of the central concepts to Sri Madhvacharya's philosophy is that of Bimba-pratibimba. There is a distinction between the Lord and the jIva. The jIvas are reflections of the Lord, that is, they depend on Him for existence & functionality. In a similar fashion, we can think of all weddings as a reflection of the wedding between Narayana-Lakshmi. Of course there are significant differences, since the union between Narayana & Lakshmi is eternal unlike other marriages.

kumBhakuchada mELE imbiTTa haaragaLu |
tumbiguruLa mukhakamala |
tumbiguruLa mukhakamala mahalakShmi jaga | dambe vadhuvarara salahali || 8

kumBhakuchada mEle - On her breasts like kalasha (this is in the sense of describing a mother, see note below) imbiTTa haaragaLu - garlands were placed beautifully (imphaagi) mukhakamala - her lotus-like face had tumbiguruLa - curly hair as black as a bee (tumbiyante) mahalakShmi jagadambe - That mother of the world, Lakshmi salahali - may she protect
vadhuvarara- our bride & groom

The mother of the universe, Goddess Lakshmi has garlands placed beautifully on her breasts which are like kalashas. Her lotus-like face has curly hair as black as a bee. May she protect our bride & groom.

First, we should understand that Lakshmi's body is aprakrita, that is, non-material. Describing her breasts may seem a bit strange, but it will be viewed differently by different types of souls. Asuras will get delusional and look at Lakshmi, seeking to possess her (which is in a way Hari dvesha, since only Narayana is able to be Lakshmi's consort, and they're striving after what Narayana has). Good souls will understand that such a description just brings out Lakshmi's beauty and look upon her as a mother. When viewed in the latter sense, it doesn't have the vulgar meaning we sometimes associate with description of a woman's breast. Also, we must keep in mind who wrote this Shobhane song. Shri Vadirajaru is commonly believed to be Vayu in the next kalpa (though there is some controversy on this). Vayu would certainly look upon Lakshmi as a mother.

The reference to bees and lotuses is very interesting. Just as bees pollinate flowers, here her face is described as lotus-like, and the color of her hair is described as black as a bee.

Also, just as natural as it is for bees & flowers to go together, likewise Lakshmi's hair complements her face (and vice versa).

muttina OleyaniTTaLe mahalakShmi |
kastUri tilaka dharisidaLe |
kastUri tilaka dharisidaLA dEvi sa |
rvatra vadhuvvara salahali || 9

mahalakshmi - Shri Lakshmi devi
iTTaLe - wore
Oleyanu - earrings
muttina - made of pearl
dharisadaLe - she wore
kastUri - fragrant substance obtained from a deer tilaka - mark on the forehead salahali - may she protect vadhuvvara - bride and groom sarvatra - everywhere

Shri Lakshmi devi wore earrings made of pearl and had kasturi tilaka on her forehead.
May she protect brides & grooms everywhere.

Chandra is considered to be abhimani devata for pearl. So as a result, they have the ability to drive away sin and increase wealth & vitality. It looks like pearls adorn Lakshmi, but in reality, pearls have Lakshmi sannidhana in them. It is Lakshmi's presence that makes pearls auspicious.

Kasturi is a cure for many diseases & is considered pure. There is a gradation among kasturi - the greatest is reddish purple (kamala) in color, followed by yellowish brown(pingala), and the lowest is bluish black (krishna)

By saying "sarvatra", we can see that it is not just the groom that Shri Vadirajaru revived who is protected, but all brides & grooms.

Hence the tradition of reciting this song at many marriages. Note the clarification later on in verse 11.

ambuja nayanagaLa bimbAdharada shashi |
bimbadanteseva mUgutimaNiya shashi |
bimbadanteseva mUgutimaNiya mahalakShmi | umbudakIyali vadhuvvarage || 10

ambuja - lotus
nayanagaLa - eyes
adhara - lips like
bimba - Donde haNNu (ivy gourd, as a fruit) mUgutimaNiya - having a nose ring eseva - that shines bimbadante - like the image of
shashi- the moon
Iyali - may she give
vadhuvvarage - to the bride and groom
umbudake - what they need for eating (svarupa ananda)

Lakshmi's eyes are lotus-like. Her lips are red like the fruit of the ivy gourd. Her nose ring shines as brightly as the image of the moon.

May she give us what we need to eat, not just in this world, but also the ultimate goal that the soul hungers for, its own svarupa ananda, Moksha.

In Sanskrit, beautiful eyes are often compared to a lotus, because it remains pure & untouched by the water it is in. This is especially true for Lakshmi. Even though she is Prakriti abhimani (the controller for the primordial matter), she is untouched by all the changes matter goes through. Lips are often compared to donde haNNu because of its redness. We have to be careful when translating this verse, because the first "bimba" refers to the fruit, but the second & third "shashi bimba" refers to the image of the moon.

If taken literally, umbudake Iyali means give us what we need to eat, but we can get that from any local restaurant, why ask Lakshmi for that? As the soul travels through samsara, it hungers for eternal happiness. Experiencing this innate happiness is the ultimate goal of existence, and this "svarupa Ananda" experience is obtained only in Moksha, when the soul is freed from the bondage of samsara. Just as people are able to eat different quantities of food, so too, the experience of joy in Moksha is also different. The joy that Brahma & Vayu experience in Moksha is far greater than what ordinary souls experience. Shri Madhvacharya, whose doctrine Sri Vadirajaru propounded, showed using scriptures that there is no "oneness" in salvation. Each soul experiences its own innate happiness in Moksha, and there is a distinction among souls not just here in samsara, but also in Moksha.

muttinakShateyiTTu navaratnada mukuTava | nettiya mEle dharisidaLe | nettiya mEle dharisidaLA dEvi tanna | bhaktiya janara salahali || 11

devi - Lakshmi devi

iTTu - bore

akShata - mantrakshate, normally unbroken rice sprinkled on the head muttina - made of pearls nettiya mele - On her head dharisidaLe - was a mukuTava - crown navaratnada - made of 9 gems salahali - may she protect janara - those people tanna bhaktiya - who have devotion towards her

Shri Lakshmi devi had mantrakshate on her head which was made of pearls. Also on her head was a crown which had 9 jewels in it. May she protect those people who are devoted to her.

Normally mantrakshate is made of rice, but the mantrakshate on Lakshmi is made of pearls, which brings out her splendor. When she is described as having a crown with 9 gems, there can be no doubt that she is the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

It is interesting to note that Shri Vadirajaru explicitly says "tanna bhaktiya janara salahali". She only protects those who seek her blessing. If someone spurns Lakshmi or her pati Lord Vishnu, why should she protect them? Also, one cannot simply approach Lakshmi for some selfish material desire and otherwise ignore her. To seek her blessing one must continuously have genuine devotion towards her.

**kundamandAra jAji kusumagaLa vR^indava | chendada turubili turubidaLe |
kundaNa varNada kOmale mahalakShmi kR^ipeyinda | yinda vadhuvarara salahali ||12**

kunda - mallige, white flower
mandaara - red flower
jAji - white flower
vRndava - clusters of
kusumagaLa - these flowers
chendada - were beautifully
turubidaLe - tucked in
turubili - her locks of hair
kundaNa - golden
varNada - color
komale - soft, delicate
mahalakshmi - Shri Lakshmi devi
kR^ipeyinda - with compassion
salahali - may she protect
vadhuvarara - the bride & groom

Shri Mahalakshmi Devi had clusters of mallige, mandaara, and jAji flowers tucked beautifully in her locks of hair. She has a golden complexion. May this soft & delicate consort of Lord Vishnu protect the bride and groom out of her compassion.

For someone like goddess Lakshmi, there is nothing to be achieved by performing any actions in the world. Even for Brahma, Saraswati, Shiva, & Indra, they are yet to achieve Moksha, so they still have to do sadhana. They have certain duties to perform. For the bad karma that Shiva and Indra do, for example, the amount of joy that they have in Moksha is reduced. There are many instances of this, like when Shiva has opposed Vishnu, or when Indra had sought Ahalya. Brahma, Saraswati, Vayu, & Bharati do not do such bad karma. Vishnu & Lakshmi are far above them in that they are eternally free from samsara and do not have to strive for Moksha. So the question is why do they perform actions? Here we need to understand the "kR^ipeyinda" word. It is out of compassion that they help other souls. There is no obligation that they have to fulfill, nor will the amount of joy they experience be diminished if they don't help other souls.

**endendU bADada aravinda mAleya |
indire poLeva koraLali |
indire poLeva koraLali dharisidaLe ava | Lindu vadhuvarara salahali || 13**

endendU - The never
bADada - withering
aravinda mAleya - garland of lotus flowers dharisidaLe - was worn indire - by Shri
Lakshmi poLeva - on her beautiful koraLali -neck.

avaLu - May she
salahali protect
vadhuvaram - the bride and groom
indu - today (immediately).

Shri Lakshmi's beautiful neck was adorned with a garland of lotus flowers that never wither. May she protect our bride and groom today itself.

It is natural that since Lakshmi is a divine Goddess, the garland of flowers on her neck are not made of ordinary flowers that wither. We can also look at this in a deeper sense. Just the way that Lakshmi bears a garland that never withers, with her grace, we too will never have to wither away from hunger, etc.

devAnga paTTeya mElu hoddikeya |
bhAve mahalakShmi dharisidaLe |
bhAve mahalakShmi dharisidaLA dEvi tanna | sEvaka janara salahali || 14

bhAve - The lady (bhAme) known as
mahalakShmi - Lakshmi devi
dharisidaLe - wore
mElu hoddikeya - upper cloth
devAnga paTTeya - The devanga community makes clothes for idols & is known for its quality clothing
dEvi - That goddess, salahali - may she protect janara - those people
sEvaka - who worship tanna - her.

Lakshmi Devi wore an upper cloth made by the Devanga community, who are known to make clothes of high quality.
May that goddess protect those who worship her.

Here the clothing she wears is said to be made by the Devanga community, and in the previous verse the garland of flowers is a gift by the deity Varuna. But we should keep in mind that she is wearing this just to honor them. In other words, she does not depend on others for clothes and ornaments. She existed long before Varuna and the Devanga community came into existence and certainly had beautiful clothing and garlands of flowers even then.

I lakShmIdEviya kAlungura phalakenalu |
IOIAkShi mellane naDetandaLu |
sAlAgi kuLLirdasurara sabheya kaNDu
AIochisidaLu manadalli || 15

I - This
lakShmIdEviya - Goddess Lakshmi's
kAlungura - rings on her feet
phalakenalu - were making a 'phal-phal' sound
IOIAkShi - Her eyes were looking here and there
mellane - as she slowly
naDetandaLu - walked into
sabheya - the hall (a)surara

- where the devas(gods), asuras(demons), humans, and others kuLLirda - were seated
sAlAgi - in a row.
kaNDu - Seeing them
AlOchisidaLu - she thought
manadalli - in her mind.

This goddess Lakshmi's rings on her feet were making a 'phal-phal'
sound (similar to what was mentioned in verse 6). Her eyes were looking around as she
slowly walked into the hall where the devas(gods), asuras(demons), humans, and others
were seated in a row.

Seeing
them, she thought in her mind...

At first glance, the verse seems to say the hall where the suras
(gods) were seated. However, based on the Bhagavata verse:

**tasyAM chakruH spR^ihAm sarve sasuraasuramaanavAH |
rUpaAryavayovarNa mahimAkShipta chetasAH ||**

Gods, demons, humans, without any distinction, upon beholding the beautiful form of
Lakshmi became enchanted by her (and sought to have her). However, as a clarification,
the gods, since they are enlightened and know the status of Lakshmi (she is like a mother
to them), did not seek to possess her. They were merely seated with the asuras and
humans who actually did desire her.

So to make sure there is no contradiction between Vadirajaru's work and the Bhagavata
Purana, we need to do what is called 'shleshaalankara'. That is, we take the phrase
"kuLLirdasurara" and split it as either kuLLirda + surara, or kuLLirda + asurara.
Splitting it the first way, we get the gods being seated there. The second way, we get
those who are not gods (a+sura), that is, the humans, demons, and others (like
gandharvas). This way, we get the same meaning as the Bhagavata.

One other point of clarification is the "alochisidaLu". It is said that apart from Vishnu,
Lakshmi has full knowledge of everything and does not have to think to get that (In the
Harikathamrutasara it is said "jagadudarana ativimalaguNarUpagaLanu aalochanadi...",
she has to think to understand the attributes and forms of Vishnu, and even then "bage
bageya nUtanava kANuta", she sees new things in Him). So here we need to understand
Lakshmi thinking about others, instead of going directly to Vishnu, as mere play, an act.
If she went directly to Vishnu, we may get the doubt that perhaps there was someone else
who is right for Lakshmi, but she did not think about that person. However Lakshmi's
thought process clarifies this.

What does Lakshmi think about the others there? We shall see in the future verses.

**tanna makkaLa kunda tAne pELuvudakke |
mannadi naachi mahalakShmi |**

**tannAmadindali kareyade obbobbara |
unnanta dOShagaLaneNisidaLu || 16**

mahalakShmi - Shri Lakshmi devi
nAchi - hesitated
mannadi - in her mind
pELuvudakke - to say
tAne - herself
kunda (dOSha)- the flaws of
tanna - her
makkaLa - children.
kareyade - Without calling
tan - them
nAmadindali - by their names,
eNisidaLu - she counted
unnanta (unnata)- the great
dOShagaLanu - flaws
obbobbara - of each one.

In her mind, Shri Lakshmi devi hesitated to herself say the flaws of her children, the other devatas. That's why, while counting the great flaws of each one, she didn't call them by their names.

We shall see in future verses that the language used is "kaamanirjitanu *obba*", kAminige sOta *obba*", etc. This also indicates that Lakshmi is not saying this out loud, but thinking it in her mind.

In Skandapurana, Brahma says to Samudra Raja that Shiva, Brahma, and all the devataas (except Vishnu obviously) are children of your daughter (interestingly, so is Samudra Raja himself). In fact one of the names given to Lakshmi is "jaganmaata", mother of the world.

There are several reasons why Lakshmi devi was shy to say the flaws of the devatas, and why she didn't call them by name. First of all, saying flaws is equivalent to yelling at someone, that's why names are not said by Lakshmi, because it would have an accusatory tone to it.

Furthermore, the devatas are all great devotees of Vishnu and have good qualities, so Lakshmi was hesitant to point out their flaws. A great person is always hesitant to point out his own great qualities and the flaws of others.

Shri Vadirajaru is relying on Bhagavata when describing the flaws that Lakshmi sees, so there is certainly a basis in shastra and cannot be dismissed as Vadirajaru's own imagination. But why should Lakshmi think about their flaws at all? This is a sort of process of elimination. Only he who is without any flaws "niraniShTa niravadya" is the right match for her, which as we shall see is Lord Vishnu.

Another interesting interpretation of this verse is that the reason Lakshmi was shy to say their names is because all names in their primary sense denote Vishnu:

naamaani sarvANi yamAvishanti |

tam vai viShNuM paramamudaaharanti || In Indian culture, it is customary for a wife to not call the husband by name. Even names like Rudra & Brahma: "rudro. bahushirA...",

"brahmaNyo brahmakR^t brahmA brahma..." are found in Vishnu sahasranama. So how can Lakshmi call the names of other devatas, when in their primary sense, they denote her eternal husband, Lord Vishnu?

In the following verses, Lakshmi starts evaluating those present for a suitable groom.

**kelavaru taleyUri tapagaidu puNyava |
gaLisiddarEnU phalavilla |
jvalisuva kopadi shaapava koDuvaru |
lalaneyanivaru olisuvare || 17**

kelavaru - Some beings
tale Uri - have their head buried
tapagaidu - doing tapas
gaLisiddarU - Though obtaining
puNyava - merit,
EnU phalavilla- it's of no use.
jvalisuva - With burning
kopadi - anger
koDuvaru - they give
shaapavu - curses.
olisuvare - Can they protect
lalaneyanu - women?

"Some beings (Rshis and Devatas) have their heads buried doing tapas. Though obtaining puNya from such tapas, it's of no use to their spouse. Furthermore, some of them curse others, out of burning anger, in the process losing the puNya they have obtained. How can such individuals protect us women?" This is what Lakshmi was thinking.

There are many important ideas being conveyed here. First of all, at the Svayamvara, Lakshmi does not want someone who is constantly engaged in tapas all the time, because what kind of life would that be? Of course, Lakshmi is eternally wedded to Vishnu, but is giving her rationale for not choosing others, like the Rshis. As an example, let us consider the case of Kardama Rshi & his wife Devahuti. Kardama was engaged in Tapas for such a long time. He was married to Devahuti, a princess, who being married to a sage had to live such a difficult life. Her condition being weak over time. Of course, eventually, through a dip in Bindu Sarovar, she regained her original form. Because she had to go through such difficulty, Lakshmi does not want such a life being wedded to a sage.

In the second half, a reference is made to those like Vishvamitra. Despite being the one who saw Gayatri mantra, and doing tapas for 10000 years, he is very well-known for his anger against Vasishta. Likewise, Shiva burned Manmatha with his glance just because he was disturbed while doing tapas. Contrast this to how Krishna bore 100 insults from Shishupala and did not at all give way to anger. What is the difference here? The difference is that those other

deities are under the influence of prakriti. As Sri Krishna points out, anger comes about because of Rajo Guna: "Kaama eSha krodha eSha rajoguNa samudbhavaH". Lakshmi is the abhimani devata for Prakriti, and Vishnu is above Lakshmi as per taratamya. So the two of them are not affected by anger, though it affects the rest.

Of course for aparoksha jnanis such as Lord Shiva, such instances of anger reduce their excess puNya, and are a way of working off their prarabdha karma. They do not really suffer for their actions the way we do.

How can such devatas and rshis who give way to anger be able to support someone like Goddess Lakshmi? Lakshmi wants her spouse to be above such anger.

Finally, there is a message here that despite all the wealth and good qualities we have, if we give way to needless anger, it is not good for those around us.

**ella shaastravanOdi durlabha j~naanava | kallisi koDuva gurugaLu | ballida
dhanakke maruLAgI ibbaru | sallada purOhitakkoLagaadaru || 18**

Odi - Having read
ella - all the
shaastravannu - scriptures
gurugaLu - teachers
kallisi koDuva- (=kalisi) teach the
durlabha - difficult to obtain
j~naanaava - knowledge.
ibbaru - 2 of them
maruLAgI - sold themselves for
ballida - powerful
dhanakke - wealth
oLagaadaru - yielded to
sallada - harm-rendering
purOhitakke - Paurohitya (priesthood).

Having read all the scriptures, gurus/teachers teach knowledge that is difficult to obtain. But 2 of them (Shukracharya & Brhaspati) sold themselves so they can get more wealth, becoming Purohitas. Lakshmi devi points out the flaws in those two, who have an exalted place in the world.

Brhaspati is the guru for the devatas. Shukracharya is the guru for the daityas. Both are worthy of worship. Even though Shukracharya is the guru for the evil daityas, it is a position that he is appointed to, so that does not make him bad.

However, there are instances when both of them were driven by a desire for more wealth. Brhaspati sought the wealth of the king of the Maruts though he already had plenty of wealth. Shukracharya used his yogic powers to take the wealth of Kubera himself. As a result, Lakshmi is pointing out the flaws of these two, who are so drawn by wealth.

A purohita should strive for the hita or good of the people, and should not be swayed by wealth. A purohita should have 8 important

qualities: he seeks the good of the people, knows shruti & smruti, tells the truth, keeps his mind & body pure, protects the Vedas, follows achaara (proper conduct), uses either mantra powers or political influence to protect the people from any harm, and does not have any malicious intents in his actions, thoughts, or words.

As in the previous verse, there is a message here that we should try to incorporate in our lives. We should not be driven by greed, a desire for more wealth. Furthermore, we should not turn the knowledge of shastras that we obtain into something that we sell for profit.

Why is paurohitya called harm-rendering?

It is because of the inherent possibility to yield to temptations. In spite of the inherent problems, they yielded to it (Paurohitya).

In all these verses, the underlying message is that all those in this samsara have to undergo prarabdha and Lord Sri Hari alone is not bound by any prarabdha, He Himself being the controller of all.

In the next verse, Sri Lakshmi devi points out how certain devatas succumb to Kama.

**kaamanirjitanobba kaaminige sOtabba |
bhaaminiya hinde haaridava |
kaamaandhanaagi muniya kaaminigaididanobba | kaamadi gurutalpagaamiyobba ||
19**

obba - One
kaamanirjitanu - was conquered by desire.
obba - One
kaaminige sOta - having lost to desire,
haaridava - ran
hinde - after
bhaaminiya - Mohini Rupa of Vishnu.
kaamaandhanaagi - Blinded by desire,
obba - one
aididanu = hondidanu, went after
muniya - a Rshi's
kaaminige - wife.
kaamadi - Out of desire,
obba - one
gaami - slept with
gurutalpa- the wife of his Guru.

One of the devatas, Brahma, was conquered by desire and sought his own daughter, Saraswati. Another one, Shiva, having lost to desire went after the Mohini form of Lord Vishnu. One devata, Indra, blinded by desire went after Ahalya, the wife of Gautama Rishi. Yet another devata, Chandra, slept with Tara, the wife of his own guru, Brihaspati.

Before one gets any misconceptions, it is important to point out that Brahma, Shiva, Indra, and Chandra are all devatas, meaning they are aparoksha jnAnis. They have directly perceived Vishnu and are not affected by base desires like ordinary humans, their only real desire being that of Moksha. Nonetheless, from time to time, because of prarabdha karma they may temporarily deviate.

Here we also need to make a distinction between the case of Brahma and Indra, versus that of Shiva and Chandra. Brahma and Indra acted in accordance with Vishnu's direct command, but not Shiva & Chandra.

Brahma as the creator, created Saraswati along with all the other beings. However, her suitable consort as ordained by Vishnu is none other than Brahma himself. That is why, though it may seem strange, Brahma accepted Saraswati as his consort, who in a sense is his daughter. As for Indra, he was told to reduce the excess punya that Gautama Rishi had earned. When Gautama Rishi saw Indra with his wife Ahalya, he cursed Indra.

Cursing one's superior is normally papa, but in this case it compensated for the excess punya that Gautama Rishi earned from his penance. Indra simply portrayed himself as being "kaamaandha", when in reality he was acting as per Vishnu's command.

In fact, going after Ahalya isn't even seen as a flaw, since he is praised in stotras as being "Ahalyaa jaara". Likewise for Brahma.

Some people who recite this verse use the paThantara "kaamavarjitanu"

(free from desire) instead of kaamanirjitanu. But in Lakshmi's eyes, even appearing to have a flaw is in reality a flaw. This is not to be found in Lord Vishnu as we shall see later.

As for Shiva, with Parvati at his side, when he saw the Mohini Rupa of Vishnu, he was so enchanted by her beauty that he lost control of himself and ran after her. This is the power of Vishnu's maya.

Chandra, overcome by desire, slept with his Guru's wife who later bore a child. In the case of Shiva and Chandra, one cannot say that it was merely a show. If Lakshmi rejected those who appeared to show desire, certainly those who actually acted driven by desire are ruled out as well.

Another thing to note in this verse is that the 2 women that are referred to- Ahalya (Gautama Rishi's wife) and Tara (Brihaspati's

wife) are both considered to be a pativrata stri, meaning they are devoted to their husband. Though circumstances may have led them away from their husband, mentally they were dedicated to their husband.

Lakshmi does not want someone who succumbs to kAma as her husband, just as we saw that in the previous verses she does not want someone who succumbs to greed or anger. She wants as her husband someone who has conquered the 6 internal enemies, including Kama(desire), Krodha (anger), and Lobha (greed).

Lakshmi continues about how other devatas are dependent on someone else.

**nashvaraishvaryava bayasuvanobba para |
raashrayisi baaLuva Ishvaranobba |
haasyava mADi halludurisikoNDavanobba a | dR^ishyaanghriyobba
okkaNNanobba || 20**

obba - One of the devatas
bayasuva - seeks
nashvara - Fleeting, not permanent
aishvaryava - fame, material wealth.
obba - one
aashrayisi - depending
parara - on someone else,
baaLuva - reigns
Ishvara - as the lord.
obba - Another one
mADi - having
haasyava - laughed,
hallu - his teeth
udurisikoNDavanu - were made to fall out.
obba - One has
adR^ishya - invisible
anghri - feet.
obba - Another one
okkaNNa - has only one eye.

One of the devatas, Indra, seeks impermanent, fleeting wealth. Another one, Shiva, though he is known as Ishvara, reigns as lord while depending on those higher than him. One devata, Pusha, laughed and as a result had his teeth broken. Another devata, Shesha, has no visible feet. One (either Jayantha or Shukra) has only one eye.

At first glance, it may seem puzzling how all of these descriptions are related. When analyzed more closely, each of these devatas are shown to not be independent, rather they depend on someone else. The fame and wealth that Indra has is not permanent. If he were really independent, he would have chosen to always be in a state of prosperity. Shiva, though he is known as Ishwara, depends on Vishnu, Lakshmi, Brahma, and Vayu for his ability to rule. Pusha lost his teeth and thus relies on soft flour offered in yajnas. Shesha, in his snake form, has no visible feet. Both Jayantha and Shukra, having only one eye lack the capability to see with both eyes. Lakshmi does not want someone with any sort of dependency.

What Indra seeks is called "nashvara aishvarya", because there are instances when he lost his privileged status, so his aishvarya is destructible, not lasting. He even had to run away from his kingdom on certain occasions. He was humbled by Krishna during the Govardhana episode. He was scared if people did too much tapas, because they could possibly achieve his position.

The para here can mean someone else or those higher than Shiva (Vishnu, Brahma, Lakshmi, and Vayu). Shiva is constantly engaged in tapas thinking of Vishnu. Being a devotee of Vishnu, he bears the name of Vishnu (Ishvara, which occurs in Vishnu Sahasranama). But his dependency on someone else is evident in that even to acquire the position of being the Destroyer, he needed the grace of Vishnu.

asya devasya mILhuSho vayaa |
viShNoreShasya prabhR^ithe havirbhiH |
vide hi rudrO rudriyaM mahitvaM || (shruti)

During the time of Daksha's head being chopped off, Pusha laughed at Rudra. Out of anger, Rudra broke his teeth. Since then Pusha lacks teeth and as a result, during yajna-s, only soft flour is offered to Pusha.

Vadirajaru is very careful in the wording here. He does not say that Shesha does not have feet, but rather that they are not visible.

Shesha in mUla rupa does have feet. In the Dvadasha stotra, "sharvaadi vandya charaN...ashritya nAgapati", his feet are worshipped by Shiva and others. It's just that in the form of a snake, his feet are not visible.

Jayantha, the son of Indra, lost his eye when in the form of a crow, he troubled Sita. As for Shukra, he lost his eye when he assumed a small form to try to stop Bali from washing the feet of Vamana. In both cases it was Vishnu (as Rama or as Vamana) who took away their eyes, because of their own wrongdoing.

Though, all the devata-s are children of Lakshmi, she points out their flaws to indicate that her eternal consort Narayana alone is completely flawless and that like her, all the devata-s also worship the Lord as a flawless being.

One of the reasons for the flawlessness and completeness of the Lord is His total non-dependence. The term "aiashvarya" means not only physical or material wealth, but also other things like wealth of knowledge, wealth of fame, wealth of qualities, etc and also rulership or Lordship. Lord Hari alone eternally has all kinds of weath and also total Lordship.

All others have partial wealth for partial times. Lakshmi herself has all these types of wealth at all times, but not the same extent as Lord Hari.

Not only the degree, but also the duration varies among other deities.

For example, Rudra has that post of Rudra for one brahmakalpa (100 X 360 X 2000 * 43,20,000 years). However, Indra has that post of Indra for one manvantara (1/7 of the above duration). Another difference in these two posts is that Rudra does not get removed even for a short duration during his reign, whereas Indra gets removed a few times.

From another angle, it is not exactly the defect of Indra to covet for wealth. It is his inherent nature. Indra is Indriya abhimAni (controller of the senses). It is the inherent nature of Indriyas to covet for more and more wealth. So as per his svabhava, Indra covets more and more wealth.

maavana kondobba maruLaagiyanu gaDa |
haarvana kondobba baLalida |
jIvara kondobba kulagEDyendenisida |
shivanindobba bayalaada || 21

obba - One devata

konda - killed
maavana - his father-in-law.
maruLaagihyanu=maruLaagiddaane - and became dazed as a result.
gaDa - Incredible!
obba - Another one
konda - killed
haarvana - a Brahmin
baLalida - and became weak as a result.
obba - One
konda - killed
jIvara - living beings
enisida - and was called
kulagEdyendu - a destroyer of families.
obba - Another one
bayalaada -lost his body
shivaninda - because of Shiva.

Shiva killed his father-in-law Daksha Prajapati and went about in a dazed state, for losing Satidevi. Shocking, but true! Another devata, Indra, killed Vritrasura who was a Brahmin, and became weak as a result (Brahmahatya dosha). The demigod Yama is known as a destroyer of families, because he kills living beings. Manmatha lost his body because of Shiva.

Daksha Prajapati was upset with Shiva because he thought that the latter, being his son-in-law did not show him enough respect. Shiva's consort Sati, due to attachment to her father, went to her father's house and gets humiliated by her father's behavior, called forth the fire

inside her and gave up her body. Shiva was so infuriated by this, he cut off the head of his father-in-law, Daksha Prajapati. Later, Daksha Prajapati's head was replaced with that of a goat and brought back to life. However, it is shocking (hence the use of the word 'gaDa') that Shiva, who is known as the Lord, Ishwara, could not protect his own consort. Not only that, but after she had committed suicide he showed his anger. What use was it? It did not bring back Sati Devi. One's father-in-law is to be respected, yet Shiva killed Daksha Prajapati. The surprising nature of this behavior from such a high devata is meant by the word 'gaDa'.

'gaDa' can also be applied to Indra's behavior, in killing Vritrasura. Not only was Vritrasura a Brahmin, but he was also a Vaishnava. Indra had quite a bit of difficulty killing him and resorted to tricky means, pretending to be his friend. In fact, once in battle, when Indra drops his weapon, Vrtra asks him to pick it up, saying that both of them are under the control of Hari, it is Vrtra's destiny to be killed, and Indra's to kill him. These words shock Indra, since they came from an asura. The word used in this verse to describe Vrtra is 'haarva'. p's and h's being interchangeable in old Kannada, paarva means someone who acquired the knowledge that the Lord Lord Vishnu is all-supreme. Vrtra was not an ordinary asura, he was the

Gandharva Chitraketu, born as an asura due to a curse. So by his very nature he is a Vaishnava. For killing such a Brahmin Indra became so weak afterwards, doing all kinds of prayaschitta. Of course, Indra, being a devata is not affected by sin, however due to his prarabdha karma he had to suffer.

We need to interpret "jIvara kondobba" carefully. As pointed out in the Gita, the jIva itself never dies, it is eternal. So what does "killing jIvas" mean?

This is a Bahuvrihi compound, that which has a jIva, namely the body. Yama, the Lord of Death has the post of leading the soul away from its body, death being nothing more than the separation of the soul from the body. Yama does not really have a bad name and is known as Dharmaraaja, as we shall see in the next verse. So the term 'kulagEdi' can also be interpreted as referring to the brother of Yama, known as Mrtyu. It is this Mrtyu who comes to take away Markandeya, not Yama.

Manmatha, the god of love, also holds a very high position in the deva taratamya (equal to Indra). To get Shiva attracted to Paravati, Manmatha released an enchanting arrow at Shiva, who was engaged in tapas. Shiva was temporarily affected by it, but as soon as he realized who caused it, he opened his 3rd eye and burned Manmatha to ashes. The devas are known as amara (immortal), yet Manmatha was burned to ashes. This too is incredible - 'gaDa!' Later however Manmatha's body was restored.

Lakshmi lists these various defects in the devatas and it is evident that all of them are dependent on Lord Vishnu. These defects are indicative of dependence. From eternity her consort is Lord Sri Hari, who alone is Independent. Though the question of her choosing any one else does not arise, this stage is set only to indicate the supremacy of Lord Narayana.

**dharma unTobbanalli hemmeya hesarige
ammamma takka guNavilla |
kShammeya biTTobba narakadali jIvara
marmava meTTi kolisuva ||22**

dharma - Righteousness
unTu - is there
obbanalli - in one of them
hemmeya - as per his proud
hesarige - name.
ammamma - My God!
takka - The matching
guNavilla - qualities are not there.
biTTu - Setting aside
kShammeya - forgiveness,
obba - one of them
kolisuva - kills (tortures)

jIvara - souls
narakadali - in Hell,
meTTi - trampling on
marmava - their vital organs.

Dharma or righteousness is present in Yama Dharmaraja, just as his proud name indicates. My God! He doesn't have the qualities to match his name. Setting aside forgiveness, he tortures souls in Hell, trampling on their vital organs.

Here we must not take vital organs to mean that of the physical body, since they souls no longer have bhautika sharIra (physical body) in Hell. The body referred to is the aniruddha deha or yaatana sharIra.

Yama Dharmaraja is appointed to a position where he gives pain to the souls in Naraka. Though well-versed in Dharma, he doesn't have the opportunity to show forgiveness because he deals with the wicked souls sent to Hell. This is one interpretation of why he doesn't have the qualities to suit his name.

Also, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, who is an avatara of Yama, while in the forest during Vanavasa did not want to punish the Kauravas. It is the duty of the Kshatriya to fight against the evil and protect the good. Duryodhana had tried to burn the Pandavas alive, molest their wife, cheat them out of their wealth, and try to kill them numerous times, so he is certainly someone who deserves to be punished. Bhima and Draupadi had to convince him that war was the right course of action, similar to how Krishna convinced Arjuna on the Kurukshetra field. It is surprising that an avatara of Yama Dharmaraja himself was confused about what Dharma really is.

The groom befitting Lakshmi should be someone who is not just Dharma by name but who actually knows Dharma. As Jagannatha Dasaru describes in his song "Dasoham", "dharmaviduttama dharmanidhe", the one who knows Dharma more than anyone else, who is the abode of Dharma is Lord Narayana.

But a question can be raised. Yamadharma raja punishes those in Hell, but since Hari is the real doer, He is the one punishing the bad souls. Why isn't this a defect on his part?

First of all, in the eyes of the world, lokadrishti, it is Yama who is torturing the souls. In tattvadrishti, the eyes of philosophy, this isn't a flaw either for Yama or Vishnu, since they are just giving the souls in Hell what they deserve. If the souls were tortured because of some cruel desire on the part of Yama or Vishnu, then it would certainly be a defect, but such is not the defect. The defect on the part of Yama is that he was assigned such a role. He does not have the freedom to be assigned some other position besides that of torturing souls. This asvaatantrya(lack of independence) is present in Yama, but not Vishnu.

The next verse talks about Bali Chakravarti

**khaLanante obba tanage sallada bhaagyava | ballidaganji barigaida | durlabha
muktige dUravendenisuva paa | taaLa taLakke iLida gaDa || 23**

ante - As though
khaLanu - someone who is wicked,
obba - one person

barigaida = bari kai aada: came back empty-handed, having gifted away bhagyava - wealth
sallada - that is inappropriate tange - for him, anji - in fear of ballidage =
baliShThaninda: one who is more powerful.
iLida - He descended
taLakke - to the surface of
paataaLa - the pAtALa loka,
endenisuva - which is called, but not actually dUravu - far from durlabha - the difficult to attain
muktige - state of Moksha.
gaDa =aashcharya: Wow!

As though he were someone who is wicked, Bali Chakravarti became empty-handed after he lost the wealth that was inappropriate for him, fearing the more powerful Vamana avatara of Vishnu. He descended to the surface of pAtALa loka, which is called (but isn't actually) far from the state of Moksha.

Bali chakravarti will be Indra in next manvantara. But at the time of Vamana avatara, he tried to take the position of Indra before the end of his tenure (Indra only occupies the post of ruling Swarga for a limited time). Thus Vishnu took the form of Vamana to take back what did not belong to Bali.

Another time Bali was taken by kalipravesha and tried to steal Vishnu's crown. Fearing Vishnu and Garuda, he gave it back. So this verse could refer to that as well.

Bali is a moksha-yogya jIva, fit for moksha. So by descending to pAtALa loka it did not hinder his path to moksha. pAtALa loka (the nether world) is merely known as being far from Moksha.

Vamana actually blessed Bali. However his charity had some tamasic aspect to it. First of all, he should not have taken what belonged to Indra. Second of all, the real owner is the Lord Himself. When giving dAna, he should not think that he is really giving dAna to the Lord. He should have the feeling that he is giving to Lord what the Lord owns similar to "kereya nIranu kerege teredu".

ellaraayuShyava shimshumaaradeva |
sallIleyinda tolagisuva |
olle naanivara nityamuttaideyendu |
ballavarennna bhajisuvaru || 24

shimshumaaradeva - Narayana in the form of shimshumaara (scorpion form in which He controls time)
sallIleyinda - as a sort of play tolagisuva - takes away or diminishes ellara - everyone's aayushyava - life.

naanu - I

olle - do not accept

ivara - these (whose life span is brought to an end, in the sense that the physical body is destroyed, meaning I am appropriate for only Lord Hari)
nityamuttaideyendu - Being with him, I eternally have a husband
ballavaru - The wise
bhajisuvaru - praise enna - me.

Narayana, as kaalaniyamaka (controller of time), in the form of a shimshumaara, takes away everyone's life. For him, this is all just a sort of play. The wise praise Lakshmi as

eternally having a husband. Only Narayana is appropriate for her, since other deities are not eternal.

Though the devas are known as "amara" -eternal, when the time for the mahapralaya or Brahma-kalpAnta pralaya (great destruction) comes, even Brahma, Shiva, Indra, and other deities, have their physical bodies removed. Shiva is certainly known as the destroyer, but he destroys, the ones upto certain level only. Brahma as the creator, creates only the ones below him. The creator and destroyer of both is Vishnu. These other deities are not eternal the way Narayana is, because they only hold their positions for a limited span of time. In fact it is Narayana, as the controller of time who takes away the life force of not just humans but also these deities. In the eternal chain of Brahmakalpas, in each kalpa, Mukhyaprana from prior kalpa is brought to Brahmapadavi (the rank of Brahma). The one earlier than Mukhyaprana (known as lAtavya) from prior kalpa is made as Mukhyaprana in the current kalpa. Rudra from prior kalpa will be made as Shesha in current kalpa. The earlier one in Shesha/Rudra gaNa from prior kalpa will be made as Rudra in the current kalpa. Brahma, Shesha, Garuda and all those whose sAdhana is complete will go to moksha.

When one Brahma goes to moksha, he is followed by another Brahma and the cycle goes on. The lifespan of Brahma and other deities is but a blink of an eye for Lakshmi. So she would choose only Lord Narayana as her consort. This is all a poetic presentation. The question of choosing does not arise. She is known as "nitya aviyogini" and "nityamukta" (eternally present with Hari and eternally liberated. So, she never had a physical body).

Sri Vadirajaru is very clever with the use of words. He prefixed lla with the word 'sat', meaning good. We must not think that Narayana derives some sort of sick pleasure from destroying other deities. Jagannatha Dasaru in the Harikathamrutasaara gave a nice analogy: "maLala manegaLa maaDi kelavu kaaladoLaaDi mOdadi tuLidu keDisuva teradi lakumI ramaNa lOkagaLa"...just the way a child enjoys creating sandcastles and then destroying them, with no ill intent in destroying it, so too, the consort of Lakshmi, Lord Narayana creates and destroys the world. Birth and death are a part of living in samsara, affecting everything from a blade of grass all the way up to Brahma himself. The kaalaniyamka, Lord Vishnu who is free from this, is the only one that is a suitable match for Lakshmi.

**prakR^itiya guNadinda kaTTuvaDedu naanaa vikR^itigoLagaagi bhavadalli
sukhaduHkhavumba bommaadi jIvaru duHkhake dUraLenipa enageNeyo || 25**

bommaadi jIvaru - The souls starting from Brahma kaTTuvaDedu - are bound by
guNadinda - the ropes of prakR^itiya - the Primordial Matter, Prakriti.
oLagaagi - They undergo
naanaa - various
vikR^itige - defects
bhavadalli - in this Samsara.

sukhaduHkhavumba - They experience sorrow and happiness.
eNeye - Are they equal
enage - to me,
dUraLenipa - far removed from
duHkhake - any sorrow?

Lakshmi devi describes how all the souls starting from Brahma are bound by the ropes of Prakriti's 3 guNas - sattva, rajas, and tamas. All these souls undergo defects since they are in samsara. They experience both sorrow and happiness.

The word guNa has a double meaning in Sanskrit and Sri Vadirajaru uses that here. It can mean rope or quality. Prakriti is composed of 3 qualities - sattva, rajas, and tamas. These qualities tie us down in samsara. Arjuna asks Krishna in the Gita what causes one to do sin even though unwilling. Krishna replies "kaama eSha krodha eSha rajogunasamudbhavaH". It is Rajasic qualities like desire and anger that cause us to do bad deeds which we would not normally do. Being in samsara, the jIvas are affected by this.

The vikaara, or defect involved in transformation can either refer to manovikaara, the mind being swayed by desire, anger, greed, etc. Or it can refer to vikaara in the sense that the jIva's body undergoes change, and the jIva becomes associated with several bodies through reincarnation.

Lakshmi is of course free from both of these. As the controlling deity of Prakriti, the three gunas have no effect on her.

Here a question arises - what about Brahma, Saraswati, Vayu, and Bharati? Aren't they above this? For the most part yes. Unlike other souls, they do not have attachment to their bodies, which Krishna points out is the cause of happiness and sorrow "maatrasparshaastu kaunteya sitOShNasukhaduHkhadaaH". However, for a split second, to show that they are not in mukti state, they too may be touched by duHkha. Even for Brahma, it is said that :

"aj~nAnaM tu chaturvAraM dvivAraM bhayameva cha shoko.api tAvAn"

"[For Brahma] There are four occasions when ignorance is shown and twice when fear is shown and only that many times there is touch of sorrow".

So, the following things are to be understood in this context.

1. In all these four occasions, they lasted "ara xaNaa" (half an instant)
2. As an order and will of Sri Hari, Brahma accepted this.
3. There is no "mano vikAra(perturbance of mind)" because of these situations.

Are they equal to Lakshmi, who being nityamuktaLu, and the abhimani devata for Prakriti, is never subject to sorrow? No, none of those below Brahma are equal to Lakshmi, so she will not marry them. She is free from samsara and would only want someone who is also ever-liberated, not affected by duHkha, and that is Vishnu.

FAQ on Dvaita Philosophy (Philosophy propagated by Sri Guru Raghavendra) to be used for Studies in context with Guru Raghavendra by Keshav Rao Tadipatri:

Some neovedantic books seem to be the source of the haphazard knowledge, exhibited by some.

We don't have the ability to debate whether Rayaru is right or wrong, be it on the list or off the list. However through his grace and the grace of his antagata Vayu and tadantaryami Sri Hari, I feel confident that I can make a humble effort to clear the doubts of the true seekers of knowledge and show how Rayaru's teachings were very logical. For that a person should come with humbleness and eagerness to learn.

Q : When our own Lord Vishnu himself has so humbly admitted to Shiva's supremacy, why do you waste your precious time and energy in trying to prove otherwise.

A: The paramaguru (teacher's teacher) of Sri Raghavendraswamy argued with a great scholar for 9 days and dispelled all such doubts, as will be explained later. He did not think that it is wasting precious time. The scriptural rule is "sarvada vishhNusarvottamatvaM pratipAdaya" (always establish Vishnusarvottamatva))

Q: Why should one hold such a narrow standpoint by saying that one has to be punished only if he is a menace to the entire world (like Kamsa, but not Daksha)?

A: I only said that there is difference in Krishna killing his father-in-law and Shiva killing his father-in-law. Both of them are not the same category.

Never did I say that only the menaces to the world are to be punished. Even in our daily lives, we see that a father punishes his son. Does it mean that the son is a menace to the world?

Q: Again is it ok to blindly generalize statements? If one says that Daksha being a Devatha was good by nature, can one say Prahlada, and Vibheeshana being Asuras are evil by nature ?
definitely not ! as there are exceptions for every rule! Though Daksha didn't have asuric qualities, characters like him and Ravana are so ungrateful and wily, that they try to overpower the very same source(God) from whom they seek/gain power.

A: There is difference between Mularupa and avatArarUpa. There are some rules, which have no exception. For ex.

1. All the devata-s are guranteed moksha or liberation.
2. Lord is infinite in all the auspicious qualities.

The devatas are inherently good. Their occasional bad acts are due to "asurAvesha"(like Daksha had asurAvesha). Prahlada is a karmaja devata, by name Shankukarna, and due to the curse from Brahma is born in

Asurayoni as Prahlada. Vibhishana is Kanvamuni in his mUlarupa. Ravana has two jivas (Hiranyakashipu and Jaya).
Jaya and Vijaya were cursed to be born in Asurayoni (3 births).

Most of these asuras/raxasa-s believed that Shiva is more powerful than Vishnu and so did penance to Shiva (in some cases Brahma) and thru boons wanted to overpower Vishnu and so got crushed.

Q: So, when all Faiths claim that Liberation can be achieved thru' their path, how could one claim that Lord Hari alone is capable of giving liberation, and is the supreme most?

A: The scriptures called the All-Supreme being as Hari, who is also known thru many other names. Not only that, he is sarva shabda vAchya (known thru all names and sounds). Since He has all the names, He lets others use His names. That does not mean others become Him. Just as someone gets named as Purushottama, yet he does not become Purushottama, so also the devatas, who have His names do not become Him.

Our scriptures clearly indicate that present Shiva is born in next kalpa as Adishesha (the present Adishesha will get liberated).

Rudrapadavi, Brahmapadavi, Indrapadavi are posts. There is no such thing as Narayanapadavi. Narayana is known by the name Rudra also, but Rudra is not known thru the name Narayana.

Only Narayana and Lakshmi can give liberation and Vayu can do so thru the permission from Narayana. Rudra (or Shiva) himself says that for moksha one has to go to Narayana.

If one goes thru the works of Rayaru, it will become quite evident that Shiva is not liberated. That in no way undermines Shiva. It is extremely foolish to think that there is a war between Shiva and Narayana in this list.

"VaishnavAnAM yathA Shambho". The greatness of Shiva and his Vishnu bhakti have been repeated ad nauseum. Those who brag to have poetic imagination must also have the ability to enjoy the poetic skill and also philosophical purport behind the great work of Sri vadirajaru.

Q: Aren't philosophical debates an indication of intolerance? Why should they be there?

A: There is difference between "intolerance" and "influence". There were always philosophical debates and even Rayaru did engage in philosophical debates and defeated many scholars including those, who believed in "Shiva's supremacy". This does not mean that Rayaru was intolerant. The sole purpose is to establish right knowledge. This may help that person, who engaged in the debate. Another important factor is that this may help many people who follow these arguments and also many many more in the future generations!

Q: Isn't Shiva prevedic? Vishnu and Brahma are just vedic.

A: There is no such thing as prevedic, as Vedas are eternal. Only indologists use the terms like prevedic, postvedic, etc.

Not only Madhvas, there are other schools also, which believe in the eternality of Vedas.

There are lot of people, who think that saying that Lord Shiva is not All-Supreme is condemning Shiva. They all live in a thorough state of confusion. Among them, those, who are open-minded and willing to listen, have hope for getting corrected. Those, who have closed mind, have no hope at all.

So, my request to all the devotees of Rayaru is to be open-minded. It is perfectly true that dry polemics is of no use. Dry Logic is of two kinds.

1. Non-usage of scriptures and using only logic
2. Indiscriminate usage of scriptures and disregarding consistency.

Rayaru has strongly condemned both and stressed on a disciplined usage of scriptures and having consistency as stated by Sri Madhvacharya.

Q: How do we know that Rayaru thinks that Vishnu is all-Supreme. His teachings may have got diluted by some vested interests.

A: His works and life-history are standing testimony for the fact that he believed in Vishnu supremacy. That in no way interferes his blessing all kinds of people. Even ordinary people like us are mostly cordial to many people in our work places and daily lives, irrespective of their personal faiths.

I am stating the following historical fact, which was recorded (as per the facilities of the time and passed on).

There was an extra-ordinary scholar (named Sri Lingarajendra), who knew by heart not only purana's, but vedas also and had exceptionally superb logical skills and believed in Shiva's supremacy. Sri Rayaru's Paramaguru, Sri Vijayindraru had a historical debate with him in the presence of the Tanjore king Chevvappa Nayaka. The debate went for nine days. The agreement for the debate was this. If Sri Vijayindraru loses he would take up Shaiva dikshe and become Sri Lingarajendra's disciple. If Sri Lingarajendra loses he would give up control over temples there and would not give Shaiva dikshe to anyone. Look at the level of self-confidence of Sri Vijayindraru. If he loses the bet, he has everything to lose (as he was pITHadhipati and yati), where as if the opponent loses, he does not have to become the disciple and has much less to lose. Guess what? It attracted people from all over for such a historical event. Every argument of Sri Lingarajendra was refuted. The score is not 60-40, not 70-30, not 80-20, not 90-10, but a perfect 100-0.

That is the greatness of our scriptures (and of course Sri Madhvacharya, Sri Vijayindraru, Sri Rayaru). If there is no perfect consistency, we will be left with lingering doubts. The greatness of the saint is further seen from his words to the opponent - "You lost because your assumptions were wrong, your theory was wrong, etc. , not because your logical skill is deficient. You are a fantastic debater."

The greatness of such classical debaters is that Sri Lingarajendra also did not wander all over and did not bring quotes from Christianity or Islam, etc. They knew the discipline of an argument.

Q: Is it proper to compare various gods ? We are ordinary mortals. How can we compare?

A: Yes, we cannot compare on our own. We have no capacity. If the Shashtra-s that informed us about them make the comparison, then we should make an effort to understand the reason and purpose behind it.

Q: That is individual interpretation. Each one can interpret the shastra-s differently. That is why, we have so many schools of philosophy. We should respect them all. We should show tolerance towards them all.

A: Disagreeing is not disrespecting. Disagreeing is not intolerance. One must have ability to differentiate between social structure and philosophical structure. Rayaru has very well demonstrated that not only prior to entering Brindavana, but even after. He has blessed all kinds of devotees with materialistic prosperity, yet strongly believed in what he considered as right philosophy.

Disagreement can come out in two ways -

1. Where we express the disagreement
2. Where we do not express the disagreement

Let me give couple of worldly examples for both of them.

1. We may have a boss and an assistant, both of whom are atheists. We don't agree with their atheistic beliefs. We get on very well with them (at least in most of the cases). We don't argue with them either. Personally, it does not bother me. Also my religion or philosophy does not bother them. We have disagreement and tolerance too with no need for expression.

2. If a person says $2 + 2 = 7$, we immediately say "No, $2 + 2 = 4$, but not 7". Just because, we expressed our disagreement, are we said to have intolerance? Surely not.

Q: In simple math, it is easy, but in complex philosophy, how can we be sure as to what is right? Every one can claim that his/her interpretation is right.

A: That is why a proper guru and proper guidance is needed. Rayaru has already demonstrated it. If his faith gave him the strength and if we trust him, what is the hindrance in following him? One must not go with "svakapola kalpita buddhi" (thoughts formed by one's own wild imaginations).

Q: Can't we just not even talk about who is the greatest? Why do we need to know that. This will unnecessarily lead to frictions and hard-feeling. Always, the arguments can be made any which way. How do we know that such gradation exists?

A: It is like cat closing its eyes and thinking that no one is seeing it. Now let us approach it in two ways. One is simple logic and the other is pramana-s.

The need for pramana-s is to make sure that our approach is correct. The purpose of logic in this case is only to get the clue that we need to go to that concept of gradation.

Please note that "dry logic or polemics" can take us only to some extent in a correct path and has potential to take us awry.

Let us look at the following possibilities.

1. There is no gradation among gods. They are all equal.
2. There is gradation, but no one knows. We should not think about it and we should not talk about it as we are not fit to do that.
3. There is gradation and it varies depending on the thinking of the devotees.
4. There is gradation and scriptures have described it.

If 1. is chosen, then that also needs proof. One cannot just simply say "I like that way and so let us all go that way".

If 2. is chosen, it is like the blind cat's approach. Or ignorance is bliss policy.

If 3. is chosen, one must remember that it is not political system and there is no election process. The thoughts of devotees do not and can not determine gradation.

The only choice left is 4. We have to take refuge in scriptures only and seek proper guidance.

If we see contradicting statements, we have to go to qualified gurus. Then comes the next issue. There are conflicting ideas. What should one do? If multiple technical papers give conflicting result, do we sit back and say "let us not talk about it as it may give rise to friction and hard-feelings". We analyze and resolve. Similarly with the help of scriptures, we have to discuss and decide. That is why debates have taken place and they did not create animosities always. There were lot of good things that happened also.

Q: Look at the jihadis - even they say their God is the greatest and all other God's are inferior. If we say our God is greatest, then are we not just like them?

A: No, we are not saying "OUR" God is the greatest, in the sense that we don't own God. We are saying "THE" God is greatest. When we say "OUR", that is only due to the feeling of high devotion to him.

1. Jihadis do not believe in "sarvabhUtadaya" (compassion to all the beings).

Our system preaches "sarvabhUtadaya".

2. Jihadis believe in exterminating those who do not believe in their system.

We do not even think of such intolerant process of extermination.

Not only that, we do not even insist that all the others also should follow our beliefs only.

3. They believe in rejoicing in torturing the non-believers.
We are not supposed to hurt any one just because they do not believe in our system.

(Some may argue that there are some intolerant Hindus, who did similar acts. I am not comparing the people here, but the system itself. Our definition of "dharma" is broad-based. Compassion is part of it. "dhAraNA dharmaH" = Dharma is that which supports.)

4. Intolerance has no place in our system, where as intolerance is the guiding factor for Jehadis.

So, where is the comparison?

Q: What are the other devotees supposed to do if the tone and language that is used is not very nice and it is hurtful and objectionable?

A: The English language is not the best language to express such sensitive thoughts. It is also only a mailing process and people are free to suggest any alternate patterns of expression. Instead of going ballistic, one can give alternate expressions or alternate explanations that are agreeable and in accordance with our scriptures. These are just postings and not etched in stone as final authority. Improvements are always welcome.

Constructive criticisms have positive effect and destructive criticisms have negative effect. The goal here is only to understand the heart of our scriptures.

**Q: If this is hurtful to all the members in the list and no one likes these, why bother even to go with such explanations?
Why can't it just be stopped?**

A: If it is hurtful to all, then truly it has to be stopped. However, that is not true. There were many personal letters, who expressed their joy at the postings with expressions like "tears rolling down their eyes" and "thrill at the wonderful presentation", etc. which outnumbered the letters of those, whose face is reddened with anger.

Our acharya's statement "bahu chitra jagat, bahudhA karaNA" (This universe is so strange and so varied with many diverse activities of many beings...) hits our face daily.

Q: Even if only a portion of people are angry, why can't this be stopped with consideration to those?

A: The goal in life is not to form fan clubs or cults with narrow beliefs. We have to see the truth in our scriptures. That is what Rayaru preached and lived for. If we need to tread his path, we need to have the courage to follow his teachings. All those, who have expressed their disapproval, how much have they read Rayaru's works? Are they at least aware of the works of Rayaru ? Have they even

heard of a work called "Parimala", which is a commentary on "Srimanniyayasudha"?

Q. What about the prior incarnation of Sri Raghavendraswamy. Did he always believe in Hari sarvottamatva? Did his guru and paramaguru also believe in that?

A. The prior incarnations were Bhakta Prahlada and Sri Vyasaraaja. in both of them, he believed in Hari sarvottamatva, as many are aware of. His Guru Sri Sudhindra and Paramaguru Sri Vijayindra tirtha and also his guru Sri Surendra tirtha were all proponents of Hari sarvottamatva.

Q. Let that be. They can preach Hari sarvottamatva. Did they do refutation of Shiva sarvottamatva? Why can't both coexist?

A. They did the refutation as the history proves. There are several incidents from the life history of above saints, where they debated with those who preached shiva sarvottamatva. Sri Appannacharyaru had so much respect for Sri Rayaru and adored every quality of Rayaru, especially the debating skill of Rayaru, which is essential to remove wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge and right knowledge cannot coexist.

Q. Who are we to evaluate the qualities of Brahma Vishnu and Maheshwara?

A. Of course we are nobody to make our judgement. That is why we have to accept what shstra-s say. Then the next question is "what about so many kinds of interpretation?". For that the answer is "let us go by what Rayaru says".

Q. Just as there is mention Maheshwara and Brahma accepting the supremacy of Sri Hari, there is also mention of Sri Hari and Brahma accepting the supremacy of Meheswara. They could not reach or see end of Shiva linga, when Shive grew. Sri Rama and Sri Krishna worshipped Shiva. What about all these?

A. The answers and explanations for all these are present in our own scriptures. If people are interested, I will try to give the answers to these. As I mentioned Rayaru is well aware of all these and yet debated and defeated all those opponents.

Q. All the gods are in harmony. All the devotees and the gods are in harmony. Why are we disturbing our harmony?

A. Of course. Does any one has to doubt "Is Sri Rayaru and Sri Rama devaru in harmony"?. When Sri Rayaru is a devotee of Sri Rama, they are in great harmony. Maheshwara and Brahma are even greater devotees. So, the harmony is even greater! The harmony grows exponentially, when the knowledge is pure and clear. How can our harmony be disturbed if we go in the lines of teaching of Sri Rayaru?

Q. Don't the devotees do the Darshana of Lord Venkateshwara after taking the Darshana of Kapileshwara at Kapila teertha? Are not all the gods worshipworthy?

Of course. We have to worship all the "devata-s" as parivAra devata-s of the Lord. The Lord has made not only that rule, but also that we have to understand proper gradation.

Otherwise, we get all mixed up. That is why Rayaru followed Madhva siddhAnta and one of the important tenets there is "jiivagaNaaH hareranucharaaH nIchochchabhAvaM gataaH".

(All the sentient ones, including Meheswara, Brahma and Durga are followers of Sri Hari and they have gradation)

Q. During the Vanavaasa Rama and Laxmana stayed in Hampi and during the punyakara Chaaturmaasa and worshipped Sri Virupakshadevaru of Hampi. In Rameshvara, Rama worshipped Shiva. As Sri Krishna also, he worshipped Shiva. What about all these?

A. Whenever Sri Rama or Shri Krishna worshipped Shiva, Shiva just passed the prayers back to the Lord Hari, who is his antaryAmi. We have to remember one thing. Gods are not politicians standing for election and we are not voters to choose our candidate. We have to simply accept what shastra-s say and if they are confusing, take the helping guidance of ones like Sri Rayaru. We are not trying to make the things as per our understanding, but we are trying to understand things as per the mking of shastra-s, based on the teachings of Sri Rayaru.

Q. Our Mantralaya Sri Raghavendrateertharu has given a unique regard and respect to Shesha Garuda Rudradevaru along with Sri Hari Vayu Guru.

A. Surely. We have to do that exactly as per the teachings of Rayaru, which are like "neechochchabhaavaM gataaH" and "tadbhakti taaratamyena taaratamyam vimuktigaM", etc.

Please note what Sri Appannacharyaru says about Rayaru

"sachchaastraatividuushhakaakhilamRishhavaadiibha-kaNThiiravaH" (He was like a lion to the elephants of debaters with pseudo-knowledge, who are defiling the flawless shaastra-s).

Rayaru blessed all kinds of devotees, including foreigners, but when it came to keeping the right knowledg and rejecting the wrong knowledge, he was "vedavyaasamuniishamadhvayatiraaT-Tiikaarya vaakyaamRitaM j~nAtva-advaitamataM halaahalasamam tyaktvaa..." (He understood the message of Sri Vedavyasa, MadhvayatiraaT, Tikacharyaru and rejected Advaita knowledge (of abhedavAda) as if it is Halahala poison. Please develop the ability to differentiate between philosophy and people.

Q. Should we not welcome warmly all our world devotees in the folds of Bhakti of our Mantralaya Rayaru and Bichali Sri Appannacharyaru?

A. Of course. With open arms, we welcome all the devotees.

Let us always remember the simple fact that Rayaru, out of grace and kindness, has made those great teachings much simpler for his devotees. Those who claim to be devotees of Rayaru and Sri Appannaacharyaru and yet don't follow the teachings of Sri Rayaru and the message given by Sri Appannacharyaru, are tantamount to be making an effort to backstab Sri Rayaru and Sri Appannacharyaru. Their efforts will not cause even a dent in Sri Rayaru and Sri Appannacharyaru, but will only boomerang. There is a big difference between "not understanding" and "opposing". Rayaru will forgive the former, but never the latter.

Q. We need to feed ourselves and lead peaceful life and try to get Bhakti, Gnyana and Vairaagya. Many of us are all still in the first phase of Bhakti. Do we need all this?

A. The need for harmony and peaceful life must always be there. That is perfectly fine. Why should that interfere with quest for truth? When we are only in the first phase of bhakti, there is all the more reason not to oppose Rayaru and his teachings. Right?

Q. Why can't we just use the mantra - Bichali Sri AppaNacharya priya Mantralaya Sri Raghavendrateertha urubhyoa namaH and ignore all the debates?

While saying that, let us also understand what their message is. Correct understanding of shastra-s is not a hindrance for cordiality, but a great asset for cordiality. As a final word, let me dispell all the wrong notions of some people by quoting our Acharya, who has exhorted "naanajanasya shushhruushhaa kaaryaa".

"We have to serve all kinds of people [not just our kind]."

Why do people get mixed up between philosophy and social life? Sri Satyadhyanaatiirtharu quotes a good example for this. Two lawyers argue heavily in the court of law and after work, every day they go together for dinner and they show to the world that they are very close pals. When asked by the confused ones as to "how is it that you argue so much and yet act like this?", they answered "In the court room, the goal is to arrive at the tuth. Just becuase we argue, it does not mean that we have enmity."

Most of us are cordial in professional life. We can continue to be cordial in social life as well. In philosophy, the sole goal is to nail the truth. It is even made easier by the grace of Rayaru. Let us drink the nectar of the teachings of Rayaru.

Q. Paramatma - Iswar is one and gives blessings, darshan to his/ her devotees as they pray - whatever name or form they call out - narayana, mahadeva, bhagawati etc, by the grace of great avatars - bhaktas - Guru's like Shri Raghavendra Swamy, Shankaracharya, Namacharya, Ramanujacharya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa etc.

We tend to get confused since Shiva Purana - says Shiva is superior, Devi Mahtmayam says Devi is the primordial Mother etc, Vishnu purana says Narayana is superior.

When a small child who cannot yet speak or is just able to cobble a few words, calls out to the Mother - Father, they come running to answer the child's heartfelt call, without bothering about the how the child gramatically spelled or called out the name.

I am sure the merciful Lord, who is full of Love, will respond to the pure and sincere call of the devotee. That's the biggest temptation - the call of Bhakta - which even the Lord cannot resist you may call it the Lord's weakness, the Bhakta's love.

A. Lord does not have any weakness. Compassion is not weakness, but strength. Surely the Lord is ONE. The Lord is "sarvashabdavAchya (all

names and all sounds describe him)". The question here is not what name is given to the Lord, but how the Lord is extolled. The child can call his/her mother any which way it can.

But if the child goes to someone else and calls her as mother, that someone else may help the child, but tells the child that she is not the true mother.

When gajendra prayed the Lord, he addressed the Lord as one, who is the root cause of everything and one who creates, maintains and destroys all, and one who controls it all, etc. No specific name was mentioned, yet all names were mentioned. Lord Hari came to save him.

When Lord Krishna preached Gita, he did not say that one can pray any one, whom he/she likes. He said that He alone is all supreme (again and again). In one place He says "Among Rudra-s, I am Shankara. Among senadhipati-s, I am Skandha, etc." People tend to interpret to imply non-difference between Hari and Shiva. That will be silly, because He also said "among weapons, I am Vajrayudha". Can we deduce that there is non-difference between Him and the Vajra?

Whom ever you pray with devotion for only material things, that god will come and fulfill your material things. if that is all what you want, then that is fine. If one has a higher goal like moxa, then one has to pray the Lord, who has that capacity. How to know who has that? You have to go by the scriptures that revealed them to you. That in no way disrespecting other gods. When you say that Lord is ONE, remember that Lord is ONE. If you start claiming that every Baba is Lord or every god is the Supreme Lord, then that is the source of confusion.