

Adiyongal Thirumadal

ISSUE 10

A SYDNEY ANDAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

MAR 2016

Welcome to the **TENTH** issue of Adiyongal Thirumadal !

Our group's plan to celebrate SRJ 1000th year in 2017 by conducting at least one function every month in 2017 till May when Sri Ramanuja jayanthi will be celebrated. Our group is planning to invite Sri U Ve Devaraja swamigal to deliver upanyasams on Swami Ramanuja. It is still at the planning stage. There is also few other proposals to commemorate the thousand thirunakshatiram of Swami Ramanuja including a whole day music concert and possibly a dance drama in the months of March and April 2017 leading up to 1000th Sri Ramanuja Jayanthi. We will keep you updated as soon as these plans crystalise.

Devotees may please note that regular Eramanusa Nootranadhi chanting is going on every Tiruvadira day of each month on Skype. If any devotee is interested to take part in it, you may please send us an email to **sydneyandal@gmail.com** and we will send you the skype invite.

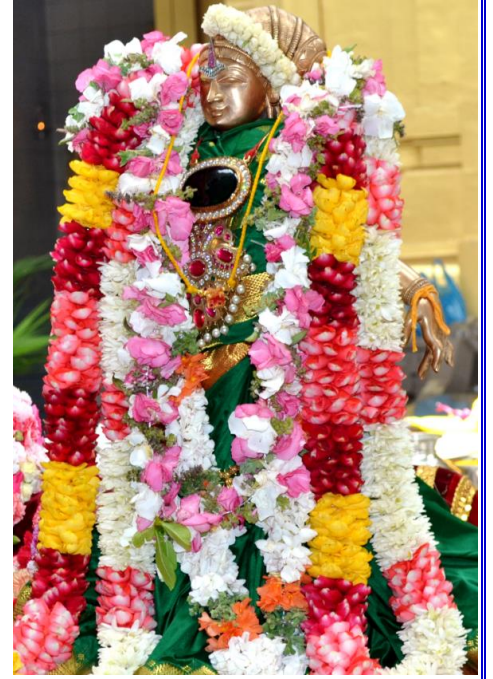
Regular monthly chanting of Thiruvoimozhi to celebrate Nammalvar Thirunakshatram, Visakam is taking place at bhagavatha's thirumaaligai. If any devotee is interested to host at their place, please contact us through the above email ID.

Our regular monthly SVT chanting is on Sat 12 March and the chanting list is as follows: Podhu Thanians, Thiru Pallandu. Kanninum Siru Thambu, Aazhi Ezha Pasuram, Perumal Tirumozhi, Tirumalai and Eramanusa Nootrandadi

Following is a message from Velukkudi Krishnan swami during his visit to Australia. When anyone wants to do kaimkaryam to a Divyadesam during their India trip, please send email to servedd@kinchit.org. Kinchitkaram will organise it for them. It can be any number of people starting from one.

Please send us your feedback or comments to **sydneyandal@gmail.com**

Please visit our website **www.sriandalsydney.org** for latest updates.



Note the date in Mar

Mar 23 Panguni Uthiram

Namperumal Panguni Uthiram Saerthi



Helensburgh Sri Venkateswara perumal with ubhaya naachimaar



We covered the second pasuram last month. Let us continue with the third pasuram. Andal's thirty songs contain the cardinal principles of Vaishnava dharma. These songs are sung to bring peace, prosperity and Divine Grace. Andal appears intent upon performing a particular religious vow to marry the Lord, thereby obtain His everlasting company, and inviting all her girl-friends to join her.

Overview

In the first pasuram of Tiruppavai, Andal focussed on the "Ashtakshara" mantram and celebrated it.

In the second pasuram, she shifts her attention to the Dwaya mantram (Mantra Rathnam) and points out who qualifies for such anusthanams (observance) and the code of life after Saranagati.

In the third pasurams, she elaborates on the powerful message of Charama SIOkam of GeethAchAryan (MaamEkam CharaNam vraja-MokshayishyAmi-Maa Sucha:).

Another view is she declares that AchArya Kula Sambandam (Connection and involvement with AchArya Kulam starting from Sriman Narayana to the present AchArya in that lineage) will give the Mumukshus (Those who desire the boon of MOksham) immense SrEyas (auspiciousness).

Yet another view is that Andal invites her friends for the Vratham observance. In the second pasuram, she spells out the rites to be observed and the deeds to be abandoned. In the third pasuram, she describes the fruits of the Vratham.

Pasuram 3 – Ongi Ulagalanda

‡ōngi ulagalanda uttaman pēr pādi*
nāngaḷ nam pāvaikku ccārri nīr āḍināl*
tīnginri nāḍellām tīngaḷ mummāri peydu*
ōngu peruñjennelūdu kayal ugaḷa*
pūnguvalai ppōḍil porivaṇḍu kaṇpaḍuppa*
tēṅgāḍē pukkirundu śirtta mulai parri
vāṅga* kkuḍam niraikkum vaḷḷal perum paśukkaḷ*
niṅgāda śelvam niraīndēḷōr embāvāy (3)

‡ఓங்கి ఊలకలంద ఉత్తమన్ పేర్ పాడి*
నాంగళ్ నమ్ పావైక్కు చ్చార్రి నీర్ ఆడినాల్*
తీంగిన్రి నాడెల్లామ్ తింగళ్ మమ్మారి పేయ్య*
ఓంగు పేరుంజెన్నెలూడు కయల్ ఉకల*
పూంగువలై ప్పొడిల్ పొరివాణ్డు కాణ్పాడుప్ప*
తేంకాడే పుక్కిరుండు శీర్తత ములై పర్రి
వాంకక్* కుడమ్ నిరైక్కమ్ వణ్ణల్ పెరమ్ పశుక్కళ్*
నింకాత శెల్వమ్ నిరైన్దేలోర్ ఎంబావాయ్ (3)

‡ఓంగి ఊలకలంద ఉత్తమన్ పేర్ పాడి*
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తీంగిన్రి నాడెల్లామ్ తింగళ్ మమ్మారి పేయ్య*
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‡ఓంగి ఉలగళంద ఉత్తమన్ పేర్ పాడి*
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నింకాద శేల్వం నిరైందేలోర్ ఎమ్బావాయ్ (3)

O my maidens! Let us recite the many thousand names of the Lord who as Trivikrama, measured the worlds with His outstretched feet. Let us bathe in the river as a part of our vow, the land will be blessed with plenty of rain in time; the fish will play in the well grown paddy fields; the beetles sleep in the water lilies and the fine cows yield abundant milk to the cowherds and everlasting prosperity; we shall bring our vow to a successful fruition.

Commentary (Swapadesam)

If we sing in praise of the holy names of the Utthaman, Lord Trivikrama (the most benevolent Lord), who grew to a cosmic form and measured the three worlds in two strides and put His third step on the head of Emperor MahABali, and then if we take the bath (in sacred Yamuna) in the name of our Vratham, then there will be three timely showers (of rain) throughout the country and there will be no harm at all (i.e., no drought, nor any famine).

The country will be rich and plentiful (because of the copious rains); the fish (kayal) will roam about amidst tall stalks of large red paddy crops; the bees will fall asleep amidst the petals of KuvaLai-flower (water-lily) and the great, profusely milk-giving, generous cows will yield milk abundantly; Thus, the whole country will be filled with undecaying wealth and prosperity (the good people take to righteous path and sing the glory of Lord Trivikrama). Andal hints that the Lord's name is grander than Him and hence she says "Utthaman pEr Paadi" (Nama sanklirthanam of Utthama name). She invites her fellow-gOpis to sing about the Nama Mahimai of Trivikrama and His deeds. She recommended that they do this Nama sanklirthanam and observe the Vratham with Sankalpam that it is for Bhagavath-Preethi (SaaRRI NeerAdinAL). Then she describes what kind of phalans will result from such an observance.

PHALAN 1: "THEENGINRI NAADELLAM TINGAL MUMMARI PEYTHU"

The Vratham observers will be free from the DhOsham of ananya Seshathvam (Theenginri NaadellAm). MummAri or the three monthly rains in recognition of the Vedic scholars, the righteous king and the pathivrathA women will fall. The three rains are also linked to the water poured on the hand of Vamana by Bali Chakravarti as dhAnam, the Kamandalu Jalam of Brahma, when He washed the ascending feet of the Lord and the GangA jalam that flowed from the sacred feet of Lord Trivikrama. Those waters will make the lands fertile and samrutthi (prosperity) will result.

PHALAN 2: MUMMARI OR THE TRIMONTHLY RAIN

In Rama Raajyam, there were 9 days of Sunshine and one day of abundant rain. This cycle repeated itself every month. Thus, there were three periods of rain each month. The land was fertile and there were no inauspiciousness caused by water shortage. Such prosperity will arise from the proper observance of Tiruppavai Vratham.

PHALAN 3: ONGU PERUM SENNEL--VALLAL PERUM PASUKKAL

With the abundance of rain that makes the country rich and prosperous, the copious milk yielded from the generous cows, prosperity is seen everywhere from the Vratham (Japam of the three Sri VaishNavite sacred mantrams and singing of the glories of Sriman Trivikrama NaarAyanan).

Inner Meaning

"SaaRRI NeerAdinAI" here refers to the UpadEsam of SaraNAGathi rahasyam by SadAchAryAs and the observance of it by SadhsishyAs.

"MummAri" here refers to the benefits of attaining the fruits of the Vratham (SaraNAGathi) through Upadesam, through study of AzhwaR's Prabandams and enjoyment of the ArchA moorthis at their divya desams through pilgrimages.

"Ongu peru-sennalUdu Kayal ukaLa" refers to the tall stalks of PrapannAs thriving in the land rich with AchAryAs; the strong fishes jumping with joy in the paddy fields are the happy AchAryAs, who recognize that their efforts have borne fruit.

"PoomkuvaLai pOthil PoRi VaNDu kaNN Paduppa" refers to Sriman NarAyaNa sleeping without worry in our heart lotuses (Hrudhaya Kamalams) that His work through His AchAryAs has been successful.

"TengAthE pukkirinthu seertha Mulai paRRI Vaangak kudam" refers to the sishyAs, who have flocked to the AchAryan pulled closer by the affection (vaathsalyam) of their AchAryans.

"VaLLal perum pasukkaL" refers to the most generous AchAryAs, who do not expect any returns. They use the equivalent of the four fingers of the udders of the abundant milk giving cows to impart knowledge about the three parama rahasyams of Sri VaishNavam. The four fingers of the udder through which this milk of Knowledge (Jnana milk) flows are: Vedam, Smruthi, Saathvika PurANams and AzhwaR Pasurams.

"NeengAtha Selvam NiRainthu" refers to the undiminishing wealth of Jnana at all times during our stay on His Leela VibhUthi (Earth) and in His Transcendent world of Sri Vaikuntam.

Previous Articles

Previous Articles: <http://sriandalsydney.org/index.php/literature/43-tiruppavai>

Andal tiruvadigale saraNam

Sri Krishnanin tiruvadigale charaNam

The author pays his obeisance to Oppiliappan Koil Shri Varadachari Sathakopan, Shri U,Ve. Velukkudi Krishnan Swamy and Shri K.M.Sudarshan who have influenced this article by their incomparable works and commentary on Desika Prabandham including Adaikkalappathu.

**seeronRu thUppul thiruvEngadamudaiyAn pAronRach sonna pazhamozhiyul OronRu
thAnE amaiyAdhO thAraNiyil vAzhvARku vAnErap pOmaLavum vAzhvu**

Pasuram 3

**thanthirangal vERinRith thamathuvazhi yazhiyAthu
manthirangal thammAlu maRRumuLa vuraiyAlu
mantharangaN dadipaNivA ranaivarkku maruLpuriyuNY
sinthuraveR piRaiyavanAr seelamala thaRiyEnE**

Meaning

Swamy Desikan hails Varadaraajan as Souseeyan (seelamala thaRiyEnE) who grants Moksham to anyone who performs prapatthi unto his lotus feet (antharangaN dadipaNivAr). One can easily draw comparison to Shree Raama's Souseelyam of mingling with the lowest ones and granting Moksham to them in spite of his exalted status. Varadaraajan's Svabhaavam is praised as SaraNaagatha Rakshakan. Swamy Desikan meditates on the glorious attributes of Varadaraajan as the one who blesses the virtuous souls who understand the difficulties of practising Bhakti Yogam and realise the qualifications of all to perform BharaSamarpanam unto Varadaraajan and attain Moksha Sukham. These are glorious souls that observe their varNaasrama Dharmams (thamathuvazhi yazhiyAthu), perform svanishtai or ukthi nishtai. They do not seek means other than prapatthi having realised the difficulties of Bhakti Yogam (thanthirangal vERinRith). They use the Veda Manthrams (Manthirangal tammaalum) and the Sri Sookthis of Poorvaachaaryaas (maRRum uLa urayaalum) as their guide to perform prapatthi. Swamy Desikan declares that he does not know of anything mightier than the souseelyam of Lord Varadaraajan and therefore surrenders unto his antharam.

Pasuram 4

**kAkamirak kathanmannar kAthalikath thirapanthu
nAgamara nayanmuthalA nAganaka rArthamakkum
pOkamuyar vldupeRap ponnaruLsey thamaikaNdu
nAkamalai nAyakanAr nalladippoThu adainthEnE**

Meaning

Through this pasuram, Swamy Desikan refers to that angam of prapatthi – MahaaViswaasam – by declaring that he has attained the golden feet of the lord of mountains, Atthigiri AruLaalar, (nAkamalai nAyakanAr



nalladippoThu adainthEnE, naagam means elephant, naagamalai – Hastigiri) being inspired by his Souseelyam and Moksha pradatvam. Swamy Vedaantha Desikan draws examples from the vibhava leelaigal of ShrimaN NaraayaNa and reinforces his MahaaViswaasam in Varadaraajan to grant him Moksha Sukham. Swamy Desikan says – kAkam (kaakasuran) irakkathanmannar (Vibheeshanan) kAthali (Sakhi - Droupathy) kath thirapanthu (the evil Kshtriya who attained Moksham by chanting the three lettered

Govinda naamam (also referred by Thondaradippodi azhwar in his Thirumaalai – MoonRRezhuthudaya peral katthirabandhum anRRE parAngathi kandukondAn) nAgam (Kaaliyan)ara nayanmuthalA (Siva, Brahma) nAganaka rArthamakkum (other Devaas)– alluding to the Kalyana guNam of Souseelyam again – he has performed Saranagathy at the feet of the Lord of Kanchi fully confident that He alone can grant him uyar Veedu in the same way He granted the boons of Samsaara Bhogam and Moksham as desired by these people (pOkamuyar vldupeRap ponnaruLsey thamaikaNdu).

SeerAr thUppul thiruvEngadamudaiyAn ThiruvadigalE Charanam



Varththai 4:

dhasamuganaich seRREnO pirAttiaip pOIE

4. தசமுகனைச் செற்றேனோ பிராட்டியைப் போலே

In this varththai, Ravana is das mugan and pirAtti is Sita. The word seRRal could be interpreted as slaying or to look down. We are aware Sita did not directly slay Ravana, even though Sita Matha had all the capabilities to have killed him by Herself, Sita Matha did not do so. In fact, Sita Matha tried Her best to make Ravana see reason and asked him to hold Rama's hand as a friend.

So here we should use the word to look down upon Ravana, his wealth (which amazed even Hanuman) and the pleasures that he pointed out to Sita to try and tempt Her. She treated them as dirt and placed a single strand of grass between Herself and Ravana and addressed it when talking to him. She was willing to give up her life and suffered the torture rather than agree to his advances. She

placed both Her body and soul as belonging to Rama and keeping Him in Her mind always, Sita Matha just waited for Him. Thirukkolor Ammal asks "Can I be like Piratti and place everything completely in His hands?"

Varththai 5:

piNam ezhuppi vittEnO thoNdaimAnaip pOIE

5. பிணம் எழுப்பி விட்டேனோ தொண்டைமாளைப் போலே

The king Thondaiman was an ardent devotee of Lord Srinivasa. Tirumalaiappan used to talk with Tondaiman directly as he was so fond of him. Lord Srinivasa of Tirumalai had given His conch and discus to Thondaiman and had been without them for a long time which made few to assume he is lord Muruga and Ramanujar was the one who established he is Narayanan and gave back the conch and discus.

When Tondaiman was ruling the kingdom, a Brahmin called Koorman decided to go to Kasi and give up his body there in the Ganges. But he died in his hometown itself. His son called Krishna Sharma, decided to immerse his father's ashes in the Ganges. So, he requested the king, being his subjects to protect his wife and children till he returned from Kasi. Then he left for Kasi. The king asked ordered his administration to take good care of Krishna Sharma's wife and children. Being involved in his daily duties, he completely forgot about them. The workers did not take good care of the family and they eventually died. After a while, Krishna Sharma came back and asked the king to return his family to him. That's when the king remembered about them. When he went to look for them, he found their dead bodies. Shocked at this and not knowing what to do, he came back and told Krishna Sharma that his family had gone to Tirumalai and will be returning in a couple of days. Between Srinivasa's sanctum and the king's palace, there was a secret passage. The king went quickly to the sanctum and fell at His feet. He prayed for the Lord's grace and prayed for the wife and children to be returned alive and in return take his own life. The Lord who had deep affection for the king showered His divine grace on the king and told him to take some holy water from the sannidhi and sprinkle it on the dead bodies and that they would then come alive. The king then returned to the palace and brought the family back to life. He returned the family to Krishna Sharma along with much wealth.

Thirukkolor Ammal asks "Am I like Tondaiman, the king who had great love for the Lord and was the recipient of His divine grace?"

Varththai 6:

piNa virundhittEnO kaNdAkarNanaip pOIE

6. பிண விருந்திட் டேனோ கண்டாகர்ணனைப் போலே

Kandakarnan was a spirit that ate dead bodies. He was an ardent devotee of Shiva and as such hung a bell in his ear to prevent him from hearing Narayana's name being said. Hence he was called kaNdAkarNan. One time he went to Kailasha and prayed to Shiva to help him leave the spirit state and attain moksha. Shiva told him that he could not give him liberation and that only Narayana could do that. However, he gave the spirit a suggestion. Shiva said "Lord Narayana has appeared on earth as Sri Krishna now. I asked Him one time to give me an opportunity to give Him a boon. He agreed and told me that He would come to Kailasha as Krishna and get a boon from me. When He comes here for that, if you pray to Him, He will give you what you seek". He also gave a description of Krishna's form to Kandakarnan so he would recognize Krishna when he saw Him. Kandakarna then thanked Shiva, removed the bell from his ear and keeping Krishna's image and name in his mind started waiting for His arrival.

One day, he saw Krishna from a distance and recognized Him straight away. He immediately killed a rishi who happened to be close and brought the body to Krishna. Stopping Krishna he said "I have heard from Shiva that You are the one capable of giving moksha. I live by eating the dead bodies and want to offer whatever I have. I just now killed this rishi and brought his body just for You. Please accept my offering" and grant me moksha. He did that because the shastras say that whatever a person eats according to his state, he should offer that to the divinity that he prays to, before eating it.

Since he had offered his food with sincerity and only to Him, Krishna accepted the offering and granted him moksha. He also granted moksha to the rishi who was killed by Kandakarna. Thirukkolor Ammal is asking "Am I capable of praying to the Lord as sincerely as Kandakarna did?"

Varththai 7:

thAyk kOlam seydhEnO anasUyaip pOIE

7. தாய்க்கோலஞ் செய்தேனோ அநஸூயைப் போலே

After Sri Rama went to the forest to follow His father's orders to honor the boons given to Kaikeyi, He spent some time at Chithrakootam along with Sita and Lakshmana. It is here that Bharatha tried to convince Him to come back to Ayodhya. Fearing further visits from people in Ayodhya, Rama left Chithrakootam. They then reached Sage Athri's ashrama and prayed to him as well as his wife Anasuya. Athri Maharishi introduced his wife to Sita and said "Anasuya is a great pativrata. She follows the path of dharma. One time when there was a famine, she created vegetables and brought Ganges here. Pray to her like she is Your mother". Rama too said the same and Sita prayed to Anasuya and asked about her wellbeing.

Anasuya was pleased by this and told Sita "I appreciate You leaving all the pleasures in the palace and following Your husband to the forest. A true wife is one who follows her husband even during his tough times. May You gain all good things". Considering Sita as her own daughter with a view of giving some happiness to Sita who is missing on the pleasures back home, Anasuya decorated Her with flowers and garments and listened to Her childhood, marriage and other happenings. In the evening she told Sita "O Lady of sweet words! I am pleased by Your words. It is getting dark and You should go back to Your husband". Sita bowed to her as She would to Her mother and went to Rama. Rama was also pleased by the affection shown by Anasuya to Sita. Rama and Sita then spent the night in that ashrama. Thirukkolor Ammal is asking "Can I show the motherly affection to Thayar that Anasuya showed?"

Acknowledgement:

Sri TCA Venkatesan's write up and Sri U Ve V V Ramanujam Swami

(to be continued...)

THIRUVANPARISAARAM

We were going to stay only one night in Tiruvananthapuram and on enquiring found that there are two other divyadesams (Tiruvannparisaram and Tiruvattaru) close by. So we hired a taxi and set out in the afternoon for Tiruvannparisaram. It is a straight road from Tiruvananthapuram right up to almost Kanyakumari (just 20 km from Tiruvannparisaram). On the way we stopped at Kovalam briefly. It is a very picturesque town, of course catering more to the influx from foreigners. We reached the temple around 5.20 PM. The temple was to open only at 5.30 pm. Locally, this place is also called Tirupathisaaram. It is the birthplace of Udayanangai, mother of Nammazhvar.

The pushkarini is right in front of the temple. One of the temple authority opened the temple for us, we were walking around inside the prakaram looking at all the vigrahams waiting for the garba graham to be opened. Adiyen was talking to another person in the temple about the history of the temple and was enquiring when the Bhattar would come to open the sannidhi. He was saying it will open at 5.30 after the Bhattar takes a holy dip in the pushkarini. Imagine adiyen's surprise after several minutes when it turned out that the very same person was the Bhattar himself. Just outside the garba graham, there are shrines for Garuda, Ganesha, Vishwakshenar, Nammazhvar and Nataraja. There is also a shrine for Rama and surprisingly one for Vibhishana Azhwan. Adiyen has never before seen a shrine for Vibhishana Azhwan. Legend has it that Vibhishana Azhwan was blessed with a vision of the coronation of Rama, here at Tirupathisaaram (while returning to Lanka).

The Tiruvaazhmarban (Goddess Mahalakshmi on his chest) moolavar is a majestic 9 feet idol made of a special element called Katusarkara Yogam (mixture of jaggery and mustard) and no abhishekam is performed on it. He has Sankhu and Chakram on his hands and since he has the Goddess Mahalakshmi on his chest, there is no separate shrine for Thayar. The deity has a crown made of Gold and adorned with diamonds and other precious stones. There is a divine tejas on the Lord's face in this temple. Dashavatara paintings adorn the ceiling of the Indra Kalyana Mandapam in the temple. Nammazhvar has sung one pasuram on Tiruvaazhmarban.



Temple Entrance



Nammazhvar paasuram

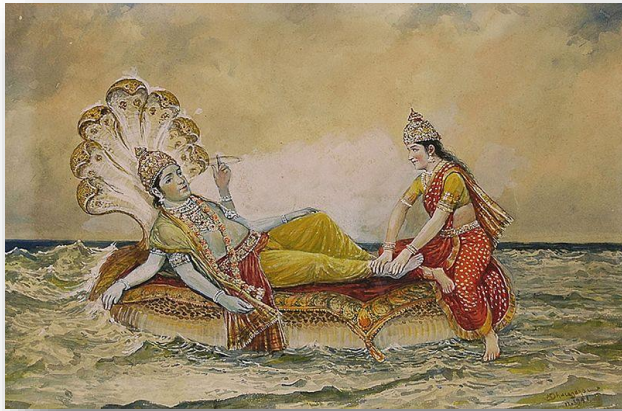


Tiruvaazhmarban

LOCATION : 70 Kms from Trivandrum **MOOLAVAR** : THIRUVAAZHMBAN/ THIRUKURULAPPAN
POSTURE : Amarnda Tirukolam facing East - 2 hands holding Sankhu, Chakram and lower right hand in Abhaya Hastam with lower left hand placed on the knees; gigantic form-9 feet
THAYAR : KAMALAVALLI NAACHIYAR **THEERTHAM** : LAKSHMI THEERTHAM
VIMANAM : INDRA KALYANA VIMANAM **PRATHYAKSHAM** : SAPTHA RISHIS

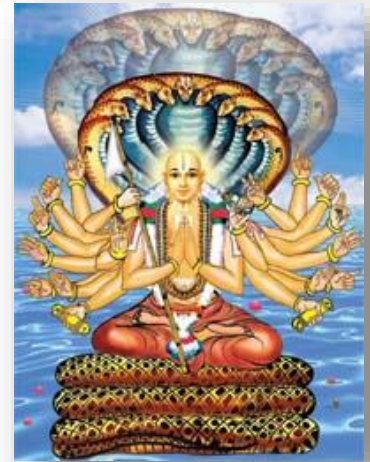
Ramanuja's Life and Teachings Sri Ramesh Varadarajan

Once Lord Vishnu, relaxing on his snake bed was lamenting about the worldly people going about their jobs without realising that their real goal in life is to attain salvation. He said that he donned the role of humans in His Rama and Krishna Avatar. During His Ram Avatar, He encountered many difficulties and suffered by being



banished to the forest by his step mother and faced separation from His wife Sita who was taken away by the demon King Ravana. He behaved like a perfect human and treaded the path of righteousness. However people on earth said that He is god and can cope with any difficulties suffered by humans.

During Krishna Avatar, He declared His Godhood at every instance and showed His might in killing the evil forces. People were in awe and said God is powerful and he



has donned a human form. All these did not bring about change in people's attitude to life and reach the goal of salvation.

He then sent His aspects as humans to set people on the right path. These aspects who were born as Alvars spent their time in deep contemplation on Him and reached back. He therefore asked one of His closest devotees (Nitya Soori's who are ever with Lord Narayana in Vaikunta), Adishesha to go to earth and set people on the Right path. At the orders of Lord Vishnu, Adishesha was born on this earth as Acharya Ramanuja and set people on the right path. Adishesha who is never separated from His Lord took avatar of Lakshmana in Rama Avatar and as Balarama in the Krishna Avatar.

Ramanuja's Birth

South India is blessed with devotion and spiritual bent of mind. Kanchipuram and surrounds (Thondai Mandalam) situated near Chennai and a celebrated temple town have produced many learned. Sriperumbudur is a small town situated midway between Chennai and Kanchipuram. More than 1000 years



ago Aasuri Kesava Somayaji, an eminent Vedic scholar lived in this village with his wife Kanthimathi. Kanthimathi was the first sister of a learned scholar Periya Thirumalai Nambi. Thirumalai Nambi was a prominent disciple of the well-known Vaishnava Acharya Alavandar. Thirumalai Nambi lived in Thirumalai serving Lord Venkatesa. Sridevi, younger sister of Kanthimathi lived in Madura Mangalam with her husband Kamalanayana Bhattar in nearby Madura Mangalam. Though Kesava Somayaji and his wife lead a good life, they remained childless. Thirukachi Nambi was a prominent vaishnavite who served Lord Varadaraja in Kanchipuram. He lived in Poovirundavalli and walked daily to Kanchipuram to serve lord Varadaraja. On the way, he will take some rest and spend some time with Kesava Somayaji.

Ramanuja's Life and Teachings - contd

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On one occasion, Kesava Somayaji opened his heart to Thirukachi Nambi and requested him to plead with Lord Varadaraja to shower His grace on them for a child. Accordingly Thirukachi Nambi pleaded humbly to Varadaraja. Varadaraja through the temple priest ordained that the couple should perform Putra kameshti yaga in ThiruAllikeni and Adishesha himself will be born as his son.

Tirukachi Nambi on his return, told Kesava Aasuri and Kanthimathi of Varadaraja's divine ordain. As ordained, the elated couple went to ThiruAllikeni and performed Putra kameshti yaga. The benevolent presiding deity of ThiruAllikeni, Venkata Krishnan blessed the couple. With His blessings, the couple returned home.

A year later, a son was born to the couple in the Tamil Year Pingala, Chithirai month during the star Thiru Adirai. This day is a golden day in the calendar of all Sri Vaishnavaites. They thankfully recalled Thirukachi Nambi's help to seek Lord Varadaraja's blessings. The glowing face of the child attracted every one and they all said that the child was definitely an aspect of lord Narayana or that of His divine weapons or Adishesha Himself.

Young Ramanuja and His Education

Hearing the news of his sister delivering a baby boy, Thirumalai Nambi felt very happy and reached Sriperambathur very soon. He was struck by the baby's beauty and divine bearing. He touched the baby's shoulders with flowers to signify the conch and chakra and named him Ramanuja with implied meaning of Lord Lakshmana (Ilaya Alwan). Ramanuja grew like a moon in ascendancy and all the knowledge seem to flow towards him. He was able to commit to memory by just reading once any poem in Tamil or Sanskrit. His sharp intellect and memory surprised his parents.

His parents performed things appropriate for his age like ear piercing, commencing his education and the sacred thread ceremony (Upanayanam). His knowledge grew with time and he learnt all things necessary, very early. He liked to associate with the righteous and knowledgeable people and this helped him to develop a mature outlook and accumulate knowledge.

During this period, an auspicious thing happened in Madura Mangalam, Ramanuja's younger aunt Sridevi delivered a male child. That child also oozed divinity and the boy's parents were elated. Thirumalai Nambi came to see the child of his youngest sister and named him Govindan. He felt happy looking at a fulfilled life of his sisters and returned to Thirumalai.

When Ramanuja turned 16, He got married to Tanjammal. After a few months Kesava Somayaji Aasuri became ill and died soon after. Both Ramanuja and Kanthimathi were deeply affected and left Sriperambathur. They went to Kanchipuram and rented a house and started living there.

Yadava Prakasar an Advaiti (One who believed in existence of only one thing) lived in Thiruputkuzi near Kanchipuram. Ramanuja heard about his knowledge and approached him with a request to take him as his student. Yadava Prakasar took Ramanuja under his tutelage and taught him the deeper meanings of Veda and Vedanta. Ramanuja thought that by knowing the deeper meanings of the Vedas, he will be better placed to establish the superiority of Lord Narayana. Folklore has that Yadava Prakasar in his previous life was a monitor lizard (Udumbu) living in an anthill near a lake in Maduranthakam. Because he had the fortune of eating the remnants of food left by the devotees, he was born in this life as a person well versed in sastras.

Ramanuja's brother Govindan, who was brilliant was called by the learned as Govinda Bhattar. He came to his brother Ramanuja and enquired if he can also start learning from Yadava Prakasar. Ramanuja spoke to Yadava Prakasar and enrolled Govinda Bhattar also as his student. (to be continued...)

Panguni Uthiram is a very auspicious day to most Hindus. It falls in the nakshathram Uthiram. Panguni is the twelfth month of the Tamil solar calendar. Panguni is a month which is around March and April.



How is Panguni Uthiram celebrated in Srirangam?

In the month of Panguni, in Srirangam, There is Adhi Bramotsavam which consists of ten days. On each of these days the lord Namperumal comes out and does a few activities. Out of all ten days two days are very auspicious to Sri Vaishnavas. The first one is, Uraiyyur Serthi and the second one is, serthi with Sriranganachiyar. Uraiyyur serthi happens on the sixth day of Adhi Bramotsavam. On this day, Namperumal goes out across Cauveri River to Uraiyyur where he is with Kammalavali nachiyar. This is only one day in which this happens.

Serthi with Sriranganachiar happens on the ninth day. All 364 days of the year, Namperumal and Sriranganachiar aren't together. This is the only day in which they are together. Namperumal is in Therku (South) Vasal and Nachiar is in Vadaku (North) Vasal. Sri Ranganachiar's nakshathram is Uthiram and the month is Panguni. That is why in her in her Vali thirunamam we are saying, "Panguni Uthiram Paruthithal Valiye."

Why is Panguni Uthiram important to Sri Vaishnavas?

In Sri Vaishnava sumbruthayam you have to surrender yourself to perumal. You can only do this when they're together. If thaayar is not there and you go straight to perumal then perumal will look at your blemishes. Then who knows you might not even get the chance to surrender. The reason why Sri Vaishnavas always talk about going to perumal with thaayar is because perumal always looks at our blemishes and may sometimes punish us but if thaayar



is there then she will

convince and request him to accept our surrender and bless us.

Another reason why we surrender to perumal when they are together is because the great jagathacharya Ramanuja did surrender on this day. He also sang Gathathrayam (Vaikunda gadyam, sri ranga gadyam and saranagathi gadyam). So to follow Ramanuja's footsteps we surrender on the day which they are together.



What do we need to do on that day?

If you get the chance to be in Srirangam then try and get blessings from Uraiyyur sevai and Srirangam serthi sevai. If that is not possible then go to the Vishnu temple where you live. In our case you must go to Helensburgh temple and get blessings from thaayar and perumal. If even that is not possible due to some unexpected situation then chant Gadyathrayam at your home perumal. Get blessings from your thiruvaram perumal.