

Group 3 Sakalakalaa Valli Maalai

Sakalakalaa Valli Maalai, a Saiva devotional work, was composed by Kumaraguruparar – a renowned Tamil Saivite saint, poet and philosopher. He was born a mute and, through the grace of Lord Murugan, he became a skilled speaker and a divine scholar.

Whilst residing in the holy city of Kaasi, Lord Kedaavesvarar appeared in his dream, revealing that He lay hidden amidst ruins and indicated the sacred spot. At dawn the next day, Kumaraguruparar, accompanied by his disciples, found the place and set about restoring it with devotion.

At that time, under the Mughal Empire, building a Hindu temple was not easy. Special permission from the king was required. Although knowing only Tamil, Kumaraguruparar approached the king for help to renovate the temple. However, the king, seeing his humble appearance, refused even to offer him a seat and just ignored him! When Kumaraguruparar finally presented his request, the king responded arrogantly, “I do not understand what you are saying! Speak in my language, then I will reply!” Deeply saddened and humiliated, Kumaraguruparar returned home.

The next morning, he bathed in the River Ganga and performed prayers and meditation with complete devotion to Goddess Saraswathi. It was then, with Her Grace, that he sang the Sakalakalaa Valli Maalai, which begins with the 1st verse:

“Vēṇṭāmaraiyukku aṇṇi nin paṭam thānga en vellai uḷḷat taṇṭāmaraiyukku thakādu kolō cagam ēlum aḷithu uṇḍān uṇḍānga oḷithān pittāka uṇḍākkum vaṇṇam kaṇṭān suvaikol karumpē sakala kalā valliye”

(வெண்டாமரைக்கு அன்றி நின் பதம் தாங்க என் வெள்ளை உள்ளத் தண்டாமரைக்குத் தகாது கொலோ சகம் ஏழும் அளித்து உண்டான் உறங்க ஒழித்தான் பித்தாக உண்டாக்கும் வண்ணம் கண்டான் சுவைகொள் கரும்பே சகல கலாவல்லியே)

Through the grace of Kalaimakal, the Goddess of Arts, he sang the Sakalakalaa Valli Maalai flawlessly. Miraculously, he also immediately understood the words and grammar of the Hindustani language – the language of the King!

He then worshipped the Goddess Ambika, who blessed him with her lion vahanam, and he rode upon it to return to the king! When the king saw him riding the lion, he was astonished and realised that Kumaraguruparar was indeed a great sage. The sage addressed the king in his own language and the king complied with all his requests.

Sakalakalaa Valli Maalai is a masterpiece of Tamil literature that unites devotion, learning, and art. There are 10 verses which are melodious and simple in language but carry profound meaning. During the festival of Navaratri, it is a cherished tradition among Hindu Saivites to sing or recite these sacred verses. Rich in poetic beauty and devotional fervour, this work holds a distinguished place in our Tamil literary heritage. Let us all sing it and gain Goddess Saraswathi's Blessings.