Twitter Thread by ■■■■■■■■■



■■■■■■■■■
@anbezhil12

#MahaPperiyava

Those who distrust the Puranas maintain that they contain accounts that are not in keeping with day-to-day realities. The stories in the texts refer to the arrival and departure of celestials and of their awarding boons to devotees. To the critics such accounts



seem false. A woman is turned into a stone because of a curse, then the curse is broken with the grant of boon; or the sun is stopped from rising - such stories seem untrue to us because they are beyond the realms of possibility and refer to acts beyond our own capacity.

Since

such things do not happen these days, is it right to argue that they could not have occurred at any time? In the past the mantras of the Vedas had their own vibrant power because of the exemplary life led by those who chanted them. Then people practised severe austerities and

cultivated yogic power of a high order. These facts are borne out by ancient books. Through their mantras, austerities and yoga, people then could easily draw to themselves powers of a divine nature. Where there is light there is shadow. So with divine powers there also existed

demonic forces that could be seen in their gross form during those times. Today the war between the celestials and the demons is still being waged (the combat between good and evil). Eons ago people could perceive these forces of good and evil because of the special vision gained

from their austerities. Scientists say that all light waves and sound waves cannot be grasped by the human sense organs. Some of them go step further to observe on the basis of their researches, that there are indeed "good and evil dieties". Even today there are present in this

world any number of yogins and siddha-purusas. They are unscathed by fire or snow, they can produce rain or stop it, and have powers that cannot be comprehended by our senses. But we do not have faith in such phenomena and we keep doubting everything. In the past there must have

been more people than we find today with such abilities or "siddhis". The Puranas contain accounts of many a miracle. Historians dismiss miracles as not part of history. Jnanasambandhar cured Kun Pandyan of his fever with the sacred ashes that had the potency imparted by his

muttering of the Pancaksara. The Pandyan was made upright with his hunch removed ("kun" in Tamil means "hunch" or "hump"). Historians disbelieve such stories. Mahendra Pallava bound Apparsvamigal with ropes to a stone and threw him into the Kadila river. The saint remained

floating down the stream. It was this phenomenon that persuaded the Pallava king to return to the Vedic religion from jainism. Again, historians refuse to accept such accounts as true. There is, however, circumstantial evidence to show that a Pallava and a Pandyan king were

restored to Saivism from Jainism. Historians agree that in the sixth and seventh centuries Jainism declined in Tamil Nadu and that the Vedic religion (particularly Saivism) came to be on the ascendent. If such a big change was to happen, that is if two important monarches of the

time felt it necessary to change their religion, the sort of miracles mentioned in the stories of Jnanasambandhar and Appar must have occured. The fact that these rulers did not record the incidents in stone or copper-plate does not mean that they did not take place at all.

There is a stroy told in the tradition relating to gurus about Ramanujacarya. He exorcised a ghost from the daughter of the Jaina king Pittideva who ruled Hoysala (Karnataka). Thereupon the monarch embraced Vaisnavism. Historians do not lend credence to such stories of exorcism.

Ramanuja lived in the 11th century. Jainism languished in the Hoysala kingdom and Vaisnava worship and temples prospered. Pittideva himself came to be called Visnuvardhanadeva. This is now confirmed as a historical fact. How can you deny that these changes occured as a result of

the incidents narrated in the story told above? English-educated people dismiss such accounts in the Puranas as lies since they cannot be proved scientifically. This attitude is not right. Even today human skeletons that are ten or twelve feet long are found here and there. Also

are discovered the skeletons of huge animals which are extinct today but which agree with the descriptions contained in the Puranas. From such discoveries it seems likely that in the hoary past demons as tall as palm-trees must have existed, also animals like yalis with the body

of a lion and trunk of an elephant. A human skeleton of which the legs alone measure 16 feet and the remains of an animal ten times bigger than an elephant have been discovered in the Arctic region. It has been determined that the animals belonged to many hundered thousand years

ago. If we take the help of mythology also it would be seen that our Puranic stories are not untrue. Man, who was as tall as a palm, is now only six feet; at another time he was only the size of our thumb. The physical characterstics of creatures changes from age to age. This is

stated in the Puranas. The Puranas are ridiculed because they contain references to vanaras, monkeys akin to humans, to creatures with the face of a man and the body of an animal; and than to a character with ten heads. It is all lies, critics say. Some however, believe that the

Puranic stories are all "symbols", that they are allegorical representations. It is true that in the Puranas certain principles, certain truths, are conveyed in the form of stories. But, for that reason, the stories themselves cannot be called false. Even in modern times we read

in the papers about the birth of a child with two heads and four hands or one that is neither human nor animal. They called such children freaks. A freak is the product of an error in nature, nature in which wd ie do not usually meet with an error. What are called freaks today

could have been created in the past in larger numbers for a special purpose. People in those days had supernatural powers and, in keeping with the same, the birth of such unusual children would not have been impossible. We cannot claim that what we know now is all that is to be

known and that there could not have existed anything different from the existing orders of creatures. It does not stand to reason to treat what we do not know and what we cannot know as untrue. In our own times we see that what we normally regard as unbelievable happens now and

then. We read reports of children and older people recalling their past births. In recent years such reports seem to have become more common than before. We distrust the Puranic story, according to which, Kasyapa had a wife called Kadru who gave birth to snakes. But many of you

must have read a newspaper report last year (1958) of a snake born to a Marwari woman. When I read it I was reminded of another story. It refers to a family I had heard about before I became Svamigal. In that family neither the daughters nor the daughters-in-law wore screw pine

flowers in their hair. When asked the reason for it they told a "story" - but by story is not meant anything made up. Ten or fifteen generations ago one of the family members, a woman, said, a snake was born in our family. The family was ashamed of its birth and concealed the

fact from others, but, all the same, it was brought up in the home, fed milk, etc. This wonder child could not be taken out. The mother went out only when she had some work of the utmost importance. There is a saying: if you are married to a stone, well, the stone is your husband

Likewise, if a snake is born to you, the snake is your child. One day the mother had to go to the wedding of a very close relative.
There was an old woman in the house. We do not know who she was, whether she was the grandmother of the snake child. The joint family was then still

a strong institution. A great-aunt or a distant cousin was looked afterby the family. The old woman in our story was vision impaired. The mother of the snake child left it in the care of this woman when she went to the wedding. What have you to do to a snake child? You don't have

to bathe it or do up its hair. Do you have to dress it? Or carry it in your arms? But it had to be fed at fixed hours. Before leaving, the mother had told the woman: Feed it boiled milk. Feel around for the stone mortar and pour the milk in the cavity. The snake will feed on it.

She had probably trained the snake to feed in this manner. The old woman did as she had been told. But one day she probably overslept and it was past the time to feed the snake. When the snake scrept up to the mortar it didn't find any milk in it. It waited for some time but soon

fell asleep crouching in the mortar itself. It was now that the old woman brought the milk. It had not been cooled and was piping hot. She could not naturally see the snake lying coiled in the mortar as she poured the hot milk into it. Alas, the milk was too hot for the snake and

it died. The mother who had gone to attend the wedding had a dream in which the snake child appeared and said to her: Mother, I am dead. You come and cremate me amid the clump of screwpine. Hereafter no daughter or daughter-in-law in your family shall wear srewpine flowers in the

hair. “From that day, no one in our family has worn screwpine flowers,” the woman said concluding her story. When I heard this account first I was astounded and wondered whether such things really happened. Many years later, after I had become Swamigal, people belonging to that

family [in which the snake child was born] came to see me. It was not to speak about the snake child of the past. There was an old copper-plate inscription in their family. They had come to know about my interest in old inscriptions and they brought the copper-plate for me to see

The inscription on it belonged to the time of Acyutaraya who reigned after Krsnadevaraya. According to it a Brahmin had donated lands to 108 fellow Brahmins. He had done so on behalf of his king. I will tell you why. The Brahmin's time is taken up by chanting the Vedas and

performing rituals. He is not expected to earn a salary or do any work other than practising Vedic dharma (today of course Brahmins work in offices and other establishments). But he had to maintain his family. That is why the sastras permit him to receive gifts, and that is how

in the past kings and wealthy citizens honoured Brahmins with donations. But, contrary to present-day allegations, Brahmins did not extort such offerings, but maintained their self-respect, receiving only the minimum needed for their upkeep.
According to the copper-plate

inscription I mentioned earlier, a Brahmin had distributed the land received from Acyutaraya among 108 fellow Brahmins. All their names and gotras are mentioned in it, together with the subjects in which they were proficient. Among them figures the names of the ancestor of the

people who came to see me, people descended from the family in which the snake child was born. The copper-plate had come as a family heirloom through so many generations. An interesting fact emerging from the inscription was that the name of the ancestor mentioned on the copper-

plate was Nagesvara. I was told by my visitors that the family had a Nagesvara every successive generation. I could guess at once that the name was associated with the snake child. It seemed to answer my doubts about its story. When I heard the news last year of the birth of a

snake to a woman, I had more reason to believe the earlier story of the snake child. It is wrong on my part to blame you for not having sufficient faith in the Puranas. I myself had doubts about the story of the snake child - it had all the character of a legend. It was only when

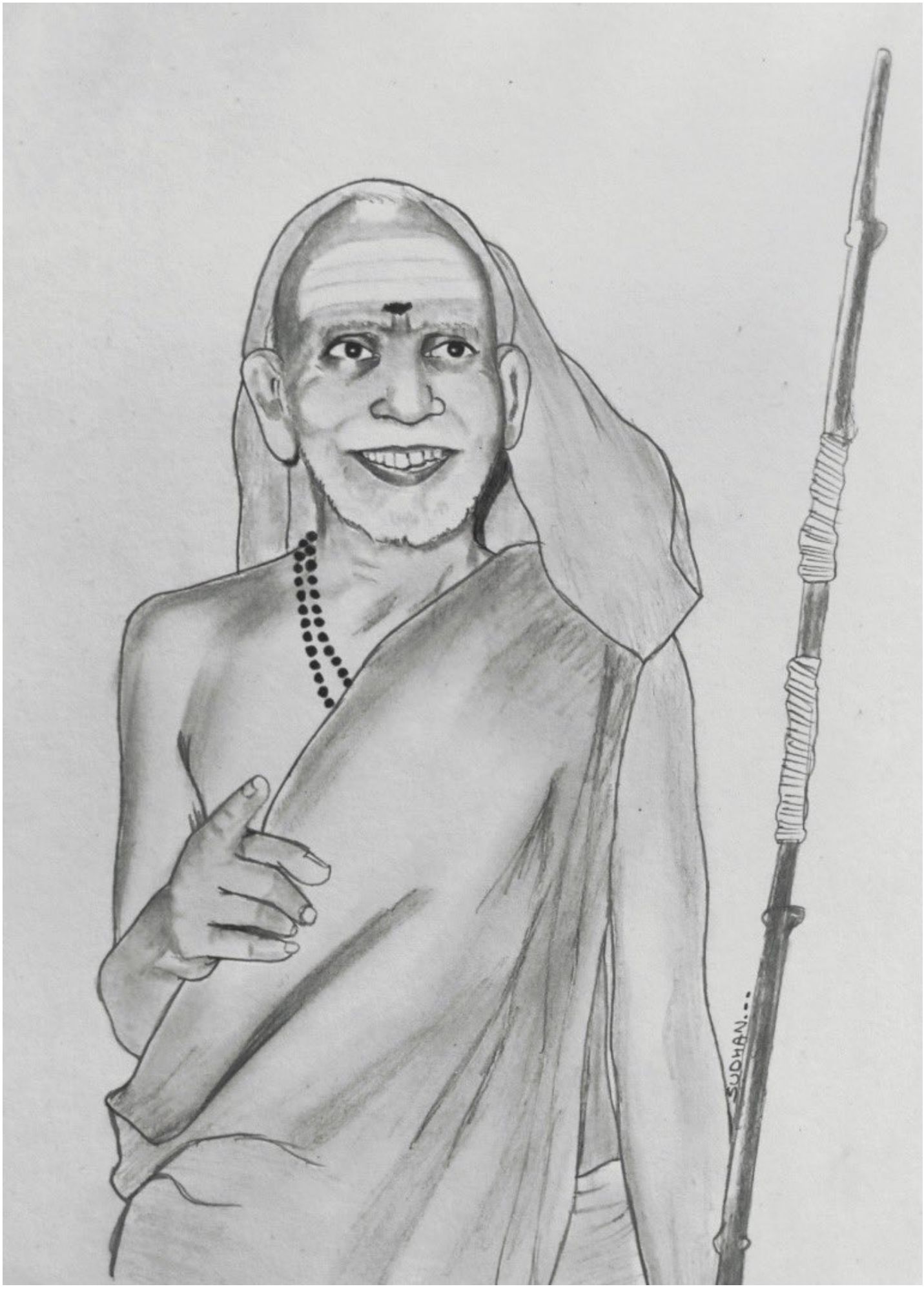
I read the newspaper report of the birth of a similar snake child that I believed it to be fully authentic.
Today we are prepared to believe any story however bizzare it be if it is printed in the papers. But we treat the Puranas as no more than fables. "Those who composed the

Puranas had nothing worthwhile to do. They had the stylus and palm-leaves and they went on inscribing story after story. Some of the stories seem ingenious enough but most are absurd, " such is our way of thinking.

"Hindu Dharma" is a book which contains English translation of

certain invaluable and engrossing speeches of Sri Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi MahaSwamiji (at various times during the years 1907 to 1994).

Sarvam Sri Krishnarpanam ■■


SUDHAN...