



RAMANUJA DARSHANAM

(Philosophy of Ramanuja)

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः



SRI RAMANUJAR
SESHAVADHARAM
THONDANUR, KARNATAKA

A VEDICS JOURNAL
Volume 2 Issue 3: Jul - Sep 2004

Vedics Foundation (<http://www.vedics.net>)

Table of Contents

Ramanuja Darshanam

Editorial	1	Editor: Sri Sridhar Srinivasan
Naichchiam: Path to discovering true Joy		Associate Editor: Smt Harini Raghavan
Surrender, as described by Swami Nammazhvar - Rangachari Swami	3	Advisory Board: Sri Mukundan Pattangi Sri TA Varadhan Sri TCA Venkatesan
Highlights of Nachchiar Thirumozhi - Sri ESB Swami	6	
Arangathamalan mugaththu - Sri Badri Bhattar Swamy	10	
An Interview with Prativadi Bhayankaram Annangaracharyar Swami	13	Subscription: Each Issue: \$5 Annual: \$20
The Essential Requisite for Aradhana - Understanding Perumal's kindness	19	Email vedic_mag@yahoo.com
Gadya Trayam of Swami Ramanuja	23	
Great Saints and Teachers	27	
Tiruvanikkalam: New temple for srInivAsa and kulaSEkhara Azhvar	33	
Calendar (Oct - Dec 04)	34	
Coloring page	35	

About the Cover image

The image on the cover of this issue, is that of Swami Ramanuja at Thondanur, near Melkote (thirunArAyaNa puram), in Karnataka. It is here that Ramanuja showed His innate divinity, of being the avatAra of AdisEsha. While fleeing from persecution by kulOththunga Chola, Ramanuja came to Thondanur, and was staying at the Narasimha temple there. It was here that Ramanuja had released the daughter of the local Jain king BittidEva (later called as VishNuvardhana) from the clutches of a Brahma Rakshasa, and the king became a Ramanuja devotee. It is said that a group of 12,000 Jain followers marched to Thondanur, and asked Ramanuja to debate them on religion and philosophy. Swami Ramanuja asked for a curtain to be present between him and the group of 12,000 debaters. Then, He manifested His divine form, as the thousand-tongued divine serpent AdisEsha, argued with the group & won the debate. Most of the defeated scholars consequently took refuge in Ramanuja, and became his disciples. This wondrous incident in Ramanuja's life on earth is immortalized through a painting at the Thondanur Narasimha temple, which can be seen even today.

EDITORIAL

NAICHCHIYAM (HUMILITY, SUBSERVIENCE TOWARDS LORD AND HIS DEVOTEES): PATH TO DISCOVERING TRUE JOY

In an earlier editorial, we had commented upon Swami Kurathazhwan's amazing sense of naichchiyam, and how it epitomized his stature as the true Sri Vaishnava. A loose translation of naichchiyam as a sense of inferiority (stemming from neecha, someone who is inferior) is both inadequate and incorrect. To understand what Naichchiyam truly means, we turn to Swami PiLLai IOkAchArya, one of the most prominent Acharyas in the *orAn vazhi* (chosen lineage), bequeathed us eighteen gems of sampradayic wisdom, collectively known as 'ashTadasha rahasyangaL', insightful texts that are typically prescribed for comprehension only after one has had a chance to master the Vedas, Vedanta and Divya prabhandam. Of these eighteen works, srI vachana bhUshaNam is extolled by our Acharyas and sampradayic scholars alike as the very pinnacle, a work of such magnificent that it epitomizes the divine outpouring stemming from our exalted lineage. The ability to succinctly delineate the essence of esoteric SAstric and purANic wisdom with crystal-like clarity in Sri vachana bhUshaNam is unmatched by anything or anybody. In this wondrous work, swami pillai ulagaryan (his name in tamizh) describes many essential traits of a Sri Vaishnava, and comes upon one of the most important traits, thus:

Naichchiyam Janma Siddham (Sutram 215)

What does *naichchiyam* mean *here*, and why is it such an important trait for a Sri Vaishnava? To find the answers, we turn to swami maNavALa mAmunikaL's vyAkhyAnam. Naichchiyam means an inherent sense of humility, sense of subservience stemming from our recognition of *sEshatvam* (servitude) and *pAratantriyam* (total dependence) towards perumAL and his devotees (*bhAgavatas*). Naichchiyam does not imply that a Sri Vaishnava feels inferior. It communicates a sense of dependence and servitude towards bhagavan and bhAgavatas. Swami mamunikaL's vyakhyanam:

BhAgavata anuvartanAdigaLil vandhAl sEshatvamAgira swaroopaththukku ThagudiyAna thAzhchchi

Naichchiyam stems from one's reference point. For a true Sri Vaishnava, the reference point is bhAgavatas, and if we follow in their foot steps, then, servitude (*sEshatvam*) is our true nature (*swaroopam*). A servant cannot serve well, unless he feels naichchiyam, a sense of humility, a desire to serve towards the Master. Therein, in service, lies his reward.

Now, one may opine, *that it is easier said than done*, that it is not easy to forget when we have learned a little something, that it is hard to ignore that we may have earned a little material success or a few rewards or awards here and there. Jettisoning ego, and the anger that comes along with it, a consequence of *avidyA* (ignorance), is not easy and our purvacharyas recognized this problem *for us* long before speaking of naichchiyam. Hence, they practiced naichchiyam, servitude, total and complete, before preaching its value. Our Acharyas had reached the highest in terms of learning and comprehension, yet lived with a sense of total humility and servitude.

Two acharyas of Sri Vaishnavam, more than any other, are picked by our orthodoxy, as the quintessence of this trait. One is swami Kurathazhvan, that incomparable disciple of swami Ramanuja, whose exalted qualities defy description. The other, of course, is swami Manavala Mamunikal. Both were ubhaya vEdantins, incomparable intellectual giants with immense *gnyAna* (knowledge), *anushTana* (practice), *bhakti* (devotion) and *vairAgya* (absence of any attachment to material and samsaric possessions). Yet, in their life and works, they repeatedly re-iterate a sense of total naichchiyam. Why? Was this humility appropriate, warranted?

Yes, because for Swami Kurathazhvan, the focus of his life was bhAgavatas, our jagadAchArya swami Ramanuja and our lord Sriman Narayana, not *himself*. The sense of humility and servitude was real and appropriate, because the only way to knowing our *svaUpam* (true nature) is through a sense of servitude towards bhAgavatas. Because bhAgavata sEshatvam, as described by our Azhvars and Acharyas, is the *charama parva* (the final stage) in our journey towards *mOksha* (liberation). Ultimately, if we recognize that our happiness lies in the happiness of our master, Swami Ramanuja and Sriman Narayana, then naichchiyam is the logical state of mind. After all, what can bring our Lord greater joy than a devotee serving another devotee?

Swami mAmunikal repeatedly refers to himself in lowliest of terms in *yatirAja vimshati* (e.g., *mUrkhaha* - fool, *agnyaha* - ignorant, *guNalEsha vivarjithaha* - totally bereft of any positive attributes), and when he does so, it is a reflection of a realized sense of humility towards bhAgavatas and Swami Ramanuja.

We live in a day and age when a modicum of learning, a *soup-con* of knowledge and a hint of a self-perceived positive attribute, propels us to develop oodles of ego and self-esteem. We will readily condemn any

one or anything that we, even remotely, perceive as being at odds with our own exalted assessment of ourselves.

Our purvacharyas showed that true happiness, true Sri Vaishnavam lay in recognizing that nothing is more joyous than servitude (sEshatvam), nothing is more real than naichchiyam, and nothing else other than ramanuja *sambandham* (connection to swami ramanuja) will take us to mOksham. Everything else, really, matters not.

SURRENDER AS PRESENTED BY NAMMAZHVAR

Sri U.Ve Embar Rangachari Swami

In this article, we shall see how Nammazhvar has handled the concept of Saranagati (Prapatti, Surrender).

The very well-known thiruvAimozhi paasuram "*akalakillEn iRaiyum enRu*" (ThiruvAimozhi 6.10.10) is perhaps the paasuram that is most widely used to illustrate the concept of Saranagati.

First, let us examine the paasuram and look at the literal meaning. The paasuram is as follows -

*akalakillEn iRaiyum enRu alarmEl mangai uRai maarbaa
nigaril pugazhaay ulagam moonRu udaiyaay, ennai aaLvaanE
nigaril amarar muni-k-kaNangaL virumbum thiruvEngadaththaanE
pugal onRu illaa adiyEn un adi-k-keezh amarndhu pugundhEnE.*

The free form translation of this paasuram, from Sri. B.S.S.Iyengar's translation of thiruvAimozhi (available at www.vedics.net) is as follows: "The Lord with the lotus-dame (Lakshmi) poised on His chest saying "I will not part even for a moment"! The Lord who rules over me along with the three worlds in unparalleled glory! The Lord of Thiruvengadam sought after by the peerless celestials and hosts of savants! I, the vassal without any merit to speak of, have attained salvation staying under Your feet." (Editor's note: The paasuram and translation is given for the benefit of the reader; Sri. Embar Rangachari Swami's handwritten article does not contain the translation).

The paasuram ends with "*adi-k-keezh amarndhu pugundhEnE*" - i.e. "I sat/stayed at Your feet & attained the ideal state." Clearly, the words *amarndhu* (stayed/sat) and *pugundu* (entered) are NOT physical acts of Nammazhvar (Nammazhvar did not leave the shade of the tamarind tree in Azhvar Thirunagari, and performed mangaLa AshAsanams to all emperumans from there itself). They are mental attitudes. This is made

clear in a commentary on thiruvAimozhi called "*ombadhinaayirappaDi*", written by Sri Nanjeevar, one of the *orAn vazhi* (chosen lineage) acharyas of the SampradAyam after Sri ParASara BhaTTar, and also in the 24000ppadi and eedu 36000ppadi commentaries given to us by Sri PeriyavAchchAn piLLai and Sri NampiLLai respectively.

The earliest commentary on thiruvAimozhi after Ramanuja, 6000ppadi, written by Ramanuja's gnyaana putra, thiru-k-kurugai piraan piLLaan is very brief by nature, but also indicates that "*Saranagati*" removes obstacles for reaching the Lord and yields *kainkaryam* (service) eternally and in all forms. Again, this means that only the Lord, through His divine consort, who is compassion (*krpa*) personified, removes all the obstacles to the soul reaching Him (Nammazhvar says in thiruvAimozhi - *vEri maaRaadha poo mEl iruppaaL vinai theerkkumE*), and sanctions eternal servitude (nitya kainkaryam - possible, perhaps only in the Lord's abode of SriVaikuNTa) by Himself. To put it briefly, 6000ppadi is of the opinion that the Lord is the Means (*upaaya*).

It is interesting to note the interpretation of the words "*amarndhu*" and "*pugundu*" in the longer commentaries. They are all in consonance with the magnum opus "eedu" of Sri NampiLLai, and we shall look into the same. For *amarndhu*, the actual words in the commentary are "*avanukku oru sahakaari vENdudhal, than thaliyilE upaaya bhaavam kidaththal seyyalIRE naduvodru vyavadaana viLambankaLukku hEthu uLLadhu*" - (free form translation by Ramanuja Darshanam volunteers: looking for a facilitator causes delay in putting the means (doer ship) onto the Lord by the soul). *Vyavadaana viLambam* means delay in putting. 9000ppadi says "*en thalaikkum thiruvadigaLukkum naduvu viLakkuvaay theriyaadhapadi seRindhu pugundhEn*" (Free from translation by Ramanuja Darshanam volunteers: "I attained the state where there could be no perception of any gap between my head and the Lord's holy feet")

If prapatti is a physical process, it is deemed then as a *sahakaari* (facilitator), and the person adhering to this process has a means (*upaaya*) in his hand, which go against the above interpretation of the two words *amarndhu* and *pugundu*. Vedanta Desika, in his "Dramidopanishad Sangathi" mentions this briefly through the phrase "*svam akinchanathvam*" (helpless himself). Eedu explicitly states "*pugundhEnE*" signifies "*avanE upaayam enkiRa adhyavasaaya gnyaanam*" (The requisite knowledge that He alone is the means) and says "*oru pOkkuvaraththu uNdaay anRu*". In Sanskrit, the equivalent phrase is "*sva pravritti nivritti*" (avoiding actions that seem to stem from our efforts) and the incidents in the lives of VibheeshaNa, Gajendra and Draupadi are usually cited in support of this interpretation.

This interpretation of prapatti is in agreement with logical analysis. If prapatti is a physical process, it is then a ritual either to attain the goal of the spirit of prapatti, or to please the Lord through the physical process. If it were to afford the spirit, this spirit being a mental attitude, it does NOT need any physical process since it might happen that the process alone is executed without any impact on the mindset. If it were to please the Lord, His quality of having no wants - *avaaptha samastha kaaman* - the One for whom all desires are completely fulfilled; *kuRai onRum illadhavan* in Tamizh) gets affected. Nammazhvar uses the words "*pazhudhil thol pugazh*" and says "*thozhudhu maamalar neer sudar dhoopam koNdu ezhudhumeRum idhu migai*"!

Thus, there can be no doubt that prapatti is a mindset and not a physical process. This mindset requires only a conviction that the Lord gives salvation at the time found by Him to be appropriate to the soul, and adheres to the *vaazhvinai* (means of living) of remembering His qualities and doing service to all fellow beings who are NOT averse to the Lord (i.e. who are not advEshis - Thirumangai Azhvar says *naNNaadhE iruppaar*), in the sense that they are not averse to thinking about Him, or going around His temple etc.



Swami NammAzhvAr

NACHCHIAR THIRUMOZHI – A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

Lecture by Sri.U.Ve. Elayavilli. S. Bhuvarahachariar Swamy, M.A.
Composed by Sri. Elayavilli. B. Sriraman Swamy

Of the two immortal poems sung by Sri Andal, which are sweeter than nectar, the second one is Nachiar Thirumozhi. Where is the need for this song (prabhandam)? The first one "Thiruppavai" has categorically brought out the quintessence of **Sri Vaishnavam** - the absolute surrender to Lord Sriman Narayana as the sole means of attaining salvation - i.e. the Lord Sriman Narayana himself is the '**Upaaya**' (the means to the goal).

Sri Godhadevi, having woken up all the girls in Nandagopar's village, went to **Krishna** and spoke to Him in unequivocal terms that she had no other means (**Upaaya**) except His grace for attaining *kainkaryam* (His service). Her idea of service is to bring happiness to Him only and not for her happiness, or for the happiness of both (**Andal**, and **Krishna**). The service (*kainkaryam*) is meant only to produce joy for the recipient of the service (*Seshi* - the recipient), **Lord Krishna**; **and** she will derive happiness by looking at His happiness (Refer to "*KaRavaigal pin senRu*" - thiru-p-paavai, 28, where she clearly proves to Krishna that He alone is the '**Upaaya**' and "*siRRam siRukAIE*" - thiru-p-paavai, 29 where she emphasis the fact that the *Kainkaryam* is to contribute to His happiness only). This is more than enough for a **Sri Vaishnava** to secure the Lord's Service.

However the Lord did not become merciful towards her and take her to His Service. His unfailing missile namely Saranagati became futile. Unable to brook the delay, Sri **Andal** sought the assistance of "Manmatha" who is celebrated for his skill in the art of uniting the lovers. This is the sum and substance of the first decade of Nachiar Thirumozhi.

Now, the following questions arise - (i) Manmatha (a rough analogy to **Manmatha**, is "Cupid" as present in the western world) is a small deity. Is it proper for the dedicated devotee (*Saranagatan*) to fall at the feet of another deity to realize his/her ambition, having proclaimed that the soul means of realizing Her desire is the Lord Himself, and (ii) After all this Manmatha is her own son. Is it proper for the Mother to fall at the feet of her son?

The answer to these questions is as follows: **Manmatha** is highly reputed for his job of uniting the separated lovers. Sri Andal found that Her

desire was not fulfilled even after categorical declaration of her desire for kinkaryam. Hence she implores Manmatha to rush to her help. The vailakshanya (the extraordinary virtues, handsomeness, etc) of the Lord do not allow her to wait for His union. His **separation** is unbearable. So by hook or crook, even at the expense of her nature of depending completely on the Lord (pArathanthriya svarUpa), she wishes to achieve her desire. Hence it is not wrong to fall at the feet of Manmatha.

In this decade, the most important paasuram is the fifth one - the pasurams beginning with "*Vanidai Vazhum ...*" Here, Sri Andal brings out the soul's *ananyArha SEshatva* (quality of being a servant to Lord Sriman **Narayana** alone). The simile here is most outstanding. The prepared sacrificial offerings (during the performance of a yaga, or a homa) are meant only for the demigods like Indra. Suppose a fox from the forest enters the kitchen and eats the offerings, then that cannot be offered to the divine beings. Similarly Godha **DEvi** says that she is born in this world to be offered to the Lord Sriman Narayana as His bride; she cannot live even if somebody speaks that she has to be given away in marriage to somebody else.

This truth is not only applicable to Sri Andal, but is also applicable to **all** the souls in this world. This is the meaning of the letter "U" in the pranava "Om" {A+U+M}. He is the One who cannot see the observance of any other means like **karma yoga**, jnanayoga, **bhakti** yoga, etc to get his union. Even though the gopis' did not resort to those means, they fell at the feet of Manmatha which was highly intolerable for the Lord.

Therefore He (the Lord) thought that it was His mistake which ultimately resulted in making the gopis' seek the assistance of Manmatha. In fact, He thought that He should perform penance etc to get the company of these gopis' (cowherdresses), but it has become vice-versa now. Therefore He rushed in great hurry and appeared before the gopis'. The gopis' were very upset, and hence did not even cast their glance at Him and pretended to be deeply engrossed in "*Sirril*" {a game played by the gOpis by building a small house out of sand or picturesque drawings on the earth}. The lord cannot bear this and He tries to spoil them. Thus there ensues a tough feud between the two i.e. the gopis' on one hand and Krishna on the other, which finally results in their union which culminates into separation.

The gopikas resort to several other means like early morning bath in the river where Sri Krishna robs them of their robes, kudal izaithal,

requesting the nightingale to coo melodiously inviting the lord to come as early as possible to Srivilliputtur.

The Lord, fearing her (ANdAL's) death, now plans to display the marriage festival in her dream. A beautiful description of the marriage festival as beheld by Andal in her dream, subsequently is given by Andal herself to her companion (the 6th decade, *vAraNamAyiram*). Sita sustained her life by listening to the description of the dream by Trijada, (Vibhishana's daughter), whereas Andal cannot do so. Realizing this nature of Andal, the Lord showed the dream to Andal herself and made her describe the dream to her companion. So, even Sita cannot stand a parallel to Andal.

As it was a dream, Sri Andal now wishes to know the sweet taste of the beautiful lips of the Lord by asking the conch in the hand of the Lord about the delicious taste of His lips (7th decade, *kaRpooram naarumO*). Further in order to sustain herself, she sends the clouds which had arrived from Tirumala Hills, as messengers to Lord Srinivasa, just as Sita had sent Hanuman as a messenger to Sri Rama who was actually sent by Sri Rama. Unfortunately, the clouds did not move from that place and rained heavily. So there was the growth of green grass, trees, flowers, fruits, waterfalls, etc on the hills of *Tirumalirum Solai*. A beautiful description of the hill follows in the 9th decade (*sindhurachchempodi pOl*). In one of the pasurams in the 9th decade, Sri Andal takes a pledge that she would offer 100 bowls of butter and rice cooked in milk and mixed with jaggery. The Lord Sundara of the hills said to Andal, "Suppose I eat everything offered to me, what will you ask for?" Andal replied, "I will not demand anything. I will offer 1 lakh bowls containing butter and *ksheerAnna* (milk mixed with rice) each".

"Suppose I eat all of them also, finally, what will be your demand for this offering", enquired the lord. "No demand, I will be forever in your service" replied Andal.

These two stanzas bring out the quintessence of our Sri Vaishnava SampradAyam. Sri Vaishnavas will never ask for anything as a reward for their service to the lord. Service is the reward for service. Even after sending the cloud as messenger, the Lord did not turn up. All the companions of Andal became more worried than Andal. It now became the duty of Andal to console her companions, who were more worried than her! Therefore, she comforted them by saying that she had faith in the Charama Slokas of Sri Varaha, Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. Even if they fail, her birth as the daughter of Bhattanatha will not fail her.

In order to establish the fact of our Sri Vaishnava SampradAyam that the Acharya's love and affection alone is the soul means of salvation, Nachiar Thirumozhi was sung by Andal. The surrender to the Lord (Saranagati) may fail as the Lord's mercy is polluted by His unfettered independence (svAtantrya). But, taking refuge in an Acharya will never fail us, as the Acharya is full of the milk of kindness only.

Lord Krishna, in the Gita, directed Arjuna to give up all other means of salvation like karma yoga etc and take refuge in Him, whereas Sri Andal directs all of us to give up even the lord and to take refuge unto the Acharya. This is the sum and substance of Nachiar **Thirumozhi**.

Let us all, therefore take refuge in, and surrender to Sri Ramanuja.



ANdAL (courtesy: www.srivaishnava.org)

ARANGATH-TH-AMALAN MUGATHTHU

Sri parASara badri Narayana bhaTTar swami

In order to redeem all the souls, and make them all as His devotees, our Ranganatha, the divine spouse of Sri RanganAyaki, anointed the Azhvars and made them compose the naalaayira divya prabhandam. In these hymns, our Azhvars praise Lord Vishnu in simple Tamil, which can be understood by even the laity.

Among the acharyas who were born to follow and propagate the philosophy of our Azhvars, and extolled by people, Swami Ramanuja is unique. He enlightened us by dispelling the darkness of ignorance from our lives. His teachings, compositions and religious reforms are relevant even to this day, and they offer hope and solace to the distressed and despairing souls. He anointed 74 Acharyas after him to nurture our great sampradAyam and render service to the Lord.

When we start developing ardent love towards our Lord (through *His* grace), we will be motivated and kindled to perform service to Him (kainkaryam), which will give eternal happiness. On seeing our impeccable love and service, His face becomes radiant. When we see His broad and bright smile, how do we react? We don't know. So let's examine our devotion and its reaction now.

First, we shall think of the holy river Cauvery and its service. It takes immense pleasure in rolling its welcome mat to the devotees of Sri Ramanuja. These devotees, after having gone to all Divya Desams, are very curious to see Sri Ranganatha and to get His blessings. They will be as eager as a calf, which has temporarily lost its mother and has come looking for her. Their heart will be over laden with true love for the Lord. On seeing their true devotion, Cauvery is longing to touch their feet. Here, we have to think of the most important service done by Cauvery, which has been referred by Sri parASara bhaTTar in his Sri Rangaraja stavam (22) as "*theertham sundhathi bhAdhi...*" It brings water for the holy bath (*thirumanjanam*) of Sri Ranganatha and Ranganachchiyar. Really, we are amazed at its dedicated service.

After seeing cauvery's noble service, we have to think of Sri Ranganatha. Shall we make a move towards Him and think how we can admire and enjoy His beauty? First, we get into the main entrance and we go through shrines of Azhvars and AchAryAs. Then we go to the shrine of Sri Ranganatha. Praying to vimana, we enter the sanctum sanctorum. As soon as we go there, we are captivated by the beauty of Sri

Ranganatha. We are unable to stand there. Hence we take hold of the pillars and start admiring His beauty. We start worshipping him from His lotus feet to the crown. Now, undoubtedly we will be in ecstasy.

Then our eyes move towards His face, which is fresh and glittering, like the morning sun. We become tongue tied on seeing His broad and bright smile. Though we try to think of words to capture and describe the beauty of His face, all our efforts become futile as He is beyond words. We feel sad over our inefficacy. But Azhvars are ready to lend us a helping hand. With their help (with their hymns) we can admire the inexplicable, incomparable beauty of Sri Ranganatha. Andal says in Nachiar Thirumozhi about the enhancement created by the Lord's beauty.

Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar's hymns should be thought of now. He has beautifully depicted the eloquent eyes of Sri Ranganatha. He says that He has enormous eyes. Why is it so? We don't know the answer. Due to our ignorance, we can't think of any answer. But Sri ParASara BhaTTar, who is the ardent devotee of Lord Ranganatha, wipes out our ignorance. He says that to pull the people out of the bog/swamp (desire to possess wealth and to attain name and fame), even if they don't have love towards Him, He takes pity on them and attracts them by his eloquent eyes which are full of compassion and mercy. Since He is the epitome of mercy, his body should be full of eyes. But it can't be so. With His big eyes, He is ready to shower mercy on the human beings.

Though our eyes are loathe to leave the beautiful eyes of Ranganatha, they are forced to go ahead. Now we see His lips which are as red as the coral. On seeing His rosy lips, our joy knows no bounds. The bewitching smile makes us forget all our miseries. Unconsciously, we too smile at him. His smile seems to indicate as if emperuman is asking about our welfare. We can imagine or associate so many things with that. Whatever we try to explain, our words become inadequate.

The beauty of Lord Ranganatha is incomparable. He possesses the kind of classic beauty that made Azhvars, AchAryAs, and Sri parASara bhaTTar feel and promise if paramapathanAthar's (the lord in Sri vaikunTam) forehead doesn't bear thirunAmam (the holy mark on the forehead) and the broad bewitching smile, "I'll certainly come back to Srirangam" Hence His beauty and mercy are beyond description. One more reason for the gleam on his face is due to the service rendered by acharyas. There is absolutely no doubt in this.



Swami namperumAL (courtesy: acharya.org)

AN INTERVIEW WITH SRI P.B.
ANNANGARACHARYAR SWAMI (1979).

*Interview conducted by Sri K.A. Manavalan and Sri T.A. Bhashyam.
Translated from Tamil by Sri TCA Venkatesan.*

(Editor's note: Sri PrativAdhi Bhayankaram aNNangarAchAriAr Swami is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Acharyas to have graced this earth in the 20th century. His services to Ramanuja darshanam - the authentic way of life as shown by Swami Ramanuja - are beyond description. He has blessed us with easy to comprehend commentaries on just about every source text in our SampradAyam. He has not only published thousands of books, but also delivered upanyAsams in his inimitable style to hundreds of thousands of devotees. People who recall his upanyAsa gOshtis say "if one wants to get a sense of how SriVaikuNTa is, one should attend the upanyAsams of kAnchi swami!". Every one of us is extremely indebted to swami - it is safe to say that but for him, our Ramanuja sampradAyam would not have been where it is today.)

Q. How did you get the name "PrativAdhi Bhayankarar"?

A. This is not my name. It is the title given to our ancestor. His divine name was PrativAdhi Bhayankaram Annan. He lived at viLakkoLi sannidhi in Kanchipuram. He learned the general Sastras from NayanArAchAryar, son of Vedanta Desika. Later, after hearing the greatness of Manavala Mamunikal, he went to Srirangam and sought Swami's divine feet. There, due to Mamunikal's grace, he learnt the special Sastras and became one of his ashta dikgajas.

Q. Why did he get the name "PrativAdhi Bhayankarar"?

A. When he was the disciple of NayanArAchAryar, he defeated an advaitic pundit in a philosophical debate. Upon which NayanArAchAryar celebrated him as "PrativAdhi bhayankararE". From that day onward, he and his descendants came to be known by that name.

Q. Were you born in Kanchipuram itself?

A. Yes. I was born in Kanchipuram in the household of my grandfather (mother's father - Shashti Jeeyar Swami).

Q. Can you tell us about your studies in youth?

A. My father's name was ANNangarAchAriAr. During a very young age, I learned from him. I had upanayanam done when I was six years

old. My father taught me 3000 divyaprabandhams before I was nine years old. Two years later, he performed samashrayanam for me and then taught me the ThiruvAimozhi thousand. These were taught to me in Kanchipuram as well as in our village of Chiththathoor Thiruvadi Rayapuram. In addition, I learned many works from my father's uncle Kidaambi Krishnamacharyar.

Q. Did you learn Sanskrit works also from your grand uncle?

A. I learned some works from him first. Later, I learned many Sanskrit works, including Sri Bhashya, from Sri U Ve Jagadguru Gaadi Ananthacharyar Swami. When Swami went to North India, upon his order, I learnt from Ilangaadu Rangaswamy Iyengar Swami and Pudhupper Venkatacharyar Swami. In addition, I learnt Bhagavad Vishaya Rahasya, mUvAyira vyAkhyAna, Tamil grammar, ancient Tamil works, Ashta prabhandam and Kamba RamayaNam from Shashti Jeeyar Swami.

Q. From whom did you learn the Vedas? When did you get the interest to learn them?

A. I learned some parts of the Vedas first from Narasimhacharyar. Later I stopped learning the Vedas as they were in the way of my Sanskrit education. After the age of nineteen, I started learning them again from Mamballam Sudarshanacharyar Swami. About 25 people learned with me. I created a pAtashala for us to learn Vedas and purchased a building for it. We started reciting the Vedas we learnt, in the divine streets around the temple. This was started in the year 1919 and stopped in 1964 when I had a heart attack.

Q. How many languages do you know? In how many languages have you written works?

A. I know Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Sanskrit. I have written works in all four languages. I have also performed upanyAsams in all four languages.

Q. Till now (1979), how many works have you authored?

A. In the four languages, I have written about 1207 books. This room in which I am seated has many books - out of which only about 1/4th are not authored by me. The rest were written and published by me.

Q. Can you group the books you have authored so far?

A. They can be separated into 16 groups. Most importantly, I have published pUrvAchArya granthaas. I published all of Ramanuja's granthaas in a book called Ramanuja Granthamala; all of Vedanta Desika's granthaas in a book called Vedanta Desika Granthamala; and all

of Manavala Mamunikal's works in a book called Varavaramunindra Granthamala. In addition, I have published books authored by me, in 15 groups. Starting at the age of 19, I have authored extended meanings for the 4000 divyaprabandhams.



Swami PB Annagaracharyar

Q. In addition, you have also been publishing a journal, right?

A. Yes. I have been running journals in all four languages. I publish a journal called "Vaidika Manohara" in Sanskrit and Hindi. In Telugu, I publish a journal called "Ramanuja Patrika" and in Tamil "Sri Ramanujan".

Q. Are you the editor for all magazines or do you use representative for each of the magazine?

A. I am the editor for all magazines. I have not kept any assistant so far. These magazines have been running for 32 years.

Q. You said you know four languages. Do you also know English?

A. When I was learning at the Vanamamalai PATashala, my mother wished me to learn English. However, my father did not agree to it. Later, when my father was ill, a doctor came to see him. At that time, my father himself asked that I learn English from the doctor. I learnt English from him for about 1.5 years. I also learnt English for some time from a person called Venkataryan. Even now, while I cannot speak well in English, I can still read and write. My hand-writing is beautiful in all languages. Those who see my handwriting ask me if I am a B.A. I tell that I am a P.B.A (laughs).

Q. What's the reason for your greater affinity for dEva perumAL's gOshtis than for dEva perumAL Himself?

A. My father had ordered me that I should never give up gOshti. It is due to his grace. I have never missed iyal ghoshti once nor have I saluted it once.

Q. What do you mean you have not saluted iyal ghoshti once?

A. If one is present in the ghoshti when it starts, then one does not have to salute it. Only if one joins it in the middle does one have to salute it. I have never joined the ghoshti once in the middle. I will always be ready before the ghoshti starts. All this is due to the grace of my father.

Q. What is the reason for Divyaprabandha ghoshti to come in the front and Veda ghoshti to come behind, when perumAL goes about in the streets?

A. The Divyaprabandhams which are the Tamil Vedas tell us all about the Lord's divine auspicious qualities. However, the Sanskrit Vedas which started telling about these qualities, failed in its attempt and backed off ("yatO vAchO nivartante"). The same is stressed by Vedanta Desika, Kambar and others. This is the reason why aruLiccheyal is in the front and Veda pArAyaNam is in the back.

Q. Amongst all your works, which one do you consider is the best?

A. Amongst the works I have authored, I consider the work "Sri Bhashya Sara" in Tamizh, as the best. Also, all my vyAkhyAna in Sanskrit for the 4000 Divyaprabandhams are very good.

Q. Do you recall your first work?

A. I was about 15 years old at that time. A scholar speaking at the Hundred Pillar mandapam in Kanchipuram stated that as the Divyaprabandhams were written in Tamil they cannot be respected. I wrote a 30 page book in Sanskrit called "Divyaprabandha Vaibhava Viveka." rejecting his claim. That was my first book.

Q. Can you tell us when and where you gave your first discourse?

A. One time I had gone to Hyderabad (Sitarambag) for UDaiyavar Utsavam, along with my Acharya Sri U. Ve. Gaadi Ananthacharyar Swami. I was about 16 years at that time. There some people requested Gaadi Swami to perform a discourse. Then, he ordered me to do a discourse. That order is the source for all my upanyAsams. I performed my first discourse there on UDaiyavar Vaibhavam.

Q. Your voice is majestic till date. What is the reason behind that? Do you use any medicines to protect your voice quality?

A. The Lord's grace is the reason for my voice being good. I do not use any medicine for that. The Lord is the medicine.

Q. Even though you have helped the people of this world by performed many discourses, there is a complaint that you have not created any disciples who can follow in your foot steps....

A. I have written thousands of works. Even today, many scholars who perform discourses write to me saying that their discourses are based upon my writings. They all can be considered my disciples. Even though I have not created a few disciples, I have written thousands of works that will last hundreds of years. That is sufficient.

Q. Our sampradAyam is going down. In such a situation, who are you appointing as your heir?

A. When so many scholars such as Sadabishekam Govinda Narasimhacharyar, Velukkudi Varadachariar, PiLLai Lokam Bhashyakachariar, S. Krishnaswami Iyengar (Sudarshanam Publisher), Nallan Ramakrishna Iyengar, K.A. Manavalan and Sthalasayanaththuraivar are building the sampradAyam, it is wrong to say that the sampradAyam is going down. Therefore, it is not necessary for me to appoint someone as my heir.

Q. Can you say something about the Thenkalai and Vadakalai divisions within the Sri Vaishnava SampradAyam? What was Vedanta Desika's role in this division?

A. During Vedanta Desika's time, there was no division within the Sri Vaishnava SampradAyam. Why go that far? I will swear, wearing a Thulasi garland that prior to 1800, there was no Thenkalai Vadakalai division. Vedanta Desika gained great knowledge through upAsana. Therefore, he authored a great number of works. In these works, first he will reject a notion of PiLLai Lokacharyar. A few pages later, he would state that "this is the thought of such and such". A little later, he would agree with what he himself had rejected earlier. A certain group which came after his time, started following his earlier opinions. This is the cause for the Thenkalai Vadakalai division.

Q. When and where did you get the title "mahA mahipOdhyAya"?

A. In 1972, at Allahabad, seven people were selected as Saptha Rishis. At that time, this title was given to me by vice president Sri Pathak.

Q. We learn that you have gone on several divyadesa yatras. Have you been to all Sri Vaishnava divya desams?

A. So far, I have done North Indian divya desa yatras alone 23 times. Out of the 108 Sri Vaishnava divya desams, 106 are in this world. Out of them, excluding Salagramam and Thiruppirithi, I have worshipped at 104 divya desams.

Q. Many people of our sampradAyam go to work early and return late. Being involved in lowkika like this, they are unable to follow the Sri Vaishnava sampradAyam. Can you briefly tell what they can do?

A. After waking up and performing sandhya-vandanam, they must recite all 30 verses of Thiruppavai. If there is insufficient time even for that, then they must at least recite the "siRRam siRukAIE" paasuram. If they do this much, they would have followed the Sri Vaishnava sampradAyam.

Q. What do you consider as your greatest gift?

A. I consider the fact that I was born in Manavala Mamunikal's sampradAyam as my greatest gift. Just as Dasaratha prayed that Rama be born as his son for seven (all) births ("ninnaiyE maganAgap perRap peRuvEn EzhpiRappum nedunthOL vEndhE"), so too I pray every day that I gain Manavala Mamunikal as my Acharya for seven (all) births ("ninnaiyE guruvAgap perRap peRuvEn EzhpiRappum yathIndhrap pravaNA").

Q. You have accomplished a great many things. Is there something that you feel you have not done yet?

A. Whatever you consider that I have accomplished thus far, if they remain without any problems, then that is sufficient.

Q. When you perform discourses, why do you ask questions toward the audience? Particularly, when it appears that you are questioning some scholars, it is said that they are bothered.

A. I do not ask questions to bother any one. I ask them questions so that the audience realizes their knowledge. Also, if people who have knowledge of the Vedas and Divyaprabandhams come to me, I take them with me to my upanyAsams. I do this for the benefit of the audience only - not to test them.

Q. As the editor of magazines, what is your wish for the magazine Geethacharyan (run by Sri M.A. Venkatakrishnan)?

A. Geethacharyan must grow greatly. It must increase its pages more. As it grows, I would like to stop my magazine "Sri Ramanujan" and take this as my magazine.

THE ESSENTIAL REQUISITE FOR ARADHANA: UNDERSTANDING GOD'S RELATIONSHIP TO US

Sri U Ve Paramapada vAsi sEshadri Iyengar Swamy

(Sri Seshadri Iyengar Swami was one of the foremost scholars of Sri Vaishnava sampradAyam in the early part of the 20th century and the son-in-law of the famous thirukkaNNapuram paTTappa swami, considered by many to be the doyen of the sampradAyam who introduced the system of upanyAsams on aruLiccheyal to Sri Vaishnavam. Sri Seshadri Iyengar swami wrote extensively in the 1930s and 1940s in the Indian Philosophical and Religious English Press, bringing the sAmpradAyic message to a lay audience, enumerating key ideas of Azhvars and Acharyas through simple, elegant examples picked from Itihasa, Puranas and Sastra. We feel extremely fortunate in being able to adapt and bring you these rare gems of insight and wisdom. This is part 2 of a multipart series)

Two young boys Vijay and Vivek, both in High School, approached their teacher after he had given them a lecture about how to worship God. The teacher told the boys that God is All-Powerful, kind and merciful and that He will protect all those that surrender to Him, that worship Him, that have not turned away from His protection.

Vijay: Sir, I do not understand the idea of God, how am I to think about Him?

Teacher: Think of Him as you would think of your father.

Vijay: Oh! My father is never kind to me. He is always chastising me for something or the other. If it is not that I am not doing as well as he wants me to in studies, it is that I am not disciplined or organized. He always looks at me with so much anger. So much so, I even avoid looking at him most of the time. So, I don't know if I should think of God as my father, if you wish that I associate God with kindness.

Teacher: No, no, he is kind to you. Does he not provide for your needs and for that of your family? He wants you to do well in life, and wants to make sure that you do not get complacent about yourself or your education. So, he puts on an angry face in front of you, so that you get into the habit of doing things right, just to avoid any unpleasantness. You will see his face bright and joyful when you grow up to be competent and successful.

Vijay: No sir, I believe my father likes to be unpleasant. He is that way with everybody, including my mother, and usually, makes everyone unhappy.

Teacher: OK, You may not understand now, but you will know that your father was really kind to you, when you become a father yourself.

Vijay: So, you want me to worship God as I would look at my father. All right, I can do so only with fear. I can never like God if He is always unkind to me like my own father.

Vivek: What am I to do, Sir? My father died when I was a very young. I have no idea of what my father was like, at all.

Teacher: Who raised you, and supported you as you were growing up?

Vivek: My uncle, Sir.

Teacher: All right, think of God as someone akin to your guardian, someone who has shown you a lot of love and kindness.

Vivek: Sir, Why can't I also think of God as my uncle? My uncle was always kind to me and hence, it is easier for me.

Teacher: All right, both of you worship God as a guardian or any one in your family or life who has consistently displayed kindness towards you.

Vijay: Sir, in that case, why can we not worship God as Mother? My mother has always been kind to me. When my father is upset, which is most of the time, it is my mother who brings a hint of sanity to the proceedings.

Vivek: Sir, my grandfather was the kindest amongst all those that I can relate to as a positive influence.

Ram: Yes, my grandfather too.

Teacher: Well, Worship God as your grandfather or any member of your family, someone who you think loves you. God loves everybody and is always kind and takes great care to protect everyone.

Lord Krishna told Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, (IX -17), the same fact:

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।

पतिअहमासया जागातरु मअतब्र दहअतब्र पतिअमाहाह ॥

"I am the father of this universe, I am the guardian, the mother and grandfather". He means thereby that everyone can worship Him, perceive Him, in any relationships like these, relationships that embody love and affection.

Vivek and Vijay were in the final year of their college course. Once when they had come home on vacation, they met their high school teacher that had told them about how to worship God. They asked him if he had any thing new to say now, and he said, 'God is the truth to be known'

Boys: Sir, our grandfathers have passed away and we feel that there is not any one in this world for us who loves us the way our grandfathers did.

Teacher: What about God, whom you worshipped as your grandfather? He is always there to love you. He never ceases to exist.

Boys: Well, sir, how can we see that? He is unseen, unknown.

Teacher: Though he is unseen, unknown, He is ever present, taking care of every thing. He is the very reason why things function so smoothly in life.

Boys: How are we to know this, Sir?

Teacher: Through the Vedas, Rig, Yajur, Sama i.e., the insights of great men who have actually experienced the existence of God as you have experienced the existence of your grandfathers.

Boys: We cannot relate to what you are saying, Sir.

Teacher: I will make it clear, briefly. You are now grown up. You can understand things in a little more abstract form. E.g., the Fire, the Moon and the Sun are the three energies that support life in our world. Without them, there is no happy existence on the earth. However, it is not always visible to everyone how the Sun supports life.

In the Rig Veda, God is worshipped as the Fire. In the Sama Veda, He is worshipped as the Moon and in the Yajur Veda, He is worshipped as the Sun. You are sufficiently educated to know how these three are essential for Life on earth. God is the spirit that drives all the three. He destroys all our sins, like Fire destroying all unwanted things put into it. From a baby to an old person in the dusk of their life, the presence of moon is an equal source of pleasure. Likewise, God always imparts that sense of security, pleasantness, to all. The sun, you know, removes physical darkness and supports life through light and heat. Likewise, God removes our ignorance and gives us the Light of knowledge.

Boys: But if God is kindness, where is the kindness in these forms?

Teacher: Yes. God has to be kind to all and has to be impartial. He proved that it is possible to be the pure and impartial like the Fire, pleasant and comforting like the Moon and illuminating and life-supporting like the Sun, all at the same time, in His Rama avatAra. Rama was born from Payasam that was given by the Fire God, and much like Fire, Rama epitomized impartiality and fairness. He was the purifier of sins, as in the case of Ahalya. Sri Rama was adored as the most pleasing, much like the full Moon on a cool night in vAlmiki's Ramayana:

चन्द्रकान्ताननं रामं अतीवप्रियदर्शनं

chandrakAnthAnAnam rAmam athIva priyadarSinam

He was born as the SUrya-kula pradeepa. He was like the eternal sunshine of joy and divinity to all the people of Ayodhya. He shone like the Sun in Lanka and removed the darkness (ignorance) in the world and embodied the fire, the

moon and the Sun, all this while being the epitome of kindness and compassion.

If anyone has difficulty understand how God feels towards us, and how we should look upon Him, we should simply turn ourselves to Sri Rama, and every thing will become crystal clear. After all, what Sri Rama lived, is what Sri Krishna preached in the Bhagavad Gita.

Lord Krishna, in the BG (IX - 17), says,

वेद्यम् पवित्रम् ओम्कार ऋक् साम यजुरेव च

(vEdyam pavitram omkāra ruk sāma yajureva ca)

"He is the truth to be known. He is the purifying and unifying factor of the Universe. He is Rig, Yajur and Sama Veda". He is kindness personified that binds all individuals in the world together.

God, in all these forms, is kindness personified, because He, who has no desire, will come down as a Rama or a Krishna, simply to make sure that we can find a way to elevate our existences. If this is not ultimate kindness, what is?

The two students nodded in comprehension, and the teacher smiled. His work for the day had been done.

GADYA-TRAYAM OF SWAMI RAMANUJA

Dr. V V Ramanujam, M. A., M. Sc., Ph. D., Editor, YatirAja pAduka

(With the maNipravALa commentary by parama kAruNika - most merciful, vyAkhyAna chakravathi - the emperor amongst commentators, Swami PeriyavAchchAn piLLai - serialized with permission from the original publisher, Sri Parampara Sabha, Bangalore. This is the third part of a multipart serialization)

(Editor's note: It is the uninstigated grace of our Lord and connection to swami Ramanuja that has given us this wonderful opportunity to adapt and serialize this seminal work in Sri Vaishnavam. Ramanuja's gadya-trayam is both fundamental to the sampradAyam, and an essential aspect of Ramanuja Darshanam - very necessary for everyone to learn, understand and comprehend. The incomparable commentary of swami periyavAchchAn piLLai has been very aptly transliterated by Dr. V V Ramanujam, to whom we will remain forever in debt for affording us

this joy of getting close to the wondrous, inspired, divine, compassionate vision of our jagadAchArya Swami Ramanuja)

The text of the Saranagati Gadyam begins with a prayer to Sridevi (Periya pirAtti). In this prayer, Sri Ramanuja seeks Sridevi as the refuge and requests her to bless that his sincere Saranagati at the feet of the Supreme Lord may be deemed to be in proper setting and bear the desired fruit. The idea is that she should intercede on his behalf and see that her beloved husband (the Lord) accepts his supplication and grants the desired fruit of being accepted in His service.

भगवन्नारयणाभिमतानुरूप स्वरूपरूपगुण विभवेश्वर्य शीलाद्यनवधिक अतिशय

असंख्येय कल्याण गुणगणां पद्मवनालयाम् भगवतीं श्रियं देवीं नित्यानपायिनीम्

निरवद्याम् देवदेवदिव्यमहिषीं अखिलजगन्मातरम् अस्मन्मातरम्

अशरण्यशरण्याम् अनन्यशरणः शरनमहम् प्रपद्ये

Bhagavan nArAyaNAbhimatAnurUpa svarUpaUpaguNa vibhavaishvarya SeelAdyanavadhika atishaya asankhyEya kalyANa guNa gaNAm padmavanAlayAm bhagavatheem Sriyam dEvIm nityAnapAyinIm niravadyAm dEvadEvadivyamahishIm akhilajaganmAtaram asmanmAtaram aSaraNyaSaraNyAm ananyaSaraNa: SaraNamaham prapadhyE

The Saranagati gadya is a practical commentary on the *dvaya* mantra in which the eternal association of Sri (Sridevi) with the Lord is emphasized. She is ever present with the Lord to intercede on behalf of supplicants who approach Him. By Himself, He may either accept the supplicant because of his innate mercy, or reject him because of His sense of justice which calls for punishment for sins committed. Sri, the mother, sees to it that the latter mood is drowned and that His mercy comes into full play. It is natural for a child to approach the mother for any wish to be fulfilled without any uncertainty. It may be recalled that in the Ramanuja nUrrandhadhi, the final verse prays to Sri RanganAyaki to bless the seeker with Sri Ramanuja's holy feet.

Translation of the text: Oh! Sridevi! Mother of the entire world and more particularly my mother! The crowned and divine queen of the supreme Lord of all the Devas! Pure and faultless, ever inseparably united with Him, full of all auspicious qualities, with a charming form, with the most wonderful and infinite collection of adorable qualities

such as greatness, ruler ship and high virtues worthy and matching those of Bhagavan Narayana, and to His utmost liking having no other resort to look to, I seek thee as my refuge (since you are the sole resort of the helpless).

The translation of the text is not literal. The text is actually in the form "I take refuge in the universal Mother, Sridevi" but has been rendered in the form of an address to Sri since the next sentence conveys Sridevi's direct reply.

The word *Bhagavan* (भगवान्) indicates the fullness of the principal qualities - knowledge (ज्ञान), power (शक्ति Sakti), strength (बल bala), lordship (ऐश्वर्य aishvarya - being ISvara or commander), valor (वीर्य vIrya) and brilliance (तेजस् tEjas); and absence of anything lowly. Narayana means indwelling supporter of all creations and the possessor of all. She is dear (अभिमत abhimatha) to Him and to His utmost liking and befits Him (अनुरूप anurUpa) in all respects - in form (विग्रह vigraha) and, in qualities (गुण guNa). The need for mentioning Narayana here is that Sri and Narayana form an ideal and inseparable couple. (विष्णोः एस अनपायिनि vishNau Esa anapAyini). He is identified as *sriya:pathi* (श्रियःपति - Lord of Sri), and She as *vishNupathni* (विष्णुपत्नि) They are fitting partners in all respects.

Recall the sentence "Sita deserves (befits) Rama in all respects and he also (deserves) this dark eyed damsel". *SvarUpa* refers to the characteristics and *rUpa* to the beauty of form. Both befit each other in every respect. The term *guNa* is used twice- रूप गुण *rUpaguNa*, and कल्याण गुण *kalyANa guNa*. The former indicates beauty of form and limbs and the latter indicates desirable natural qualities like love, affection, accessibility and the like.

The various characteristics (qualities) which contribute to the greatness of Sri are enumerated. विभव (vibhava) denotes possession of that enjoyable wealth. All that is His is also hers by virtue of her being His beloved wife. ऐश्वर्य (Aishvarya) is Lordship or sovereignty. The entire world is Hers. Even the sarvESvara allows Himself to be commanded by her when the need to make him the savior instead of the dispenser of mere justice arises. शील (Seela) is the ability to mix freely; easy accessibility, motherly love and affection - all are indicated. Such desirable qualities

are infinite and cannot be enumerated. All the good qualities are always in full play.

पद्मनालयाम् (padmavanAlayAm) - Resident in a cluster of lotuses; her constant presence is in her Consort's heart. The lotus is mentioned only as a thing of beauty and so very desirable and auspicious.

भगवतीम् (bhagavathIm) indicates fitness for worship and respect.

श्रियम् (sriyam) - The word Sri has many connotations. Chief among these are srIyathE - one who is sought (prayed to) by all beings as mediator for acceptance by the Lord and srayathi- one who seeks the Lord for saving the beings who approach the Divine Couple. Others are; She patiently hears supplications; she makes them heard by Him; She negativities the faults of her children; she pleases; all by her desirable qualities.

देवी (dEvIm) implies the divinity associated with her; He is the supreme Lord, she is the first Lady.

नित्यानपायिनीम् (nityAnapAyinIm) denotes she is ever present with her Lord without a moment's separation; always available for mediating between the sinning children and the discipline - loving Lord.

निरवद्याम् (niravadyAm) brings out her faultless nature; she is never proud of her exalted position and always adds to the greatness of her Lord.

देवदेविद्व्यमहिषी (dEvadEva divya mahishIm) She is the crowned queen of the Emperor-King of Kings. She is the queen of all queens (wives of divine being like Brahma and Rudra) and can carry out her wishes without any impediment whatever.

अखिलजगन्मातरम् (AkhilajaganmAtaram) - She is the universal Mother, particularly my mother

अस्मन्मातरम् (asman mAtharam) mother to even a lowly thing such as me)

अशरण्यशरण्याम् (aSaraNyaSaraNyAm) that she is the refuge of the refuge less- one could be certain of being saved by her- is indicated by *aSaraNyaSaraNyAm*. That the supplicant has no other place to go is pointed out by *ananyasaSaraNa*: -I seek refuge in the divine mother.



Namperumal and ranganayaki thayar on panguni uthiram sErththi sEvai

GREAT SAINTS AND TEACHERS

Sri T.A.Varadhan

Lord Krishna's thirunakshattiram falls in aavaNi month, rOhiNi star; in this issue of Great Saints, we will enjoy some details about two great saints born in the same star of rOhiNi - Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar, and swami periyavAchchAn piLLai.

Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar:

Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar was born in the 343rd year of kaliyuga in the year named dhurmathi, in the month of kaarthikai, on the star of rOhiNi. He is considered to be an incarnation of the srIvatsa, which is the mark

present on the chest of Lord Sriman Narayana in SriVaikuNTa.

During the time of Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar, the local king in Sri Rangam had been blessed with a daughter who was the incarnation of neeLaa dEvi, and he gave his daughter in marriage to the Lord of thiru-uRaiyUr (near Sri Rangam) as kamalavalli naachchiyaar. Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar was born in the pancama varNa (Fifth Division). Due to the lowliness of the varNa in which he was born, the Azhvar, who understood all the properties and nature of the material body, abided by the rules of that day; He did not want to set foot on the town of Sri Rangam (As He feared that his setting foot on the town will somehow pollute the town where the Lord is present! What humility!), stayed outside on the river banks, and spent his time in composing and singing songs about Lord Ranganatha. The word paaN means song in Tamizh. The Azhvar was born in the community known for singing, and hence, was called Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar.

One day, as the Azhvar was singing with total immersion on the Lord's auspicious qualities, the priest of the great temple, lOkasaaranga muni came to fetch water for the Lord's holy bath. As Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar's eyes were closed in his trance, he did not see the priest coming to fetch water. The priest called out "Oh! paaNaa, move away". In his trance, Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar did not hear those words, and hence did not move. The priest threw a stone at thiru-p-paaN Azhvar; the stone hit the Azhvar on his face, and he started bleeding; He came from his trance, and realized that the priest had thrown a stone at him for having been in the way. Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar immediately moved away from the place, but felt very sad that he was in the way of the priest and that he had caused some trouble for the priest. The priest proceeded to the river, finished his daily duties, and took water back to the temple with the accompaniment of music and temple honors for the water.

Sriranga Naayaki, the divine consort of Lord Ranganatha, in the meantime, requested the Lord - "Oh Lord! You should not allow our dear devotee - thiru-p-paaN Azhvar to be only on the outskirts of our town; You should somehow make it such that he is near to us". The Lord listened to this request, and He did not allow the holy curtain (thiru-k-kaappu) to be opened in the temple that day. (The holy curtain has to be opened in order for the priests to go into the sanctum sanctorum and perform the required duties, and for the devotees to worship the Lord; not being able to open the curtain is a significant, unusual impediment and extremely rare). He also expressed His anger to lOkasaaranga muni and said "How can you treat My dear devotee in such a manner?" lOkasaaranga muni went home, but was very sad and disturbed that he

had committed a grave sin against such a bhAgavata (Lord's devotee). The Lord appeared in his dream that night and the priest asked how he can make amends to the sin that he had committed. The Lord said "You should not think lowly of My dear devotee, and you should bring him to see Me".

The next day, lOkasaaranga muni woke up, and was delighted that the Lord had given him an order that will help him to make amends to the sin he had committed. He went and looked for Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar, who had gone even farther away from the town. As soon as lOkasaaranga muni saw thiru-p-paaN Azhvar, he went and fell at the Azhvar's feet and requested "The Lord has asked me to bring you to the holy temple to Him". Azhvar hesitated thinking of the lowliness of the VarNa that he was born in. But lOkasaaranga muni insisted and repeatedly requested the Azhvar. Azhvar said that he could not set foot in Srirangam, to which lOkasaaranga muni reassured him that his feet will not touch the ground on Srirangam, as he was going to be carried on lOkasaaranga muni's shoulder. After repeated requests, Azhvar could not refuse the desire of a devotee of the Lord, and he accepted. lOkasaaranga muni to carry Azhvar into the Great Temple.

At the temple, the Lord was eagerly waiting for thiru-p-paaN Azhvar's arrival. As soon as the Azhvar arrived, the Lord showed His full splendor to the Azhvar (just as a wealthy man who will shower his full wealth on a loved person who is poor). The Azhvar, with immense happiness, worshipped the Lord from His feet to His crown, and gave us the most beautiful pasurams of amalan-aadi-piraan. In the last paasuram, the Azhvar says "My eyes, which has seen the Lord, will not see anything else!" Then and there, TiruppAN Azhvar merged physically with Lord Ranganatha.

Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar' thaniyan is

*"aapaada chooDam anubhooya harim Sayaanam
madhyE kavEradhuhitur mudithaantharaatma
adhrushTruthaam nayanayOr vishayaantharaaNam
yO nischakaaya manavai munivaahanam tham"*

Thiru-p-paaN Azhvar's thirunakshattiram occurred on Nov. 27 this year.



thiruppANAzhvAr (uRaiyUr)

Swami PeriyavAchchAn-piLLai

Sri P.Jayaraman

(Editor's Note: The following biographical summary has been taken from the appreciation of svAmi periyavAchchAn piLLai, by Sri. P.Jayaraman, present in the introductory section of the GadyaTrayam vyAkhyAnam translation by Sri. V.V. Ramanujam Swami)

In his divine work, periya Thirumozhi, Thirumangai Azhvar (kalikanri) paid obeisance to Lord Bhaktavatsala at a place known as Thiru-k-kaNNamangai. Noting the unusual radiance on the face of the Lord at thiru-k-kaNNamangai, Thirumangai Azhvar exclaimed "KaNNa! The bearer of the white conch! Should You be so inclined, You can learn the essence of the works of this poet! (*veN sangam onRu Endiya kaNNa! Nin thanakkum kuRippaakil kaRkalam kaviyin poruL thanE - periya Thirumozhi 7.10.10*). This offer by the Azhvar could not be accepted by the Lord apparently because of the limits imposed (protocols) on the Lord due to His being in the archa form. As if to take advantage of this offer, at a later day, a great saint who is considered to be Lord Krishna Himself was born in the same thirunakshattiram (aavaNi rOhiNi) as the Lord. This saint is svAmi periyavAchchAn piLLai. This saint's teacher was born in the same thirunakshattiram as Thirumangai Azhvar - svAmi nampiLLai; the Acharya for svAmi periyavAchchAn piLLai was born in kaarthigaiyil kaarthikai!

PeriyavAchchAn piLLai, in Tamizh, means "Venerated great teacher". The prefix "periya" (great) is given to only a few persons in our sampradAyam - periya Perumal (Lord Ranganatha), periya Azhvar (vishNuchitta), periya Jeeyar (Swami Manavala maamuni), periya nambi (the great teacher of Ramanuja), and of course, Krishna sUri - periyavAchchAn piLLai. This great Acharya is instrumental in our understanding of our sampradAyam; He is known as the emperor of commentaries (vyAkhyAna chakravathi), and he has written commentaries on just about any major source text of our religion.

PeriyavAchchAn piLLai was born with the name Krishna sUri, to yaamunadEsika and naachchiyaaramma in the year 1167 AD, at a place called senganUr (singanallUr) near the divyadEsam of thiru-veLLi-yan-kudi near Thanjaavoor. It is said that in his early youth, he went on a pilgrimage to Thirupathi, and was blessed with an idol by Lord Srinivasa Himself, which he installed in his hometown. This temple exists to this day. After the demise of his parents, he went to Srirangam and spent his life there. He became a principle disciple of Swami NampiLLai, and acquired all the essences of the Tamizh and Sanskrit

Vedas from him, and propagated his Acharya's teachings after his demise.

PeriyavAchchAn piLLai had no off springs of his own, and he adopted his sister's son naayanaar aachchaan piLLai as his son. Along with naayanaar aachchaan piLLai, his other key disciples were parakaala daasar, pin pazhakiya perumaaL Jeeyar and Srirangaachaariyaar (who was also a disciple of Swami NampiLLai and the paramaachaarya of AdivaN SaTakOpa Jeeyar who established the ahObila mutt). Swami PeriyavAchchAn piLLai lived 95 years on this earth.



The essence of our sampradAyam is incorporated in four distinct types of source texts - (i) the Tamizh Vedas, the naalaayira divya prabhandam, (ii) the saatvika Puranas such as Vishnu Purana and the Itihasas of Ramayana and Mahabharata, (iii) the rahasya granthaas and (iv) the Stotras composed by our Acharyas (such as catussLOki by Swami

Alavandar). Swami PeriyavAchchAn piLLai is the ONLY Acharya who has written commentaries that are untainted and follow exactly what our acharyas have taught on all the four types of source texts above.

The following is a partial list of commentaries authored by Swami periyavAchchAn piLLai - naalaayira divya prabhandam commentaries (most of it - for the first 400 paasuram of periyaaazhvaar Thirumozhi, his commentaries were lost, and another great Acharya, Swami Manavala maamunikal wrote commentaries for those 400 to make up for the loss), selected passages for Ramayana and Mahabharata (called tanisLOki), rahasya granthaas (paranda rahasya, maaNikya maalai, sakala pramaaNaa taatparyam, rahasyatraya deepika, nigamana-p-padi, upakaarasmriti, kaliyan aruLappaadu; commentaries on stOtra ratna, catussLOki, gadya trayam, jitantE stOtram and paasura-p-padi RamayaNam.

Swami PeriyavAchchAn piLLai's thaniyam is

*"srImad krushNa samaahvaaya namO yaamuna soonavE
Yat kataakshaika laksyaaNaam sulabha: sreedhara sadhaa".*

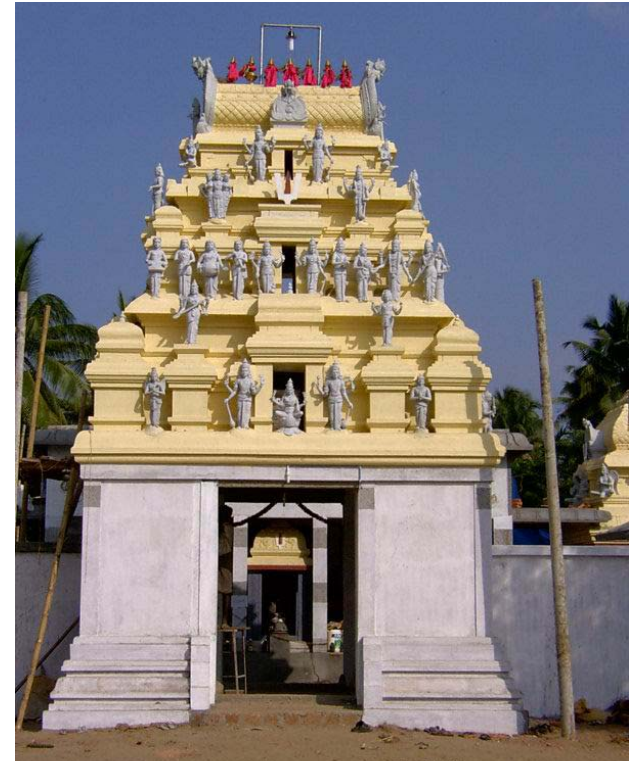
NEW TEMPLE FOR SRINIVASA PERUMAL AND KULASEKARA AZHVAR AT THIRUVANJIKKALAM

Kulasekara Azhvar, the 6th of the mystic poets, was born on Masi month, punarvasu star in early kali yuga. Kulasekara Azhvar was a kshatriya king. He had spiritual intimacy with Rama and was tuned so much that Rama's joy and sorrow was his. In fact, his life history says that he once set forth with his army to save Rama from the 14000 demons in JanasthAna, forgetting that Rama was in trEta yuga and he was in Kali yuga. He is the only Azhvar to be called as Kulasekara Perumal, since Rama is known as Perumal in our sampradaya. This azhvar sang 105 verses in Tamizh, collectively known as Perumal Thirumozhi. He has narrated the history of sri Rama in brief in 10 verses and also visited various other shrines like Srirangam, Thirupathi, ThirukkaNNapuram, Ayodhya and so on. He captures the sorrow and lament of Devaki and Dasaratha, who missed the experiences of Krishna and Rama due to separation. It is said that he had a daughter by name Serakulavalli who was married to Lord Ranganatha. She is consecrated inside Srirangam temple. In the later period of his life, azhvar relinquished the kingdom and spent his final years visiting divya desams and singing the glory of perumAL.

Hitherto, all the 10 Azhvans except Kulasekara Azhvar had a temple at their divine birth place. Swami Nammazhvar India foundation went on a tour to Kerala divyadesams (13 in number) and determined that there was a need for a temple to celebrate the birth and life of Kulasekara Azhvar. Sri Velukkudi Krishnan Swami was the driving force behind the effort to build the temple. The samprOkshaNam for the temple was celebrated on Nov 22, 2004, amidst sampradayaic pomp and presence of leading Sri Vaishnava scholars and Acharyas.

The temple at Thiruvanjikalam is a testament to the untiring efforts of great bhAgavatas such as Sri Velukkudi Krishnan Swami and Thirukkoshthiyur Madhavan Swami in supporting and maintaining the true spirit of Ramanuja SampradAyam.

The temple is located on the highway (4kms from Kodungallur) between Cochin and Guruvaiyoor and is only 45 minutes away from Cochin. The place is popularly known as Thiru Kulasekarapuram (TKS puram). Devotees are encouraged to visit the holy shrine when they get a chance.



The main goupuram of the temple



Sri U Ve Velukkudi Krishnan Swami

CALENDAR - FOURTH QUARTER 2004

Oct/Nov 2004

Date	Lunar Calendar	Star	Event
10/22/04	Iyppasi 6	ThiruvONam	Poigai AzhvAr, PiLLai IOkAchAriAr thirunakshattirams
10/23/04	Iyppasi 7	Avittam	BhoothaththAzhvAr thirunakshattiram
10/24/04	Iyppasi 8	Sadhayam	PEy AzhvAr thirunakshattiram, EkAdasi
11/05/04	Iyppasi 20	Aayilyam	maNavALa mAmunigaL Utsavam begins
11/11/04	Iyppasi 26	Swathi	DeepaavaLi
11/15/04	Iyppasi 30	Moolam	maNAVALa mAmunigaL thirunakshattiram,
11/22/04	Kaarthigai 7	Uththirattaadhi	Kaisika EkAdasi
11/23/04	Kaarthigai 8	Revathi	Kaisika dvAdasi
11/26/04	Kaarthigai 11	Kaarthikai	Thirumangai AzhvAr, nampiLLai thirunakshattirams
11/27/04	Kaarthigai 12	Kaarthigai/rOhiNi	Thiru-p-paaN AzhvAr thirunakshattiram

Dec 2004

Date	Lunar Calendar	Star	Event
12/08/04	Kaarthigai 23	Swathi	EkAdasi
12/16/04	Maargazhi 1	Avittam	Beginning of marrgazhi month
12/21/04	Maagazhi 6	Aswini	Pagal paththi sARRumuRai
12/22/04	Maargazhi 7	bharaNi	vaikuNTa EkAdasi
12/31/04	Margazhi 16	Makam	Irappaththi sARRumuRAi

COLOURING PAGE

Sri Anand Srinivasan





Live discourses on the Tele-bridge

Saturdays 8.30 PM CST:
Poorva and Uttara Dinacharya - Tamil
Sri T A Akkarakkani Srinidhi Swamin

MaNavALa maamunikaL (the aparAvatAra of Swami Ramanuja) had many sishyaas, and amongst his sishyaas recognized eight Achaaryas as " ASHTA DIGGAJACHARYAS" akin to Swamy Ramanuja's 74 Simhaasanaathipathis. Swamy Erumbiappa was one of the ashTa diggajas. His overwhelming love for Swami manifested into the poorva and utara Dinacharya sthothrams. The sthothrams describe Swamy Maamunikal's daily routine, nitya karmaanushTAnam , nitya kaarya kramam and give us an insight into the life of our most celebrated Acharya.

Sri T A Akkarakkani Srinidhi Swamin is a bright and young scholar from Perumal Kovil (Kanchipuram). Swamin is also the great grand son of Sri U.Ve. Prathivadhi bayankaram Annangarachariar swami. When Sri Srinidhi swamin was 10 years old, he had given a small lecture about "Yatiraja Vaibhavam" at Sri perumbudur before our sampradaya acharyas, Sri .Ve.T.A.Sathabishekam Govinda Narasimhacharya swamy, Sri Puttur swamy (Krishnaswamy Iyengar) & Sri U.Ve Dr M.A. Venkata krishnan swamy. For the past four plus years, swami has been travelling to many cities and giving upanyasams on varied topics.

Latest updates and more information visit: www.vedics.net
For more details, please e-mail: ramanuja@yahoogroups.com



FALL IN LOVE WITH GOD

Pray with sincerity humility and gratitude for atleast 15 minutes a day.

RESTRICT FOOD CONSUMPTION

Eat anything only after offering it to God.

MEDITATION

Meditate on the beauty of God, at least thrice a day, atleast a minimum of 3 minutes each time. Chant Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam (the 1000 Holy Names of Lord Vishnu) once a day.

RESPECT FOR ALL THAT IS HIS

Strive to lead a life in which you will never hurt a fellow living being for any reason.

MONEY

Earn to live, educate, support and serve and not for the sake of pursuing materialistic desires.

CHARITY

Donate however little it may be to noble causes. Feeding the needy is the highest form of charity.

CONTENTMENT

Be happy and content that you are His. Thank your preceptors at least once a day for blessing you with this awareness.

ABSOLUTE FAITH

Place complete trust in the supreme LORD. Do not go against His way.

SELF - CONTROL

Strive to live a life free from selfish desire and anger.

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

Always adorn a peaceful smile; it will work on others and on you too