

PĀÑCARĀTRA TEXTS
IN THE TENKALAI-VATAKALAI DISPUTE

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BACKGROUND

Professor OBERHAMMER and his students, over the past three decades or so, have done a remarkable amount of solid scholarship on the textual traditions of Pāñcarātra and Viśiṣṭādvaita and their mutual relationship. For that they have earned the gratitude and admiration of all those who have done research in either of these areas. Future scholars in these areas will be able to stand on the broad shoulders of the work of these pioneers.

I could not adequately summarize the scholarly contribution of the “Vienna School” of Pāñcarātra research. Nevertheless, the discussions of this work in the Symposium raised several points especially relevant to the present endeavor:

(1) The Pāñcarātra tradition is old, but not all its texts are. As with *itihāsapurāṇa*, the texts we have grew up over a long period of time and have enjoyed much layering.

(2) Pāñcarātra tradition and its texts have a peculiar historical context which is not yet well understood. Who is writing these texts? For what audience? And for what purpose? Who is passing on these texts, and for what purpose are they being studied and utilized? The changing socio-historical context of the authors and audience of the Pāñcarātra texts has yet to be fully understood and articulated. The available texts suggest that they arose under royal patronage, written by priestly ritual specialists and advisors to kings.

(3) The authority of Pāñcarātra texts is defended by most Viśiṣṭādvaita theologians (Yāmuna to Vedāntadeśika and beyond) in their Sanskrit works (with Rāmānuja as a notable exception). These works were written primarily for an “outsider” audience of rival Brahmanical schools. But Śrīvaiṣṇava “in house” literature in Maṇipravāḷa simply assumes the authority and hoary antiquity of all Pāñcarātra texts.

(4) By the time the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition had coalesced into an identifiable textual tradition and religious movement, the historical and religious context, in South India at least, was quite different from that of the earlier strands of the Pāñcarātra tradition. The Śrīvaiṣṇava theologians don’t always know quite what to make of these texts and

their concerns. The authors of Pāñcarātra texts talk to the royal court and its ritual specialists. The Śrīvaiṣṇava authors, however, write as *ācāryas* and theologians for a popular movement. Though they see the Pāñcarātra texts as authoritative, their reading of them is highly selective. They see them through the lens of their own tradition and its other sources: the devotional experiences of the Āḷvārs, legendary figures of *itihāsapurāṇa*, and the writings of their own tradition's previous *ācāryas*.

(5) Twenty-five years ago, scholars tended to assume that Pāñcarātra influenced Śrīvaiṣṇavism, but not the other way around. It is clear now, after the work of Professor OBERHAMMER and his students, that many of the Pāñcarātra texts we now have arose after the Viśiṣṭādvaita and the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition were well underway, and that the influence is at least as strong in this opposite direction. We know now that Śrīvaiṣṇavism exerted its doctrinal influence on later Pāñcarātra texts, presumably as Pāñcarātra priests and Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas both became more involved in Vaiṣṇava temple rituals and ceremonies for a Śrīvaiṣṇava more popular audience.

(6) Often overlooked or taken for granted by scholars is the impact of the Pāñcarātra tradition on the liturgy of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. The practice of *mantra* initiation in Śrīvaiṣṇavism is poorly understood and underappreciated by Western scholars, but enormously important in the actual practice and promulgation of the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition.¹ This practice clearly is related to a long tradition of Pāñcarātra use of and speculation about *mantras* and their meaning. Some of the most important and widely read Śrīvaiṣṇava theological texts are the *rahasya* commentaries, which explicate the three Śrīvaiṣṇava *mantras* used in initiation ritual.

The three basic Śrīvaiṣṇava *mantras* used in the *pañcasamskāra* initiation from twelfth century to today are as follows:

(1) the Tirumantra or Mūlamantra: *om namo nārāyaṇāya*, “Om, Homage to Nārāyaṇa!”

¹ For more on this topic, see RANGACHARI 1931. To my knowledge, no up-to-date anthropological research on the Śrīvaiṣṇava community's practice has yet been published.

(2) the Dvayamantra: *śrīmannārāyaṇacaranau śaraṇaṃ prapadye || śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*, “I seek the feet of the Glorious Nārāyaṇa as my refuge. Homage to Glorious Nārāyaṇa!”

(3) the Caramaśloka (BhG 18.66): *sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja || ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ ||*, “Abandoning all *dharmas*, seek Me alone as refuge. I will release you from all sins, do not fear.”

It’s true that only one of these *mantras* is mentioned in Pāñcarātra texts, the Tirumantra (in LT 17.19 and 24.68ff.; AS 52). This widely known *mantra* may even predate the Pāñcarātra tradition, for it is mentioned in the Ālvār’s hymns as a part of temple liturgy.² The ceremony which bestows these *mantras*, and recites the lineage of *ācāryas* through which they came (*guruparamparā*), is one of the five components of *pañcasamskāra* initiation. Without that initiation, one cannot call oneself a Śrīvaiṣṇava. Every Śrīvaiṣṇava in his daily worship thereafter is expected to recite the *guruparamparā*, recite and reflect upon the meaning of the three *mantras*, and worship the domestic image of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa.

Even if the three Śrīvaiṣṇava *mantras* do not come directly from Pāñcarātra, the way these *mantras* are interpreted seems consistent with Pāñcarātra tradition. *mantra* initiation by a *guru*, secret instruction, daily worship and meditation on the *mantras* are all standard fare in the Pāñcarātra and, indeed, throughout the larger Tantric tradition.

At least among the larger Teṅkalai school of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, the *pañcasamskāra* ritual which bestows these *mantras* is understood as equivalent to an act of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*. In Vaṭakalai practice, *prapatti* is performed in a separate ritual toward the end of one’s life.³ The teaching of salvation by *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, a distinctive feature of Śrīvaiṣṇava thought and practice after Rāmānuja, is understood by later Śrīvaiṣṇavas to be a Pāñcarātra teaching (though not exclusively so). It is considered one of many ritual *upāyas* or *sādhanas* taught in Pāñcarātra for almost any result imaginable.

Salvation via *prapatti* is one of the two *sādhanas* to *mokṣa* officially recognized in Śrīvaiṣṇavism, but it becomes the only prac-

² See MUMME 1988, introduction.

³ See RANGACHARI 1931: 45.

tical soteriology. Rāmānuja and the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophers spill a lot of ink in Sanskrit articulating and developing Rāmānuja's theory of salvation by *bhaktiyoga*, which includes *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*. But the Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṇipravāḷa tradition that claims Rāmānuja as its founder focuses virtually all its attention, in both theory and practice, on *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* alone as a distinct path to *mokṣa* that is open to all and not limited, as is *bhaktiyoga*, to twice-born males.

ŚARANĀGATI, PĀÑCARĀTRA
AND THE TENKALAI-VATAKALAI DISPUTE

A hotly disputed question in Śrīvaiṣṇava history is when the notion arose that *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti* is an *upāya* distinct from *bhaktiyoga*. The Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition teaches that *prapatti* is a hoary tradition taught in the Bhagavadgītā, demonstrated in *itihāsapurāṇa*, practiced by the Āḷvārs, and advocated by all the Ācāryas; however, scholars have disputed that claim. Did Rāmānuja recognize it and express it in his Gadyas? Did Rāmānuja even write these Gadyas? To what extent is *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* presented in Yāmuna's devotional poems?⁴ The general scholarly position in this debate has been that *prapatti* was not seen as a separate *upāya* up to and through Rāmānuja. To such scholars, the question is who and when, in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition after Rāmānuja, recognized it and taught it as such.

It is clear that in some Pāñcarātra texts, *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* is clearly defined and taught as a path to *mokṣa* distinct from *bhaktiyoga*, and the viewpoint later Śrīvaiṣṇavism taught is articulated: that all other paths to *mokṣa* boil down to these two. However, the dates of the Pāñcarātra texts (or portions thereof) which teach this doctrine, the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā ch. 37 and the Lakṣmītantra ch. 17, are equally unclear, and cannot shed much light on when this doctrine arose. It seems likely that the doctrine of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* as a separate *upāya* to *mokṣa* emerged concomitantly in the Śrīvaiṣṇava and Pāñcarātra traditions, indicating that the keepers of these two traditions were closely associated in the centuries between Yāmuna (c. 1050?) and Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai and Vātsya Varadācārya (c. 1225).

⁴ ROBERT LESTER, JOHN CARMAN and VASUDHA NARAYANAN have discussed these questions in many of their works.

I began this present investigation by reviewing Pāñcarātra references in the major Śrīvaiṣṇava Mañipravāla *rahasya* texts and asking the following questions: How are Pāñcarātra proof texts used in the Śrīvaiṣṇava *rahasya* literature? Which Pāñcarātra texts are most used? Since my own research has been on the Tenkalai-Vaṭakalai schism, I was especially interested in the role that Pāñcarātra texts play in the way authors from each school explain and defend their unique theological and soteriological points. The texts I reviewed included Vedāntadeśika's Rahasyatrayasāram (probably written c. 1350) for the Vaṭakalai position, and an assortment of texts commented on and quoted by Maṇavālamāmuni (1370-1443) for the Tenkalai position: Piḷḷai Lokācārya's Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam and Mumukṣuppaṭi, and the Ācāryahṛdayam of his brother Aḷakiyamaṇavāla Perumāḷ Nāyaṇār. I also looked over the voluminous Parantarahasyam of Periyavāccān Piḷḷai (1167-1262), an early *rahasya* commentary which was composed a generation earlier than Piḷḷai Lokācārya (1205-1311) and his brother (1207-1309). Most of these texts (Mumukṣuppaṭi, Parantarahasyam, nearly half of Rahasyatrayasāram) are commentaries on the three Śrīvaiṣṇava *mantras*. The rest are independent doctrinal works nevertheless included by Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the general genre of Mañipravāla "rahasya" texts. I found that two chapters in two Pāñcarātra texts, Lakṣmītantra ch. 17 and Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā ch. 37 account for over half of the Pāñcarātra references in this body of Śrīvaiṣṇava *rahasya* literature. This is not surprising, because these are precisely the Pāñcarātra chapters that elucidate the teaching of *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti*, the main focus of the *rahasya* literature.⁵

⁵ OTTO SCHRADER (1916: 23) mentions the Bhāradvājasamhitā, a late Pāñcarātra text purported to be solely about *prapatti*. I have had no access to this text, unfortunately. Even though SCHRADER describes this as a popular Pāñcarātra text, it is not used much in the literature I investigated. I found footnotes in printed *rahasya* literature attributing a few quotes to it, none of which seem to involve key points of dispute. I leave to a future researcher to study this text, elucidate its view of *prapatti*, and ascertain its probable date and influences. My hunch is that it may shed light on how the teaching of *prapatti* to the *ācārya*, or to Rāmānuja himself, came to be recognized in the Tenkalai tradition as a means to *mokṣa* that is separate from *prapatti* to the Lord himself.

I found that the Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai Ācāryas quote the same passages from these two chapters in these two Pāñcarātra texts, but interpret them differently. In fact, nearly all the major disputed points in the Teṅkalai-Vaṭakalai argument about the nature of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* seem to be imbedded in these two Pāñcarātra chapters. These chapters are themselves ambiguous on the disputed issues, and thus leave room for both the Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai interpretations. They seem to demonstrate a pre-schism understanding of *prapatti* consistent with the period of time between the generations before and after Rāmānuja. By their ambiguity, these texts helped fuel the later schism in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition.

A couple of generalizations did shake out of this investigation, to be explained and supported below. Generally Vedāntadeśika's interpretation of *prapatti* follows the sense and context of the Pāñcarātra texts' teachings about *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti* more closely. This may suggest that the Kāñcī school of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, from which Vedāntadeśika arose, had more influence on the formation of these late Pāñcarātra texts than the Southern school. Or it may only mean that Vedāntadeśika's somewhat legalistic approach to soteriology is more in keeping with that of Sanskrit śāstric tradition to which Pāñcarātra is related, and thus he finds these texts more theologically to his liking. Clearly the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas in Śrīraṅgam, who forged what would be later known as the Teṅkalai tradition, devoted more of their intellectual energy to the interpretation of the Ālvār hymns and *itihāsapurāṇa* than to Sanskrit *śāstra*. Their voluminous *rahasya* works demonstrate a willingness to creatively reinterpret Pāñcarātra passages about *prapatti* to fit their own soteriological doctrines. One gets the impression that the Teṅkalai Ācāryas are always viewing the Pāñcarātra tradition through the lens of the Ālvār's experience and the Bhagavadgītā's Caramaśloka, which they see as the theological crystallization of that experience.

Furthermore, these two Pāñcarātra chapters on *śaraṇāgati*, Lakṣmītantra ch. 17 and Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā ch. 37, seem to show a very slight, and opposing, sectarian slant. It would be going much too far to say that one supports the Teṅkalai position and the other the Vaṭakalai position on *śaraṇāgati*. But I found that Vedāntadeśika's interpretation of *prapatti*, though not at odds with what is said in Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā, is more compatible with, and indebted to, that seen in the Lakṣmītantra. The Teṅkalai position on *prapatti*, how-

ever, is more hospitable to the view of *śaraṇāgati* expounded in Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā than that found in the Lakṣmītantra.⁶

All the disputed points in the theological argument between Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai understanding of *prapatti* can be seen as revolving around the central issue of whether or not *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, surrender to the Lord, can be called an *upāya*. This term, best translated as “means” or “instrument,” carries a lot of soteriological weight in Śrīvaiṣṇava doctrine. Is *prapatti* an *upāya*, a ritual means or implement employed by the seeker of salvation (*mumuṅṣu*) to achieve his goal, comparable to other ritual *upāyas* specified in Dharmasāstra and Pāñcarātra? Or, in *śaraṇāgati*, is the *upāya* solely the Lord himself, such that the *mumuṅṣu*'s act has no instrumental value at all? Vedāntadeśika and the Vaṭakalai school claim that *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* can be properly considered an *upāya*. The Lord has primary causality in effecting salvation, making him the primary means or *upāya*; but since the Lord won't bring about salvation without the individual taking the initiative by performing *prapatti*, that act of *prapatti* itself has some causal instrumentality, and can be legitimately designated as an *upāya*. The Teṅkalai Ācāryas, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai through Maṇavālamāmoni, unanimously claim that *prapatti* is not to be seen as an *upāya*. In *śaraṇāgati*, the Lord alone is the *upāya*. *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti* is not even an act, much less an act with any causal or instrumental function in bringing about salvation.

The Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition eventually came to frame the dispute in terms of the “monkey school” versus the “cat school,” an analogy whose charm earns it mention in nearly every introductory textbook on Hinduism published in the West. The Vaṭakalai support a soteri-

⁶ Pāñcarātra quotations are certainly not the only kinds of proof texts used in Śrīvaiṣṇava *rahasya* literature to support the disputed points regarding the nature of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, nor even the most important proof texts. Passages and examples from the Bhagavadgītā, *itihāsapurāṇa*, and the hymns of the Āḷvārs figure more prominently in the discourse of both schools. For an exploration of the difference between the way Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai Ācāryas use excerpts from the Rāmāyaṇa to support their doctrines, see MUMME 1991. For a study of the Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai interpretations of Bhagavadgītā 18.66, see MUMME 1992. For a study of how both schools use and interpret passages from Nammālvār's hymns see MUMME 1987a. The focus of the present work is how the two groups of Ācāryas use Pāñcarātra texts.

ology of cooperative grace, where God is seen as saving the soul in *śaraṇāgati* like a mother monkey carries a baby monkey: the baby itself must make some small effort to hang on in order to be carried. The Tenkalais, however, articulate that in *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, there is salvation by divine grace alone, more like a mother cat carries a kitten. The kitten is passive, making no positive efforts in the act. In fact, any efforts it made would only interfere with those of the mother. Though the analogy developed only later in Śrīvaiṣṇava history (perhaps the early nineteenth century) it aptly summarizes the distinction between the soteriology of these two branches of the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. In the earlier Maṇipravāla *rahasya* literature, there are several interrelated aspects to the central soteriological dispute, all of which appeal to these same two Pāñcarātra chapters that expound *śaraṇāgati*.

DOES PRAPATTI HAVE AṄGAS?

A key point of dispute within the larger issue of whether *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* can be considered an *upāya* is the question whether it has *aṅgas* or ancillaries. Vedic and even Tantric *upāyas* are analyzed as consisting of an *aṅgin*, the main ritual event or action, and the various *aṅgas* or ritual ancillary actions which accompany it or fill it out. Both the Tenkalai and Vaṭakalai Ācāryas seem to agree that if *śaraṇāgati* is determined to have the same kind of *aṅgin-aṅga* structure, then it can be called an *upāya*. Maṇavālamā-muni quotes a Pūrva Mīmāṃsa maxim: “Whatever has *aṅgas*, that is a *sādhana* (or *upāya*).”⁷ Though I can’t determine whether Vedāntadeśika quotes this maxim, what he says shows that he clearly assumes its truth. So is *prapatti* an *upāya* with *aṅgas*? Vedāntadeśika and the Vaṭakalai school say yes, and the Tenkalai Ācāryas say no. Both schools can quote Pāñcarātra to support their positions.

Lakṣmītantra and Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā speak of *prapatti*, *śaraṇāgati* or self-surrender as having five or six aspects, components or *aṅgas*. All of these *aṅgas* or aspects are mental attributes or attitudes, so that the parallel with Vedic ritual *aṅgas* and *aṅgins* is not perfect, since generally Vedic *aṅgas* are physical actions. Nevertheless, the issue is: are these mental attributes properly considered to be the

⁷ ŚVB 56: *yad yat sāṅgaṃ tat tat sādhanam*.

aṅgas and *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*, the *aṅgin*? In Lakṣmītantra (LT 17.59-62) the Lord, speaking to Śrī, proclaims: “Hear from me, Lotus Lady, the six-limbed *upāya* whereby one attains Me as a refuge and ultimately joins me.” These six *aṅgas* are then listed as:

- (1) the will to do what is pleasing (*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*),
- (2) avoidance of what is displeasing (*prātikūlyasya varjanam*),
- (3) faith that he will protect (*rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsaḥ*),
- (4) asking for protection (*gopṭṛtvavaraṇam*),
- (5) self surrender (*ātmanikṣepaḥ*),
- (6) helplessness (*kārpaṇyam*).⁸

A bit later on in the same chapter (LT 17.75), surrender (*nyāsa*) – which is proclaimed to be synonymous with *nikṣepa*, *saṁnyāsa*, *tyāga* or *śaraṇāgati* – is described as having five *aṅgas* (*pañcāṅga*). In the Ahirbudhnyasaṁhitā (AS 37.28) the *śaraṇāgati* method is described as having six aspects (*vidhā*). The list given is identical to that cited in LT 17.60-61b.⁹

Vedāntadeśika has no trouble reconciling these three passages from the two texts into a single consistent doctrine: *ātmanikṣepa*, *śaraṇāgati*, *prapatti* or its other synonymns is the *aṅgin* or main event. The other five are the *aṅgas*. Together they form the *upāya* of *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti*, which must be accomplished in toto, with all its *aṅgas*, in order to be effective. Though the Lord is the *siddhopāya* or accomplished means, *prapatti* is the *sādhyopāya*, the small part of the means yet to be accomplished. When one performs *prapatti* with all its *aṅgas*, as a momentary act, the full *upāya* is then accomplished and one’s salvation is assured. Vedāntadeśika takes pains to show that *prapatti* with all its *aṅgas* is articulated in the Dvayamantra uttered by the aspirant to salvation (*mumukṣu*) in the *prapatti* ceremony, thus legitimating the efficacy of this ritual (RTS ch. 11).

The Tenkalai position is different, and somewhat more consistent with the Ahirbudhnyasaṁhitā (AS 37.28) which speaks of *śara-*

⁸ LT 17.59-61b: *mām ekaṁ śaraṇam prāpya mām evānte samaśnute | ṣaḍaṅgam tam upāyam ca sṛṇu me padmasambhave || 59 ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam | rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso gopṭṛtvavaraṇam tathā || 60 ātmanikṣepakārpaṇye ṣaḍvidhā śaraṇāgatih |*

⁹ AS 37.28-29b: *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam | rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso gopṭṛtvavaraṇam tathā || 28 ātmanikṣepakārpaṇye ṣaḍvidhā śaraṇāgatih |*

ṅāgati as having six aspects (*ṣaḍvidhā*). Though the same components are listed as in Lakṣmītantra, in Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā it is important to note that these components are not called *aṅgas* and *śaraṅāgati* is not called an *upāya*. Rather, the Lord himself is referred to as the *upāya*. In Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā (AS 37.30c-31b), *prapatti* or *śaraṅāgati* is defined as the following prayer: *aham asmy aparādhānām ālayo 'kiṃcano 'gatih || tvam evopāyabhūto me bhaveti*. “I am an abode of sins, helpless, with no recourse; You indeed be my *upāya*.” Though this definition of *prapatti* is cited frequently by both Vedāntadeśika and the Tenkalai Ācāryas, the latter emphasize it more. Piḷlai Lokācārya’s Prapannaparitrāṇam, one of his eighteen Maṇipravāla *rahasya* texts, is an exposition of the two qualifications for *śaraṅāgati* here mentioned: helplessness (*ākiñcanya*) and not having any other way of salvation (*ananyagatitva*). The Tenkalai single out this Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā passage as forming the nucleus of their understanding of *prapatti*. Like this passage, they emphasize the negative. They point out that the attributes of helplessness (*ākiñcanya*) and having no other recourse (*ananyagatitva*) are not positive attributes. Hence they cannot be considered true *aṅgas* or ritual ancillaries, for the absence of an act or quality cannot itself be an *aṅga* (Mumu 121).

At any rate, the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā speaks more clearly of the Lord being the *upāya*, rather than *śaraṅāgati* being the *upāya*. However, the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā, in introducing *nyāsa* or *śaraṅāgati*, does refer to it as a *sādhana* (AS 37.24), a term which Vedāntadeśika routinely takes to be equivalent to *upāya*. In other contexts, the Tenkalai Ācāryas also consider these two terms equivalent. Here, however, they seem to take this term in a general or non-technical sense to mean simply “method.” The Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā uses various forms of the verb root *sādh-* to articulate that *prapatti/śaraṅāgati/nyāsa* to the Lord can be used to achieve (*sādh-*) any or all goals, not just *mokṣa*. On this point there is no dispute between the two schools.

In refuting Vedāntadeśika’s *aṅga* doctrine, Piḷlai Lokācārya and Maṇavālamāuni, following the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā’s usage, simply call these five characteristics “aspects” (*vidhā*), not *aṅgas* in the technical sense of Vedic *aṅgas*. They insist that *prapatti* does not have the *aṅgin-aṅga* construction of a śāstric *upāya*. In *prapatti*, as the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā says, the Lord alone is the *upāya*. These so-called *aṅgas* are to be seen in this light. As Piḷlai Lokācārya puts it,

“The essential character of this (*prapatti*) is not tolerating itself; its ancillary is not tolerating anything other than itself. This *upāya* supports only itself.”¹⁰ Maṇavālamāmuni explains in his commentary: “The distinctive characteristic of this *prapatti* is such that it cannot support calling itself – that is, choosing [the Lord] to be the *upāya* – as an *upāya*. This means that if described as it truly is, and not simply superficially, it cannot appropriately be labeled an *upāya* ... [One might object:] But since it is enjoined with *aṅgas* in the Caramaśloka, the principle, ‘Whatever has *aṅgas* is a *sādhana*,’ applies here. Therefore, doesn’t that mean it is a *sādhana*? [No.] Piḷḷai Lokācārya shows that this does not apply by saying, ‘Its *aṅga* is not tolerating anything other than itself.’ ... This means that it tolerates nothing by way of activity of the sentient soul except for itself – in the form of acceptance. The *aṅga* for this (*prapatti*) is relinquishing with all traces, all activity in the form of *sādhana*. The principle ‘whatever has *aṅgas*’ refers to things accompanied by *aṅgas* in the form of activity. But the *aṅga* of this *prapatti* is in the form of inactivity (*nivṛtti*). Therefore this means that [*prapatti*] is not an *upāya*.”¹¹ It is clear that here the Caramaśloka forms the lens through which the Tenkalai Ācāryas interpret these Pāñcarātra passages. Its phrase, *sarvadharmān parityajya*, “reliquishing all *dharmas*,” establishes that the *aṅga* first abandons all *upāyas* (Mumu 200-202). In the following phrase, *mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja*, “take refuge in me alone,” the verb *vraja* does not indicate an action but a thought of ac-

¹⁰ ŚVB 55-57: *itutanakku svarūpam tannaip porātolikai. aṅgam tannaiyolintavarraip porātolikai. upāyam tannaip porukkum.*

¹¹ Maṇavālamāmuni ad ŚVB 55-56: *upāyavaraṇāt makamāna tannai upāyamenna sahiyātapatiyāyirukkai. atāvatu – āpādapratītiyilōiya ullapaṭi nirūpittāl svasminnupāyatva pratipattikku yōgyamākamāṭṭapaṭi yirukkaiyenrapati. ... caramaślokattil ittai sāṅgamāka vidhikkaiyālē, “yad yat sāṅgam, tat tat sādhanam” eṅkīra nyāyamitukkum vārātōvenna; aṅga svarūpattai darśippikkavē anta nyāyamiṅguvārātenru pārṭtu, atu tannai yarulicceykirār: “aṅgam tannaiyolintavarraipporātolikai.” ... svikārarūpamāna tannaiyolinta cetana pravṛttikaḷiṇonraiyum sahiyātapatiyirukkai. sādhanarūpa sakala pravṛttikaḷiṇuṭaiyavum savāsanatyākamiṛē yitukkaṅgam “yad yat sāṅgam” eṅkīraṇiṭattil pravṛtti rūpāṅga sahitamāna varraiyirē sādhanamā-kac collukirātu; appaṭṭiyarikkē, itinuṭaya vaṅkam nivṛttirūpamākaiyālē, iṭu tānē yitinuṭaya vanupāyatva sūcakamenrukaruttu.*

ceptance (Mumu 238-239), and *ekam* establishes that all *upāyatva* is in the Lord alone, not in the acceptance (Mumu 220-222).

So in the Tenkalai interpretation of *prapatti*, the Caramaśloka and the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā definition (AS 37.30-31) are taken as having a higher authority in articulating the true *aṅgin-aṅga* construction than the other Pāñcarātra texts. These passages indicate that the *aṅgas* of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* are negative – the state of having relinquished all other *upāyas* and being truly helpless. The absence of an action or characteristic cannot truly be called an *aṅga* in the Vedic sense. Ritual *aṅgas* are in the form of the positive presence of some attribute or action. Thus, they claim, one can't argue on the basis of these negative *aṅgas* that *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* is an *upāya*.

Maṇavālamāmuni quotes Piḷḷai Lokācārya's Parantapaṭi (in ADR 155-156), which echoes Vedāntadeśika's terminological distinction between *siddhopāya* and *sādhyopāya*, while explicitly rejecting the view that *ānukūlyasaṅkalpa* and the other attributes mentioned in Pāñcarātra are truly *aṅgas*. In commenting on ŚVB 57, Maṇavālamāmuni says: "The *siddhopāya* [that is, the Lord himself] is intolerant of association with other aids. This idea Piḷḷai Lokācārya himself has revealed in his Parantapaṭi, saying, 'Since this particular *upāya* does not tolerate anything other than itself, *ānukūlyasaṅkalpa* and the like cannot be designated as *aṅgas* to the *upāya*. Rather, these are characteristics which arise in the process, like sweat when pounding rice.'"¹²

In summary, we can say that the Tenkalai doctrine of the lack of *aṅgas* in *prapatti*, though somewhat at odds with the Lakṣmī-tantra's teaching of *prapatti*, is quite reconcilable with the teachings of the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā. But it is clear that the Tenkalai Ācāryas are seeing both Pāñcarātra texts through the lens of the Caramaśloka. The Caramaśloka's articulation of abandonment of all positive activities as the precursor to taking refuge colors the Tenkalai interpretation of the Pāñcarātra *aṅgas* or *vidhās* of *śaraṇāgati*.

¹² Maṇavālamāmuni ad ŚVB 57: *inta siddhopayam saḥāyantara saṃsargāsahamayirē yiruppatu*. "ivvupāya viśesam svavyatiriktamāyiruppatonrai sahiyāmayālēyirē ānukūlyasaṅkalpādikalukkumupāyāṅgatvamanrikkē, avakāta svētam pōlē sambāvita svabhāvatvamuṅṭākīratu" *enru ivvarthattai parantapaṭiyilē ivarthāmēyarulicceytāriṅē*.

We might note that Vedāntadeśika devotes an entire chapter of his Rahasyatrayasāram (RTS ch. 24) to refuting the doctrine (presumably of the Tenkalai Ācāryas) that *prapatti* is simply a prayer or request rather than a six-limbed *upāya* with *aṅgas*. Quoting the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā's definition or *śaraṇāgati* as a request that the Lord be the *upāya* (AS 37.30-31), he says it is common in Vedic and common usage to refer to a ritual act by one of its *aṅgas* rather than by the *aṅgin*, and that is what this passage does. However, he claims that other passages in Lakṣmītantra and Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā clarify that *śaraṇāgati*, *nyāsa*, or *ātmanikṣepa* is the *aṅgin* and that it has many *aṅgas*. (See RAJAGOPALA AYYANGAR 1956: 265.)

THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S WILL OR EFFORT IN *PRAPATTI*

Does the effort or will of the individual *prapanna* play a crucial and indispensable role in salvation? Can the Lord save even if not so requested by the individual? Or does He always wait for a request from the individual, in the form of a clear act of *prapatti*? This is another important aspect of the disagreement over the nature of *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti*. Two Lakṣmītantra passages are especially relevant to this issue:

(1) *karuṇāvān api vyaktaṃ śaktaḥ svāmy api dehinām || aprārthitona gopāyet*. “Although the Lord is declared to be the master of all embodied beings, and although he is compassionate and capable, yet without a prayer He will not protect.” (LT 17.72cd-73a)

(2) *sarvajño 'pi hi viśveśaḥ sadā kāruṇiko 'pi san || saṃsāratantra-vāhitvād rakṣāpekṣām pratikṣate* | “Even though the Lord of the universe is all knowing and ever compassionate, yet in order not to disturb the order of *saṃsāra*, he expects a request for protection.” (LT 17.79cd-80ab)

Here the Lakṣmītantra seems to affirm, as do Vedāntadeśika and the Vaṭakalai school, that the Lord invariably waits for a request. It is interesting that the Lakṣmītantra even gives a reason for this: “in order not to disturb the order of *saṃsāra*.” This is the central argument Vedāntadeśika makes in defense of his position. For the Lord to do otherwise, says Vedāntadeśika, would result in the *sarvamuktiprasaṅga*, the logical result – which is clearly not seen – that everyone should have already been saved. The Lord is all powerful and compassionate; if he doesn't need a request from us, then he should have saved everyone already. Since he hasn't, it's clear he is waiting

for this token, this initiative, in order to support the normal functioning of *samsāra* according to the law of *karman*. Vedāntadeśika is passionate about this point, referring to it over and over in his Rahasyatrayasāram, and quoting these same Lakṣmītantra passages at every turn. He sees all kinds of intolerable theological consequences if this point is compromised. Śāstric injunctions of *dharma* and prohibitions of *adharma* would all lose their meaning. The Viśiṣṭādvaita principle of the agency (*kartr̥tva*) of the soul and the Lord's egalitarianism would both be seriously threatened.¹³

The Tenkalai position is not so carefully or consistently articulated, but can be summarized as follows: Though the Lord usually waits for a request for protection, this is not always the case. Nammālvār himself is an important case in point. Piḷḷai Lokācārya's younger brother, Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷa Perumāḷ Nāyaṇār, spells this out clearly in his book, the Ācāryahr̥dayam.¹⁴ The Tenkalai Ācāryas defend the Lord's freedom to choose to save any individual He so chooses, completely unprompted by the will or action of the individual. The Lord can, and sometimes does, even force the will of the individual, and make him or her surrender, or choose an accidental good deed as a pretext for showering his saving grace on an oblivious individual. Nammālvār's hymns are cited to claim that all this indeed happened in his case. The Tenkalai Ācāryas submit that the Lord's *aiśvarya*, his lordliness or ownership of creation, extends this far. But they can also agree with the Lakṣmītantra's point: the reason the Lord seldom acts in this way – and generally seems to wait for the soul's acceptance of Him in order to effect salvation – is in order to maintain the *līlāvibhūti* or realm of *samsāra*, support the validity of his own śāstric injunctions, and avert the *sarvamuktiprasaṅga*. (See Mumu 228.)

Even if the Lord chooses to wait for this request, in order to preserve the meaning of the “*ekam*” in the Caramaśloka, the Tenkalai Ācāryas insist that the *prapanna* should think of that request as completely useless or superfluous in his own salvation (Mumu 226-229). The *upāya* is the Lord alone; one's request is not really needed, and it's wrong to think of it as having any instrumental value (*upāyatva*).

¹³ See RTS ch. 11, quoting LT 17.79-80. This appears in RAJAGOPALA AYYANGAR 1956 on p. 125.

¹⁴ See especially ĀcHr̥ 93-113 and ŚVB 381-383, 396, and MUMME 1988, ch. 6.

“You be my *upāya*.” That is the request of the supplicant, as stated in AS 37.30-31. And the Tenkalai see it as an intolerable contradiction to give *upāyatva* to the mere mental request that the Lord be the *upāya*.

ATONEMENT FOR SINS AFTER *PRAPATTI*

A fourth major point of dispute is how to deal with deliberate sins done after *prapatti*. Do they require atonement (*prāyaścitta*) in the form of a subsequent *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*? If so, the status of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* as an *upāya* is strengthened. Thus the doctrine of *prāyaścitta* is a key disputed point in Tenkalai-Vaṭakalai debate. Here again, both sides quote the same Lakṣmītantra verses from chapter 17 to support their positions. These passages are:

sakṛd eva hi śāstrārthaḥ kṛto ’yam tarayen naram |

“The teaching of this *śāstra*, done one time only, will liberate a human being.” (LT 17.92ab)

upāyāpāyasamyoge niṣṭhayā hīyate ’nayā ||

“Whereas by following the *upāya* and *apāya* [method] one does not have that advantage.” (LT 17.92cd)

apāyasamplave sadyaḥ prāyaścittaṃ samācaret |

“If one intentionally commits some misdeed, atonement should be done immediately.” (LT 17.93ab)

prāyaścittir iyaṃ sātra yat punaḥ śaraṇaṃ śrayet ||

“Here, the atonement is yet again to take refuge.” (LT 17.93cd)

upāyānām upāyatvasvikāre ’py etad eva hi |

“The same, indeed, even if *upāyas* are accepted as *upāyas*.” (LT 17.94ab)

Vedāntadeśika focuses his attention on LT 17.93, and considers its meaning to be unambiguous. If you intentionally do any sinful deed after *prapatti*, you must do *prapatti* again for the specific purpose of atoning for it. Failure to do so would not affect your salvation at the end of this life, however. It would simply delay your salvation long enough to be punished for that sin in this life. Vedāntadeśika devotes a whole chapter of the Rahasyatrayasāram to this topic (RTS ch. 18) where these verses are quoted at the outset. As Vedāntadeśika sees it, the contention that *prapatti* could be done to

even remove subsequent sins is not found in scripture. Since the Lakṣmītantra explicitly enjoins a subsequent *prapatti* as atonement for sins after *prapatti*, its injunction would have no meaning if the first *prapatti* included even subsequent sins (RTS ch. 18, RAJAGOPALA AYYANGAR 1956: 180-181). Furthermore, there are many injunctions of the proper code of conduct for *prapannas* sprinkled throughout the *śāstras*, all of which would have no meaning if the *prapanna*'s subsequent actions had no possibility of having any negative karmic effect at all. Therefore he rejects as completely unfounded any claims that *prapatti* can be done in such a way as to forgive even future deliberate sins or that unatoned deliberate sins have no affect on the *prapanna* (RAJAGOPALA AYYANGAR 1956: 180-181).

The Tenkalai Ācāryas take a broader perspective, interpreting LT 17.93 in light of the phrases just before and just after. Their rendering of this verse focuses on the phrase *sakṛd eva* or “once only” in LT 17.92a, which they take as having a normative force. As they understand it, to see the next *śloka* on atonement as injunction of an actual performance of *prapatti* would be contradictory to the sense of *sakṛd eva*. So they take it to enjoin simply meditating on one's prior *prapatti* and on the Lord's self-sufficiency as the *upāya* to salvation as a kind of mental atonement. That's enough to reinstate assurance of one's own salvation, if one were to somehow lapse into engaging in a subsequent sin. In commenting on ŚVB 121, Maṇavālamāmuni quotes the LT 17.92-94 passage above and clarifies that the atonement called *punarprapadana* means “remembering one's previous *prapatti*, not undertaking it again.” Thus all that is being enjoined here is a kind of mental atonement, or mental reassurance. If one performs a sin, and feels uneasy, thinking that one's salvation is somehow threatened, one need only recall one's previous *prapatti*. *prapatti* is not to be done more than once (LT 17.92ab) and engaging in *upāyas* as *upāyas* is said to be a sin (LT 17.94ab). So in light of these two verses, the passage in between must be taken as enjoining mental remembrance of the original *prapatti* as an atonement, not literal performance of *prapatti* with the idea that it is an *upāya* for removing sin.

When they comment on the Caramaśloka's phrase *sarvapāpebhyaḥ*, “from all sins” (as in Mumu 251) the Tenkalai Ācāryas generally affirm that “all sins” means all past, present and even future sins. *prapatti* is to be done once and for all (*sakṛd eva*), as the Lakṣmī-

tantra clearly states. Piḷḷai Lokācārya says, “Even *prapatti*, done in confusion, with the idea that it is an *upāya*, is equivalent to a sin.”¹⁵ In commenting on this passage, Maṇavālamāmuni takes this passage to refer specifically to subsequent *prapattis* done to atone for later sin, saying: “*prapatti* does not tolerate repeated performance; it is done once-and-for-all. *prapatti* done again, by one confused or ignorant of its nature, with the idea that it is a means to get rid of what is unwanted or to attain a desire, is equivalent to an offense just like other *upāyas*.”¹⁶ But these offenses, too, are included in the Caramaśloka’s *mokṣayiṣyāmi* (interpreted in Mumu 254). Though the Tenkalai Ācāryas do not explicitly say so, presumably the sins that the Lord promises to forgive would include all instances of *prapatti* performed by the Kāñcī Ācāryas following Vedāntadeśika’s position! So the implication is that the Vaṭakalai practitioners will go to Vaikuṅṭha, too. The Lord, becoming their means to salvation as they request, will generously forgive them of all their sins, including both their error of thinking of their original *prapatti* as an *upāya* for salvation itself, and their performance of later acts of *prapatti* as an *upāya* for the removal of deliberate sins.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we may safely say that this investigation has shown the following:

- (1) The main features of the doctrine of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* taught in the later Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition are present in germ form in the two passages on this topic found in Pāñcarātra texts: AS 37 and LT 17.
- (2) Though the Tenkalai and Vaṭakalai schools differ in important ways in their understanding of *prapatti*, Ācāryas in both traditions appeal frequently to these chapters, and indeed to the same passages in these chapters, to support their position.

¹⁵ Mumu 253: *kalanki upāyabuddhyā paṅṅum prapattiyum pātakattōtu okkum*. This passage seems to be based on LT 17.94ab, though that text is not quoted here.

¹⁶ Maṇavālamāmuni ad Mumu 253: *sakṛt anuṣṭānamoliyap punar-anuṣṭānattai sahiyāta prapatti svabhāvattai ariyāte kalaṅki aniṣṭa nivrṭtikāvātal iṣṭapṛāptikkāvātal upāyabuddhyāmuṅṅu paṅṅum prapattiyum ... upāyāntaramppōlē pātakasamam*. See also MUMME 1987b.

(3) The Lakṣmītantra is generally more compatible with Vedāntadeśika's thought and the Vāṭakalai position; the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā is somewhat more hospitable to the Tenkalai interpretation. Neither text, however, can be clearly said to endorse either sectarian position without considerable interpretation. Therefore, though these texts clearly teach *prapatti* as a separate *upāya* from *bhaktiyoga*, their articulation of *prapatti* seems to predate the sectarian split over how this *prapatti* is understood.

(4) Vedāntadeśika's view of *prapatti* is slightly more consistent with the view of *prapatti* that comes through in a casual reading of the Pāñcarātra texts themselves, where *prapatti* is taught as an *upāya* like many others. The Tenkalai school tends to use the teaching of the Caramaśloka as a lens through which they view Pāñcarātra texts on *prapatti* or *śaraṅāgati*. That lens helps them highlight important words and phrases in the Pāñcarātra injunctions of *prapatti* to support their claim that *prapatti* is not like other *upāyas*. It is, they claim, not an *upāya* at all. It is not a necessary cause of salvation and has no instrumental efficacy of its own; it is simply a passive, one-time acceptance of the Lord as one's complete and total means (*upāya*) for salvation: that is, the removal of all *karman* and the attainment of *mokṣa*.