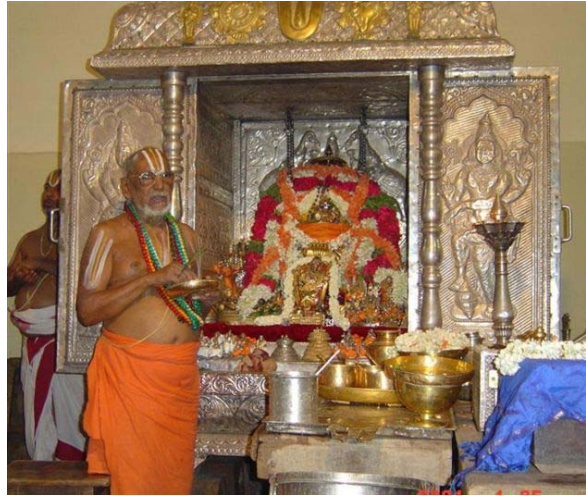


## 45th Jeer

Ashtaakshara, the 8-syllable mantra is very very important, especially to Sreevaishnava's, for, it symbolises the effective bestower of everything one aspires for, including Sriman Narayana Himself and at whose feet, seekers of the Divine, would like to serve eternally in His abode. Hence the number "eight" is quite significant and it is a remarkable coincidence that the 45th Jeeyar, Srivan Satakopa Sri Narayana Yatheendra Mahadesikan, should be the Eighth Pontiff in the hierarchy of Sri Ahobila Mutt, to bear the asrama name "Narayana", the very subject and object of Ashtakshara! Ashtakshara itself literally means Sacred Eight letters. The earlier seven Azhagiyasingars (with the name Narayana), to adorn the Mutt were 2, 9, 12, 14, 18, 22 and 31st Jeeyars.



Having said this, let us link this personage with another incident that indirectly portended his ascension to this glorious spiritual throne. The greatest achievement of the 42nd Jeeyar was to produce a galaxy of scholars specialising in Sreebhashyam, many of whom are alive today, to our good fortune, so as to guide us to seek the path of the ultimate goal. AR the Sixtyfour of them had the good luck to learn and master the knowledge at his feet and a few to mention, are Villivalam Narayanacharya (elder brother of the 45th Jeeyar in his poorvasrama), Villivalam Krishnamacharya (45th Jeeyar), Thirukkallam Narasimharaghavacharya, Purisai Krishnamacharya (grandson of 42nd Jeeyar and the editor of Sri Nrisimha Priya), Sri S. Varadhachariar (former Federal Court Judge), Injimedu Rajagopalachariar (senior-most Aradhaka of Ahobila Mutt), Melpakkam Narasimhacharya (an authority today in Dharma Sastras), Panamukai Narasimhacharya (present Srikaryam), among other eminent ones.

Now, Villivalam Krishnamacharya (45th Jeeyar in his Poorvasrama) had also the added advantage of serving the 42nd Jeeyar personally that helped him to move closely and learn all that one could desire to imbibe. It was not that easy for anyone to serve him, because 42nd Jeeyar with his profound knowledge and seasoned saintlihood was also sternly simple and austere sober. So, one had to be always on guard with abundant care and attention, for one will not know what error one may commit inadvertently while serving him.

The Jeeyar was, no doubt a great humanist and habitually sweet-tempered; yet his one look was enough to cause trepidation. To such a holy one, Villivalam Swamy had endeared himself and, therefore, in the middle of the night one day,' when he was about to draw water from a deep well to be given to the Jeeyar who had just then returned from the backyard, the Jeeyar gently restrained him for a moment and asked him what time it was. When he was told it was 12.30 p.m. he said, past midnight one should draw water from a well only after uttering a certain Vedic hymn to ward off the evil spirits lingering there. Since Villivalam Swamy was not even aware of such a thing, the Azhagiyasingar himself, chanting the sloka, lowered the pitcher into the deep well and then allowed Krishnamacharya to lift up the filled-in pitcher. Then and there he taught him the mantra, since both of them, having not slept in and not touched the bed were pure enough to utter the Vedic sloka at that time. Significantly, the Jeeyar added. "Learn such directives, for, they will be useful to you now and in the future".

This not only prompted Villivalam Krishnamacharya to write an authoritative text on AHNKA GRANTHA entitled, "SRI VAISHNAVA SADHACHARA NIRNAYA" wherein all the duties of a religious- minded man, from dawn to night, have been compiled as "AHNIKAM" and made available to posterity; but also made the prediction of the 42nd Jeeyar true in respect of the 45th Jeeyar indirectly, as this Azhagiyasingar is fully making use of them and is strictly adhering to the directives, unmindful of the inconveniences and obstacles.

Born on December 12, 1926 at Villivalam in North Arcot district, Sri Krishnamacharyar was a student of the Madras University, passing Nyaya Siromani in 1949 and received the first prize for general proficiency.

His elder brother, Vedanta Vaavadhooka Narayanachariar Swamy gave him the requisite basic foundation, after which Krishnamacharya learnt Nyaya and Meemamsa Sastras at the feet of 42nd and 43rd Azhagiyasingars. He had served as Tamil Pandit in the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Chingleput for four years from 1956 and subsequently as "Nyaya" Professor in the Sri Ahobila Mutt Sanskrit College, Madhurantakam till 1965. He was appointed "Asthana Vidwan" of the Mutt by the 44th Jeeyar in 1966 and he had been Joint Editor of Sri Nrisimha Priya (Tamil) since 1982.

Settling down at Madras, Krishnamacharya had been giving discourses in Sreebhasya, Rahasyatrayasara, Ramayana, Bhagavatham, Thiruppavai and Geetha at various places of the country for the past 30 years. He had also been conducting daily discourses in Madras for the benefit of his friends and disciples in the traditional way on the various Granthas of Sree Vaishnava philosophy. His contribution as a member on the board of Ahobila Mutt Sanskrit Vidya Abhivardhinee Sabha, a registered body that manages the Mutt's Oriental High Schools at West

Mambalam and Madhuranthakam as also the Sanskrit College at Madhuranthakam, is quite large. He has written commentaries on a number of ancient works. Krishnamacharya's articles regularly published in Sri Nrisimha Priya (Tamil) that included Vishnu Purana serial and Upansishaths were avidly read.

The 44th Jeeyar suddenly took ill in October 1991 and without hesitation he called upon Krishnamacharya to take up the reins of the Mutt. The annointment ceremony took place on October 21, 1991 amidst traditional rituals, that prepared Krishnamacharya for renunciation and then ascension as the 45th Peetadhipathi of Ahobila Mutt, when he took the asrama name, "Srivan Satakopa Sri Narayana Yatheendra Mahadesikan". It will be significant to note here that Krishnamacharya had his Panchasamskaram from the 42nd Jeeyar, Bharasamarpanam (Saranagathi) under 43rd Jeeyar and Presha Mantropadesa from the 44th Jeeyar at Sri Ahobila Kshetra.

The 45th Jeeyar recalls his close association with the three preceding pontiffs - the present Mukkoor Jeeyar, the Devanarvilagam Jeeyar and Injimedu Jeeyar and said that but for their meticulous training and guidance, he would not have been elevated to this high position. Recapitulating nostalgically, the guidance he had specially received at the feet of his (poorvasrama) elder brother Sri Villivalam Narayanachariar, the Azhagiyasingar added, with his characteristic humility, that his clear duty was only to live up to their training, guidance, ideals and thus carry on the torch of their glorious traditions.



There has been an unbroken succession of great Acharyas in Ahobila Mutt, who have realised the "TRUTH" and are always intent on the good of their following, and through them, the good of the world at large. The scriptures stress that the guidance of "Acharya" is a "Must" for enlightenment and self-realisation for he alone can lead us from darkness to light. It is this torch of illumination that I am called upon to carry for the benefit of sishyas and aspirants, said His Holiness.

Source: Sri Nrusimha Priya, 66 Rangachari Road, Mylapore, Madras 600 018.

