**PĀṆCARĀTRA TEXTS**
**IN THE TEṆKALAI-VAṬAKALAI 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 Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra research. Nevertheless, the discussions of this work in the Symposium raised several points especially relevant to the present endeavor:

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

2. Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra texts is defended by most Viśiṣṭādvaita theologians (Yāmuna to Vedāntadesīka 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 Maṇipravālī simply assumes the authority and hoary antiquity of all Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra tradition. The Śrīvaiṣṇava theologians don’t always know quite what to make of these texts and
their concerns. The authors of Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra 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 Āḻvārs, legendary figures of itihāsapurāṇa, and the writings of their own tradition’s previous ācāryas.

(5) Twenty-five years ago, scholars tended to assume that Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra texts, presumably as Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra 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. This practice clearly is related to a long tradition of Pāṇcarātra 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 pañcasāṃskāra initiation from twelfth century to today are as follows:
(1) the Tirumantra or Mūlamantra: om namo nārāyaṇāya, “Om, Homage to Nārāyaṇa!”

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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: śrīmān Śrīrāmāyaṇacaranaṇau śaraṇaṁ 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 parityayajā mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vṛaja || aham tvā sarvāpāpebhyo mokṣayīṣyāmi mā śucāḥ ||, “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 acaryas through which they came (guruparamparā), is one of the five components of pañcasamśkāra 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 Tenkalai school of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, the pañcasamśkāra 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 Maṇipravāla 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.

ŚARAṆĀGATI, PĀṆCARĀTRA
AND THE TENKALAI-VAṬAKALAI 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 Ālvārs, 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? 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 Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra texts (or portions thereof) which teach this doctrine, the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā 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 Pāṇcarātra traditions, indicating that the keepers of these two traditions were closely associated in the centuries between Yāmuna (c. 1050?) and Periyavāccān Pillai and Vātsyāya Varadācārya (c. 1225).

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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 Śrīviśṇava Maṇḍippavāla rahasya texts and asking the following questions: How are Pāñcarātra proof texts used in the Śrīviśṇava rahasya literature? Which Pāñcarātra texts are most used? Since my own research has been on the Tenkali-Vaṭakali 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 Vaṭakali position, and an assortment of texts commented on and quoted by Maṇvālамānumun (1370-1443) for the Tenkali position: Piḷḷai Lokācāra’s Śrīvacanabhūṣanam and Muṃkṣuppaṭi, and the Ācārāḥṛdayam of his brother Ālakīyaṃṇavāla Perumāḷ Nāyaṇār. I also looked over the voluminous Parantarahaṣyam of Periyāvācān Piḷḷai (1167-1262), an early rahasya commentary which was composed a generation earlier than Piḷḷai Lokācāra (1205-1311) and his brother (1207-1309). Most of these texts (Mukṣuppaṭi, Parantarahaṣyam, nearly half of Rahasyatrayasāram) are commentaries on the three Śrīviśṇava mantras. The rest are independent doctrinal works nevertheless included by Śrīviśṇavas in the general genre of Maṇḍippavāla “rahasya” texts. I found that two chapters in two Pāñcarātra texts, Lakṣmītātra ch. 17 and Ahirbudhnyasamhitā ch. 37 account for over half of the Pāñcarātra references in this body of Śrīviśṇava 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 Bhāradvājaṃhitā, 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 ācārāya, or to Rāmānuja himself, came to be recognized in the Tenkali tradition as a means to mokṣa that is separate from prapatti to the Lord himself.
I found that the Tenkalai and Vaṭakalai Ācāryas quote the same passages from these two chapters in these two Pāṇcarātra texts, but interpret them differently. In fact, nearly all the major disputed points in the Tenkalai-Vaṭakalai argument about the nature of prapatti or śaraṇāgati seem to be imbedded in these two Pāṇcarātra chapters. These chapters are themselves ambiguous on the disputed issues, and thus leave room for both the Tenkalai 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 Śrīvaishnava tradition.

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

Furthermore, these two Pāṇcarātra 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 Tenkalai position and the other the Vaṭakalai position on śaraṇāgati. But I found that Vedāntadesiṅka’s interpretation of prapatti, though not at odds with what is said in Ahirbudhnyasamhitā, is more compatible with, and indebted to, that seen in the Lakṣmītantra. The Tenkalai position on prapatti, how-
ever, is more hospitable to the view of śaraṇāgati expounded in Ahirbudhnyasamhitā than that found in the Lakṣmīmitra.\(^6\)

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 Śrīvaiśnava doctrine. Is prapatti an upāya, a ritual means or implement employed by the seeker of salvation (mumukṣu) to achieve his goal, comparable to other ritual upāyas specified in Dharmaśāstra and Pāñcarātra? Or, in śaraṇāgati, is the upāya solely the Lord himself, such that the mumukṣu’s act has no instrumental value at all? Vedāntadesika 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, Periyavāccān Piḷḷai through Maṇavāḷamāmuni, 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 Śrīvaiśnava 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 Śrīvaiśnava 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 Nammāḻvār’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 Śrīvaishnava history (perhaps the early nineteenth century) it aptly summarizes the distinction between the soteriology of these two branches of the Śrīvaishnava 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 Pāṇcarātra 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. Maṇavālamāmuni quotes a Pūrva Mīmāṃska maxim: “Whatever has aṅgas, that is a sādhana (or upāya).” Though I can’t determine whether Vedāntadēśika quotes this maxim, what he says shows that he clearly assumes its truth. So is prapatti an upāya with aṅgas? Vedāntadēśika and the Vaṭakalai school say yes, and the Tenkalai Ācāryas say no. Both schools can quote Pāṇcarātra to support their positions.

Lakṣmītantra and Ahirbudhnyasamhitā 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

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7 ŚVB 56: yad yat sāngaṃ 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 (\(āṅukūlyasya saṅkalpah\)),
2. avoidance of what is displeasing (\(prātikūlyasya varjanam\)),
3. faith that he will protect (\(rakṣīṣyatiti viśvāsah\)),
4. asking for protection (\(gopṛtvavaraṇam\)),
5. self surrender (\(ātmanikṣepaḥ\)),
6. helplessness (\(kārpanyam\)).

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 \(aṅgas\) (paṅcāṅga).

In the Ahirbudhnyaśaṁhitā (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.

Vedāntadeśika has no trouble reconciling these three passages from the two texts into a single consistent doctrine: \(ātmanikṣepa\), \(śaraṇāgati\), \(prapatti\) or its other synonyms 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 Ahirbudhnyaśaṁhitā (AS 37.28) which speaks of \(śara-
nāgati as having six aspects (ṣaḍvidhā). Though the same components are listed as in Lakṣmitāntra, in Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā it is important to note that these components are not called aṅgas and śara-nāgati is not called an upāya. Rather, the Lord himself is referred to as the upāya. In Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā (AS 37.30c-31b), prapatti or saraṅgati is defined as the following prayer: aham asmy aparādhā- nāṁ ālayo 'kiṃcano 'gatiḥ || tvam evopāyahūto 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. Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s Prapannaparitrāṇam, one of his eighteen Maṇipravāla rahasya texts, is an exposition of the two qualifications for saraṅgati here mentioned: helplessness (ākiṅcanya) 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 (ākiṅcanya) 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 saraṅgati being the upāya. However, the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā, in introducing nyāsa or saraṅgati, 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/saraṅgati/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, Piḷḷai Lokācārya and Maṇavāḷamāmuni, 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 Piḷḷai 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.”

Manavālamāmuni 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 Carama- śloka, 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.”

It is clear that here the Caramaśloka forms the lens through which the Tenkalai Ācāryas interpret these Pāncarātra passages. Its phrase, sarvadharmān parityajya, “reliquishing all dharmas,” establishes that the aṅga first abandons all upāyas (Mumu 200-202). In the following phrase, mām ekam śaraṇaṁ vraja, “take refuge in me alone,” the verb vraja does not indicate an action but a thought of ac-

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10 ŠVB 55-57: itutaṇakku svarūpam tannai porāṭolikai. aṅgam tannaţiyoṇiṭavarraiḥ porāṭolikai. upāyam tannai porukkum.

11 Manavālamāmuni ad ŠVB 55-56: upāyavaranāṭmakamāna tannai upāyamāṇa sahiyaṭapatīyāyirukkai. atāvatu – āpādapratiṭyōliya uḷḷapaṭi nirūpittā svasaṃnunupāyavat pratipattikku yōgyamākāṭapati yirukkai-yenrapati. ... caramaślokatīrtaṁ itaiṁ sāṅgamāka vīdhikkaiyālē, “yad yat sāṅgam, tat tat sādhanaṁ” enkira nyāyamitukkum vārāṭovenna; aṅga svarūpa-tai darśippikakē anta nyāyaminguvārāṭenru pārītu, atu tannai yaruḷiccey-kirār; “aṅgam tannaiyoṇiṭavarraiḥporāṭolikai.” ... svikāravāpamāna tannaţiyoḷiṭa cetana pravṛttiḥaloniṇraiyyaṃ sahiyaṭapatīyāyirukkai. sādhanaṁya sakāṭa pravṛttiḥaloniṇṭaiyaṃvamsāṇatākamīrē yitukkaṅgam “yad yat sāṅgam” enkiraṉiṭatīrī pravṛtti rūpāṅga sahitamāṇa varrāyīrē sādhanaṁyā-kac colakūratau; appaṭīyaṇiṅkē, itiṅṭaya vaṅkaṁ nivṛttirūpāmākaiyālē, itu tāṅe yitinnūṭaya vaṇupāyatavā 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 Ahirbudhnyasamhitā definition (AS 37.30-31) are taken as having a higher authority in articulating the true aṅgin-aṅga construction than the other Pāṇcarātra texts. These passages indicate that the aṅgas of prapatti or saraṇāgati 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 saraṇāgati is an upāya.

Maṇavālaṃmāṇa quotes Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s Parantapati (in ADR 155-156), which echoes Vedāntadesika’s terminological distinction between siddhopāya and sādhypāya, while explicitly rejecting the view that ānukūlyasaṅkalpa and the other attributes mentioned in Pāṇcarātra are truly aṅgas. In commenting on ŚVB 57, Maṇavālaṃmāṇa 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.’”

In summary, we can say that the Tenkalai doctrine of the lack of aṅgas in prapatti, though somewhat at odds with the Lakṣmitantra’s teaching of prapatti, is quite reconcilable with the teachings of the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā. But it is clear that the Tenkalai Ācāryas are seeing both Pāṇcarātra 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 Pāṇcarātra aṅgas or vidhās of saraṇāgati.

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12 Maṇavālaṃmāṇa ad ŚVB 57: inta siddhopayaṃ sahāyantara samsargāsahamayirē yiruppatu. “ivvupāya viśesam svavyatiriktāmāyiruppatonrai sahiyāmaiśayēyē ānukūlyasaṅkalpaḍikalukkumupāyāṅgatvamanrīkkē, avakāta svētām pōlē sambāvita svabhāvatvamunṭākārītu” enru ivvarthattai parantapaṭiyilē ivarthāmēyārulīcceleśirē.
We might note that Vedāntadeśika devotes an entire chapter of his Rahasyatrayasāram (RTS ch. 24) to refuting the doctrine (presumably of the Teṅkalai Ācāryas) that prapatti is simply a prayer or request rather than a six-limbed upāya with aṅgas. Quoting the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā’s definition or saraṇāgati 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 Lākṣmītantra and Ahirbudhnyasamhitā clarify that saraṇāgati, 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 saraṇāgati or prapatti. Two Lakṣmītantra passages are especially relevant to this issue:

(1) karuṇāvān api vyaktam śaktah svāmy api dehinām | aprārthito na 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 viśveṣaḥ sadā kāraṇiko ’pi san | samsāratantravāhītād raksāpekṣām pratīkṣate | “Even though the Lord of the universe is all knowing and ever compassionate, yet in order not to disturb the order of samsāra, he expects a request for protection.” (LT 17.79cd-80ab)

Here the Lākṣmītantra seems to affirm, as do Vedāntadeśika and the Vaṭakalai school, that the Lord invariably waits for a request. It is interesting that the Lākṣmītantra even gives a reason for this: “in order not to disturb the order of samsāra.” This is the central argument Vedāntadeśika makes in defense of his position. For the Lord to do otherwise, says Vedāntadeśika, would result in the sarvamuktātiprasaṅga, 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. Vedāntadeśīka is passionate about this point, referring to it over and over in his Raha-syatrayasāram, 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 Viṣiṣṭādvaita principle of the agency (kartrīva) 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. Nammāḷyār himself is an important case in point. Pillai Lokācārya’s younger brother, Aḷakīyamaṇavāḷa Perumāḷ Nāyānar, spells this out clearly in his book, the Ācāryahṛdayam.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. Nammāḷyār’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 lilāvibhūti or realm of samsāra, support the validity of his own śāstric injunctions, and avert the sarvamuktiprasānga. (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.

“You be my upāya.” That is the request of the supplicant, as stated in AS 37.30-31. And the Teṅkalai 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 Teṅkalai-Vaṭakalai debate. Here again, both sides quote the same Lakṣmiṇitātra 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 hiyate 'nayā ||
“Whereas by following the upāya and apāya [method] one does not have that advantage.” (LT 17.92cd)

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

prāyaścittir iyaṁ sātra yat punaḥ śaraṇaṁ śrayet ||
“Here, the atonement is yet again to take refuge.” (LT 17.93cd)

upāyānām upāyatvasvīkāre '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 Carmaśloka’s phrase sarvapāpe-bhyāḥ, “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-
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In commenting on this passage, Maṅvālamāmūni 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.” But these offenses, too, are included in the Caramaśloka’s mokṣayiśyāmi (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 Kāṇcid Ācāryas following Vedāntadesīka’s position! So the implication is that the Vaṭakalai practitioners will go to Vaikuṇṭha, 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 śaranāgati 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.

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15 Mumu 253: kalanki upāyabuddhyā paṇṇum prapattiyum pātakattō-ṭu okkum. This passage seems to be based on LT 17.94ab, though that text is not quoted here.

16 Maṅvālamāmūni ad Mumu 253: sakṛt anuṣṭānamolīyap punaranuṣṭānattai sahiyāta prapatti svabhāvattai ariyāte kalanki aniṣṭa nivṛtti-ikkākavatāl iṣṭapṛāptikkāvātāl upāyabuddhyāmūntu paṇṇum prapattiyum ... upāyāntaramppōlē pātakasamam. See also MUMME 1987b.
(3) The Lakṣmītantra is generally more compatible with Vedāntadesīka’s thought and the Vāṭakalai position; the Ahirbudhnyasamāhitā 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) Vedāntadesīka’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 śaraṇāgati. 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.