

॥ मङ्गलाशासनानि ॥

MAṄGALĀŚĀSANAS:
Blessings of the Ācāryas in English translation

Śrī Śṛṅgerī Śrījagadgurumahāsamsthānam

*śrīmatparamahamsaparivrājakācāryavyaya
padavākyapramāṇapārāvārapārīṇa
yamaniyamāsanapraṇāyāmapratyāhāradhāraṇādhyāna-
samādhyastāṅgayogānuṣṭhānaniṣṭha
tapaścakravartyanādyavicchinna śrīśaṅkarācāryaguruparamparā-
prāpta śaddarśanasthāpanācārya
vyākhyānasimhāsanādhiśvara sakalanigamāgamasārahṛdaya
sāṁkhyatrayapratipādaka vaidikamārgapravartaka
sarvatantrasvatantṛdirājadhānī vidyānagaramahārājadhānī
karṇāṭakasimhāsanapraṭiṣṭhāpanācārya
śrīmadrājādhirājagurubhūmaṇḍalācārya
ṛṣyaśṛṅgapuravarādhīśvara tuṅgabhadṛātīravāsi
śrīmadvidyāśaṅkarapādapadmārādhaka śrī jagadguru-
śrīmadabhinavavidyātīrthasvāmīgurukarakamalasañjāta*

Śrī Jagadguru Śṛṅgerī Śrīmadbhāratītīrthamahāsvāmibhiḥ

śrīvidyāśaṅkara

Bringing our mind to Śrīnārāyaṇa, we send these blessings; let these please all the āstikas, all those who believe in the truthfulness of being.

In this world, following dharma is the only great path to śreyas, well-being, for mankind. Dharma can be followed only by those who have healthy and strong bodies. And, health and strength of body is possible only through proper food and proper living. Those who do not eat and those who eat too much, both of them, are rendered incapable of following dharma. Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa

has said in this context that yoga is neither for those who overeat nor for those who do not eat at all, *nātyaśnatastu yogo'sti nacaikānta-maṅśnatah*. That is why those who know yogaśāstra say that eating proper and nourishing food in the proper measure is indeed tapas.

The term anna implies, chiefly, āhāra; what is eaten is anna. The greatness of anna is proclaimed in several śrutis, like, *annam na nindyāt*, 'do not look down upon anna', *annam na paricakṣīta*, 'do not neglect anna', and *annam bahu kurvīta*, 'endeavour to secure an abundance of anna', and so on.

Thus growing food in the proper quantity and proper manner, and ensuring proper distribution of food, indeed leads to the well-being of the people. Ignoring proper production and proper distribution of food, and investing effort in other pursuits, strongly reminds one of the saying of the wise that asks, *kimastyanupanītasya vājapeyādibhirmakhañ*, 'what has an anupanīta, one who has not been initiated into vaidika learning, got to do with high yajñas like the vājapeya'.

Now, to raise awareness about the importance of anna, the Centre for Policy Studies is publishing a book entitled, *Annām Bahu Kurvīta*. They also propose to organize a conference on this subject. Several scholars, many maṭhādhiśas and many important persons shall gather in this conference and, after discussing the subject, shall try to generate awareness and respect for anna amongst the people.

We too are pleased to learn about this programme. We wish that through the prasāda of Śrīśāradācandramaulīśvara the Centre may obtain the necessary strength for accomplishing the task they have resolved upon; and may this conference also be successfully accomplished. This is our wish and our blessing.

iti nārāyaṇasmaranam
śrī

Śrīngagiriḥ
dhātrivatsarīya vaiśākhakṛṣṇadaśamī bhānuvāsarah
12. 5. 1996

śrīḥ

śrīmate rāmānujāya namaḥ

Śrīmatparamahaṃsa
Śrī Kaliyan Vānamāmalai Jīyar Swāmigal

Śrī Vānamāmalai Maṭham
Nānguneri

abhinandanapatram

swasti śrīrdisatāt. On March 13, 1996, two teachers of physics and a teacher of economics came to the Śrīmaṭham and gave us the pleasure of a long discussion with them. These three were: Śrī Jitendra Bajāj, Śrī Maṇḍayam Doḍḍamane Śrīnivās, and Śrī Varadarājan, who is the son of the great scholar, the renowned late Śrīmadubhaya-vedāntācārya Karppaṅkāḍu Śrī Venkaṭācārya Swāmigal. They came to us on behalf of their organization, the Centre for Policy Studies, Madras.

Our discussion with them was greatly detailed and fruitful. They also presented us with a pre-publication copy of a valuable work entitled, *Annam Bahu Kurvīta*, composed by the two physics scholars. We have gone through this book from the beginning to the end, in spite of pressing demands of other work.

We are now fully convinced that this kind of work is for the first time seeing the light of day. While diligently pursuing the objectives of their Centre, these two scholars have taken an exceptionally novel path, and have composed a competent and brilliant work. It is transparently obvious that the two authors of this work have painstakingly studied and carefully imbibed a number of śruti, itihāsa and purāṇa texts before undertaking this composition. Based primarily upon the descriptions of the greatness of anna and annadāna found in the Taittirīyopaniṣad of the Kṛṣṇayajurveda, and taking its title from the Taittirīyopaniṣad's resounding proclamation of the inviolable discipline of ensuring a

plenty of food all around, *annam̐ bahu kūrūvīta*, this work of theirs analyses and explains different aspects of this issue in a well-ordered sequence of chapters and in a greatly pleasing and touching style. In this work one finds hundreds of verses of Śrīrāmāyaṇa and Śrīmahābhārata, aptly quoted at the proper place and in the proper context; and one finds several stories quoted from the various purāṇas, each befitting the context, like the story of Rājā Śveta, which has been narrated here from the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa.

We find the Taittirīyopaniṣad laying down the discipline of honouring the atithi in its teachings like *matr̐devo bhava*, *pit̐r̐devo bhava*, *ācāryadevo bhava*, *atithidevo bhava*, “let the mother be a god unto you, let the father be a god unto you, let the teacher be a god unto you, let the atithi be a god unto you”. This teaching of the Taittirīyopaniṣad has been a sanātana siddhānta, a principle accepted and adhered to by all at all times, in this holy land of Bhāratavarṣa. And, this book quotes several verses from the purāṇas and itihāsas that explain and elaborate upon this sanātana siddhānta of India. The verses quoted in this book also remind us of similar enunciations of the Tirukkural, the renowned saṅgha period classic of our own Tamil language.

The term ‘atithi’ applies to anyone who appears at our door unexpected and uninvited; he does not have to send us prior information about the date and time of his arrival. Such was the greatness of our ancient Indian civilization. Comparing the state of India in the earlier ages with the present, we find that, in spite of the great strides made in the fields of science and technology, the earlier times were indeed greatly superior in the matter of producing a plenty of food and making the food available to the people in plentiful measures. Today we seem to have hardly enough food. This becomes especially clear when we look at the present day availability of food in India in comparison with the rest of the world. Śrī Bajāj and Śrī Śrīnivās have presented this important issue in great detail through a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the factual statistics.

We heartily bless the two scholars who have composed this valuable book, which seriously enquires, for the first time, into an issue that forms the basis of all life and has always constituted the foundation of our civilization. We wish that they may continue to shine in their endeavours. We warmly bless that this excellent work be

read far and wide and become greatly fruitful. We pray at the lotus feet of our kuladaiva, the divine couple, Śrīvaramaṅkāmbā and Śrīdevanāyakavibhu, that the two authors of this book may live long and keep serving this land of our birth, the great Bhāratavarṣa of ours, through several offerings like the present one.

*sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ sarve santu nirāmayāḥ
sarve bhadraṇi paśyantū mā kaścīd duḥkhabhāghhavet*

Śrīrāmānujan
Śrīkaliyan Vānamāmalai Rāmānuja Jīyar Swāmī

Nāṅguneri
19.3.96

śrīharīḥ

*śrīmatparamahamsaparivṛājakācāryavarya
śrīsaṅkarabhagavatpādācāryaparamparāgata*

Jagadguru Śrīsaṅkarācārya
Śrī Nīscalānanda Saraswatī Mahārāja

Śrī Govardhanapīṭha
Purī

Always ensure an abundance of anna, *annam bahu kurvīta*, this is the Taittirīyopaniṣad śruti. Thus does the upaniṣad teach us the importance of producing, gathering and distributing anna in plenty. The physical body is constituted of five essential elements, the five mahābhūtas, and the five mahābhūtas are also given the name of anna in the Pañcadaśī. In the Chāndogya it is said that, āhāra, what is eaten, is anna.

From the philosophical point of view, anna is the bhogya of the bhoktā; what is eaten by someone is anna. Thus everything that exists for another is anna. In the Saptānabrāhmaṇa all things that are partaken of by devas, men and other living beings are referred to as anna. Thus, the performance of darśapaurṇamāsa is anna for devas; foodgrains like vṛīhi, wheat, etc., are anna for men; grasses and shrubs etc., vīrūdhah, are anna for animals; and vāk, manas and prāṇa, thought, mind and the vital winds, are anna for all living beings.

The ṛṣis of India have always thought of anna as all that is eaten by all beings; those who eat may belong to whichever loka, whichever world, and whatever class of beings, whether they be svayāmbhū, those who have been born of themselves; manasija, those who have been born of the mind; jarāyuja, living beings that are born from the womb; aṇḍaja, living beings that are born from the eggs; udbhija, living beings that are born from the earth; or svedaja, the living beings that are born from the sweat of others. Thus, amṛta is

the anna of devas, sudhā is the anna of nāgas, svadhā is the anna of pitṛs, vīrudhas are the anna of animals, grains like vṛīhi are the anna of men, and prāṇāḥ, the vital winds, are the anna of all.

All annas are born of jala, water. In Śrīmadbhāgavata, Śrī Vyāsacārya gives a detailed description of the various annas in the context of pṛthvīdohana, the milking of the earth, in the story of Pṛthu. And, jala is the source of all anna; in fact, ap, water stands for soma through which all anna obtains the necessary nourishment for growth. That is why the greatness of annadāna and jaladāna, of the giving of food and water, is superior to all others. The dānavīras, the ones who give food and water to others, attain to the best of lokas after their death and achieve great glory. They also live a long life and obtain great wealth in this world.

The Mahābhārata, describing the greatness of annadāna and jaladāna, says:

*na tasmāt paramaṁ dānaṁ kiñcidsastīti me manaḥ
annāt prāṇabhṛtastāta pravartante hi sarvaśaḥ*

Dear Yudhiṣṭhira, I believe that there is no dāna greater than the dāna of food and water; because all beings are indeed born of anna, and from anna alone do they obtain sustenance for living.

*tasmādannaṁ param loka sarvalokeṣu kathyate
annād balaṁ ca tejaśca prāṇinām vardhate sadā*

That is why anna is said to be the highest in this world. The bala, strength, and tejas, vitality, of all living beings always depends upon anna.

*anne datte nareṇha prāṇā dattā bhavantyuta
prāṇadānādhi paramaṁ na dānamiha vidyate*

The one who gives anna indeed gives prāṇa, gives life itself. And what can be a greater dāna in this world than the dāna of life?

*annaṁ vāpi prabhavati pāṇīyāt kurusattama
nirajātena hi vinā na kiñcit sampravartate*

But, Kuruśreṣṭha Yudhiṣṭhira, anna itself is born of water. In fact, nothing can exist without the anna, that is born of water.

*nīrajātaśca bhagavān somo grahaganeśvarah
amṛtam ca sudhā caiva svāhā caiva svadhā tathā
annaṣadhyo mahārāja vīrudhaśca jalodbhavāḥ
yataḥ prāṇabhṛtām prāṇāḥ sambhavanti viśāmpate
devānāmamṛtam hyannam nāgānām ca sudhā tathā
pitṛṇām ca svadhā proktā paśūnām cāpi vīrudhaḥ*

Soma, the god of grahas; celestial bodies, is born of water; and so are amṛta, sudhā, svāhā and svadhā; and, mahārāja, so are anna, foodgrains, ośadhīs, herbs, and vīrudhas, the grasses, etc. O protector of the people, all living beings are born of and live on these various annas that are all born of water. Of these, amṛta is said to be the anna of devas, sudhā of the nāgās, svadhā of the pitṛs, and vīrudhas of the animals.

*annameva manuṣyāṇām prāṇānāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ
tacca sarvaṁ naravyāghra pāṇīyāt sampravartate
tasmāt pāṇīyadānād vai na varam vidyate kvacit*

The manīṣīs, the thinkers of India, have described anna as the prāṇa, the very life, of men. And, O lion amongst men, all kinds of anna is born of water. Therefore, there is no dāna that is greater than the dāna of water, giving of nothing else can compare with the giving of water.

*tacca dadyānnaro nityam yadīched bhūtimātmanah
dhanyam yaśasyamāyusyam jaladānamihocyate
śatrūṁścāpyadhi kaunteya sadā tiṣṭhati toyadah*

Therefore, the one who aspires to well-being in this world and beyond should always give water to the thirsty. Jaladāna, the giving of water, is said to endow the giver with wealth, fame and longevity in this world. Kaunteya Yūdhiṣṭhira, the giver of water always finds himself to be superior to his enemies.

*sarvakāmamavāpnoti kīrtim caiva hi sāśvatīm
pretya cānantyamaśnāti pāpebhyaśca pramucyate*

He, the giver of water, attains to the fulfilment of all his desires and everlasting fame in this world; and after accomplishing his life here, having been washed of all his sins, he enjoys unending pleasures in the worlds beyond.

*toyado manujavyāghra svargaṁ gatvā mahādyute
akṣayān samavāpnoti lokānityabravīnmanuh*

O, the shining lion amongst men, the one who gives water to the thirsty attains to the immortal lokas on reaching the heavens. This is what Manu has said.

Nīścalānandaḥ

Purī
28.03.96

śrīmannārāyaṇarāmānujayatibhyo namaḥ

Śrī Śrī Tridaṇḍī
Śrīmannārāyaṇa Rāmānuja Jīyar Swāmījī

Sītānagaram

abhinandanam

*śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ
anekāni maṅgalāsāsanāni*

We have gone through this worthy and beautiful work entitled, *Annam Bahu Kurvīta*.

This book, which has been composed by Śrī Jitendra Bajāj and Śrī Maṇḍayam Doḍḍamane Śrīnivās in the form of an exposition of the śruti, *annam bahu kurvīta*, has evoked our keen interest. The book quotes several extracts concerning the subject of anna and annadāna, of growing a plenty of food and sharing it in plenty, from numerous canonical texts of India. The book clearly shows the competence of the two authors in their subject, and their dedication to and faith in the work they have undertaken.

The reader of this book is systematically introduced to a series of verses and stories concerning diverse aspects of anna taken from the śruti, smṛti, purāṇa and itihāsa texts. Food is certainly crucially important for mankind. All human societies must learn to appreciate the greatness of anna. Therefore, this work that weaves together several verses and stories from the ancient canonical literature of India deserves the highest approbation.

It is our belief that this book shall be heartily welcomed by both those who have an abiding faith in the canonical literature of India and those who may be devoid of such faith. This book brings together the entire thought of the great ṛṣis of India about anna

at one place; the wisdom of the great ṛṣis of the past ages indeed shines through this work.

It is certainly not true that Indians in the earlier times made efforts only towards the acquisition and propagation of spiritual insights; they equally diligently looked after their material welfare and organized their worldly affairs.

Living a spiritually anchored life one certainly attains happiness and fulfilment both in this world and the world beyond. The wise of the past indeed followed this dictum with firm faith and great perseverance. In fact, during the times when the āstika-buddhi of India, the natural faith of India in her understanding of the essence of the universe, finds itself free of the fear of any attack or restriction, then the proper pursuit of material happiness also remains acceptable to everyone. There is a well-known ancient saying that makes this aspect of the Indian way absolutely clear; it is said that *anīśiddhasukhatyāgī paśureva na samśayah*, “the one who gives up even those pleasures that are not forbidden in the śāstras is a mere animal, there can be no doubt about it.”

Even those who have no faith in the vaidika learning, but are anxious to bring about a healthy way of life in the society, they too must know the nature, utility, application and distribution of anna; because their life too is dependent upon anna. Where is the man whose heart is not touched by the teaching of the upaniṣads that, *āhāraśuddhau sattvaśuddhiḥ*, “purity of food leads to purity of being”? Where is the man whose head does not respectfully bow while listening to the hundreds of sayings of the wise in this context such as, *annamayam hi saumya manah*, “the mind is indeed formed of anna”?

It is certainly true that only pure thoughts and emotions flow through a pure mind, and when everyone displays purity of thought and emotions then the society as a whole takes to the proper path and moves towards the realization of truth. That is why we can say with firm conviction that this book – that offers complete knowledge concerning the subject of anna which is the primary support of all human life – is likely to be beneficial for all and is worth possessing by everyone.

Of the various objects that the mortal beings desire, like wealth, gold, carriage, etc., it is anna alone that provides complete satisfaction. Only when the people get anna in sufficient quantities, do they turn away from the unhealthy tendencies of mutual violence,

theft and malice, etc., that vitiate social living, and then stable peace prevails over the world.

Therefore, we should never alienate agricultural lands to industrial or residential purposes. For these purposes, only the barren lands ought to be utilized, not the lands that yield valuable food-grains. If we follow this dictum we shall be able to grow much more food than what we are able to grow today. With the lands yielding an abundance of food, we should also be able to establish *annadānakūṭas*, public places for the provision of food to all those who come, all around us. When that happens, then everyone shall have access to sumptuous and proper food to satiate his hunger; and then peace and contentment shall certainly reign over the whole world.

In the earlier times, several generous men of noble leanings who followed the *vrata* of *annadāna*, the discipline of sharing food with others, set up numerous *dharmaśālās*, numerous places where food and shelter was provided to the seekers. For the maintenance of these *dharmaśālās* they donated large sums of money and vast lands. Even today cities, towns and villages across the whole of *Bhāratavarṣa* maintain such *dharmaśālās*. This is well known to most of us.

All of us have heard about the great *ṛṣis* of *Bhāratavarṣa*, who on obtaining a little food after their intense *tapas* stretching over thousands of years gave away that little to the hungry seekers, and returned to their *tapas* without caring about their own hunger or thirst. We all know of the generous *Bhāratīya* housewife who gives away her hard-earned food to satiate an *atithi*. We can hardly ever forget the story of *cakravarti* king *Śibi* who gave away the flesh of his own living body to assuage the hunger of an eagle and thus save the life of the pigeon, who had sought refuge under the king's care. And, we respectfully remember the great sacrifice of the pigeon of *Mahābhārata*, who offered the flesh of his own body to assuage the hunger of the hunter who had come seeking shelter under his tree-house with a cage in his hand in which the wife of the pigeon herself had been caught.

Alas! How the times have deteriorated! What can we say about the present times?

It is said that the *bhikṣu*, who goes begging from door to door, is in reality not begging but propagating an essential teaching. He teaches us to give and continue to be like ourselves, continue to

retain the capacity and the generosity to give. And, he teaches us to avoid becoming like him by refusing to give; because by not giving one indeed loses the capacity to give, all generosity and abundance is withdrawn from such a one, and he himself becomes like a bhikṣu. In fact, the ancient Bhāratīya understanding has always been that the one who comes to our door seeking food or anything else comes not to beg but to teach us, and to bless us so that we may remain secure in our well-being.

We bless and desire that this book that has been composed by Śrī Jitendra Bajāj and Śrī Śrīnivās with great effort may generate awareness about the generosity of the ancient Bhāratīyas, who followed the vrata of annabāhulya and annadāna, the discipline of producing a plenty of anna and sharing it in plenty. May this book show the path of annabāhulya and annadāna to the Bhāratīyas of today, and spread the glory of the Bhāratīya-dānaśauṇḍatā, the Indian propensity to give generously, throughout the world.

All those who have helped in bringing this book to light deserve our appreciation. We send our blessings for all of them.

*anekāni maṅgalāni āśāsmahē
jaya śrīmannārāyaṇa*

Sītānagaram
March 13, 1996

Śrī Viśveśatīrtha Swāmījī

Śrī Pejāvāra Adhokṣaja Maṭha
Jagadguru Madhwācārya Saṁsthāna
Uḍupi

Bhagavān Brahmā proclaimed the primary sound of 'da' and thus taught dāna, the virtue of giving, to the mankind that is otherwise afflicted by greed and unworthy desires. The essence of this teaching is to keep giving and thus live a life of tyāga, selflessness. But, today in our public life everywhere we see only *dñnatā* in place of *dānitā*, we see only despondence arising from want instead of the affluence and generosity of giving. This is what we see, and we state this with great sorrow.

Amongst the dānas, annadāna, the giving of food is especially extolled in the śāstras. "Whoever is hungry deserves to be fed", such is the command of the śāstras. Thus the śāstras have taught us to satisfy the hunger of all, without discriminating on the basis of the caste or status of the hungry.

Bhagavān Śrīkrṣṇa has announced that the one who eats for oneself alone, without sharing, without giving food to others around him, eats in sin. Such a one partakes not of anna, but merely of congealed sin that has taken the form of food. Such is the importance of annadāna.

This book offers an exhaustive exposition of the greatness and significance of annadāna based on a systematic study and comprehension of the various granthas, the various canonical texts of Indian civilization. We warmly welcome this work. We wish that this book may evoke the necessary awakening in our social life. This is our desire, and our blessing.

iti saprema nārāyaṇasmaraṇāni

Tirupati
24.12.1995

Śrī Viśveśatīrtha Swāmījī

Śrī Pejāvāra Adhokṣaja Maṭha
Jagadguru Madhwācārya Saṁsthāna
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iti saprema nārāyaṇasmaraṇāni

Tirupati
24.12.1995

Virakta Śiromaṇi Śrī Swāmī Vāmadevajī Mahārāj

Akhila Bhāratīya Santa Samiti

Ānanda Kuṭīra

Vrindāvana

śrī ganeśāya namaḥ

I have gone through this book entitled, *Annām Bahu Kurvīta*, composed by Jitendra Bajāj and Śrīnivās with great effort. *annām bahu kurvīta* is a Taittirīya śruti. What is the meaning of this śruti? The meaning of the śruti is that when there is an abundance of anna, of food, then there is also an abundance of annādāna, of the giving of food. What happens when there is an abundance of annādāna? Then nobody suffers from hunger or anxiety, nobody remains aśānta, none is found lacking in peace of mind or body. And when there is none who is aśānta, when no one lacks peace, then all, securely established in a happy life, acquire tatvajijñāsā, the desire to know the essential truth of the universe, which is the proper goal of human life. Tatvajijñāsā arises only in those who are free of the worries of food and other necessities of life, and thus are at peace, are keen to live a life of dharma, and have a clear-quiet intellect.

Tatvajijñāsā leads one to engage in reflection. And, by reflecting on the tatva, on the essential truth, one attains tatvajñāna, the knowledge of the truth. In this context Śrīmadbhāgavata says, *dharmasya hyāpavargyasya nārtho rthāyopakalpate*, “the phala of dharma is mokṣa not artha, dharma is fulfilled in liberation from the cycle of life and death, and not merely in the attainment of wealth and riches in this world.” What leads to apavarga, mokṣa, is called āpavargya, which is nothing but tatvajñāna; dharma indeed gives rise to āpavargya which is tatvajñāna. Mere attainment of material wealth cannot be the goal of dharma.

Those who give dāna, share their material possessions with others, attain vividiṣā, which is the same as tatvajjñāsā. Thus through dāna both the giver and the receiver become worthy and both their lives are fulfilled. The receiver obtains the dāna and the giver acquires vividiṣā and jñāsā. This is what Bṛhadāraṇyaka teaches in the śruti, *tametam vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti yajñena dānena tapasa'nāsakena*, which means that the brāhmaṇas attain vividiṣā, the desire to know, through recitation of the vedas, yajña, dāna and disciplined tapas.

Let me summarize what is described in this book about the phala of dāna: Annadāna is in fact prāṇadāna, which is the same as giving the gift of life. Only the one who lives can possibly pursue the four puruṣārthas of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa, the four essential human endeavours towards what may be roughly rendered as virtue, wealth, pleasure and ultimate liberation from the confines of the self. It can indeed be said that by giving annadāna one endows the seeker with the four puruṣārthas. Therefore, in the śāstras, one often hears condemnation of the one who does not offer food to the hungry seeker, to the atithi or to the one who has a right to receive bhikṣā, like a samnyāsin, brahmacārin or a brāhmaṇa. The first part of this book is an exhaustive compilation of the teachings of the śāstras in this context. As is recalled there, devas are pleased through yajñas, and devas thus pleased by the yajñas fulfil the earth with plentiful rains, and the earth thus fulfilled yields an abundance of anna. The one who partakes of the anna thus produced through the prasāda of devas, without first offering it to the devas, indeed nurtures only his physical body. Such a one, even if he attains to the svargaloka, through the strength of his tapas and other virtuous acts, is condemned to remain hungry even in the svarga and to partake of the flesh of his own physical body. Such is the importance of annadāna.

This book also shows the depth of social concern that prevailed in India even under the rule of monarchical kings; their concern indeed gave rise to a much more harmonious and effective social order compared to the so-called socialism of today. And this harmonious socialism of India also flourished on the basis of annadāna and other kinds of dānas. This aspect of the Indian polity has been illustrated through a description of the polity of Thanjavur in the latter part of the book. This description of the Thanjavur polity deeply touches our hearts. We learn that even in those times, when

the means of transport were hardly advanced, a stream of pilgrims used to keep flowing from the Himālayas up to the Indian ocean. This too was made possible by the prevalence of annadāna; this too is to be attributed to the greatness of annadāna.

The book shows that those who undertake annadāna with an abiding faith, also attain greater ātmabala, greater strength in themselves; and without such ātmabala, it is indeed impossible to attain paramātmā. The śruti too proclaims that this ātmā is not accessible to the weak, *nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyaḥ*.

Why say more? Those who have the urge to know more must turn towards the book itself.

*iti śubham
vidvadanucarāḥ paramahaṁsa swāmī vāmadeva*

Vrindāvana
10.05.96

śrīh
śrī candramaulīśvārāya namaḥ

śrīmatparamahamsaparivrajakācāryavarya
śrīśaṅkarabhagavatpādācāryaparamparāgata

Jagadguru Śrīśaṅkarācārya
Śrī Jayendra Saraswatī Swāmigal

Śrīkāmakoṭipīṭha Mahāsaṁsthānam
Kāñcīpuram

“There is no dāna greater than annadāna and tīrthadāna, the giving of food to the hungry and water to the thirsty” – so goes an ancient saṁskṛt saying. But, who is the proper recipient for annadāna, the gift of food? The unequivocal answer to the question is that anyone who is hungry deserves to be fed.

Amongst the dānas, annadāna has a particularly exalted place. Recipient of no other gift ever attains satiation, ever obtains the feeling that he requires no more. But the one who receives the gift of food, he on eating to his fill spontaneously attains the feeling of satiation. “I am satisfied, I have had my fill, I need no more,” he thinks and says thus.

The meaning of ‘anna’ is ‘āhāra’; what is eaten is anna. The life of all living beings, from man to the least of the worms, depends upon anna. In the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, Śrīkṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that anna is in fact the cause of all life, all beings are born of anna, *annādbhavanti bhūtāni*, etc.

It has given us great pleasure to go through the book entitled, *Annam Bahu Kurvīta*. Śrī Jitendra Bajāj and Śrī Maṇḍayam Doḍḍamane Śrīnivās of Cennapurī have undertaken a very detailed exposition of the greatness of anna and annadāna, and the

result of their efforts is seen in this book, which is being published in three languages, Tamil, Hindi and English. In this book they offer an exhaustive description of the greatness and special significance of anna and annadāna with profuse quotations from the upaniṣads, itihāsās, purāṇas and the manudharmaśāstra; and they have retold many an ancient and moving anecdote concerning anna and annadāna found in these texts.

Nowadays we have begun to follow several new techniques for growing foodgrain-crops, and for the preservation and processing of foodgrains. These new techniques seldom preserve the quality and vitality of food. These seem to be aimed solely at the mere quantitative enhancement of the produce. In the earlier times, we certainly used to be greatly concerned about ensuring plentiful production of food, yet in the cultivation, preservation and distribution of foodgrains we followed a path that ensured the health of all and was in consonance with dharma. That is indeed the path of śreyas, which alone can lead to the welfare of all for all times.

This book offers a complete exposition of the greatness of anna and annadāna. It ought to be read by all Indians, and all of our countrymen should begin to perform annadāna to the best of their capabilities. This is our earnest desire, and our blessing.

Nārāyaṇasmṛtiḥ

Kāñcīpuram
31.08.1995