

Azhwars Bio-Graphy

Twelve Azhwars

No	Azhwar	Birthplace	Month	Star
1	PoigaiAzhwar	Kancheepuram	Aippasi	Thiruvonam
2	BoothathAzhwar	Mahabalipuram	Aippasi	Avittam
3	PeyAzhwar	Mylapore (Chennai)	Aippasi	Sadhayam
4	ThirumazhisAzhwar	Thirumazhisai	Thai	Magam
5	NammAzhwar	Thirunagari	Vaikasi	Visakam
6	MadhurakaviAzhwar	Thirukkooloor	Chithirai	Chithirai
7	KulasekharAzhwar	Vanchikalam (Kerala)	Maasi	Punarvasu
8	PeriyAzhwar	Srivilliputhur	Aani	Swathi
9	AndaL	Srivilliputhur	Aadi	Pooram
10	ThondaradipodiAzhwar	Thirumandangudi	Margazhi	Kettai
11	ThiruppanAzhwar	Uraiyur	Kaarthigai	Rohini
12	ThirumangaiAzhwar	Thiruvali Thirunagari	Kaarthigai	Kaarthigai

Mudhal Azhwars

PoigaiAzhwar, BhoothaththAzhwar & PEyAzhwar

PoigaiAzhwAr, BhoothaththAzhwAr and PEyAzhwAr are the three mudal (first) AzhwArs who were not only contemporary azhwArs; but were born on three consecutive days in SiddhArti year, Aiyyppasi month on TiruvONam, Avittam and sadhayam nakshathrams respectively ;and the babies appeared on flowers of different kind (and not were born like us actually!- They are ayOnijars). Their period was estimated as 7th century A.D. (Though we are not attaching any significant importance to it, it is better to have a datum). poigaiAzhwAr, was born (made to appear by the Lord) in kancheepuram, while bhoothaththAr in mahabalipuram and pEyAzhwAr in thirumylai (present Mylapore).

1. **PoigaiAr**, an incarnation of MahAvishNu's paanchjanya (Divine conch, sanghu in Tamil) is also called Adhi kavi. poigaiAr appeared on the ThAmarai mottu (lotus bud) in a pond in tiruve:ka near kancheepuram.
2. **BhoothaththAr** appeared in a flower called "kurukaththi"(?) in a garden at kadalmallai port of pallava rajyam (kingdom) in mahAbalipuram (south of madras). He was an incarnation of Divine mace (called kaumOdaki) of our Lord mahAvishNu.
3. **PEyazhwAr**, (called pEyAr later by people due to being crazy, mad, piththan, pEyAr after the Lord and even used to roll down with ecstasy and bhakti- He even says" others look crazy to him for their being crazy after material pursuits; and sensual pleasures), as an incarnation of the sword of mahAvishNu (called nandaki), appeared in sevvalli (Red alli-lily) flower in a well of AdhikEsava perumAL koil at mylapore (in madras).

(now, some of us may not be able to digest fully these births (or appearances) on flowers due to the Lord's grace; However, it may please be noticed that whatever you and I can understand and perceive is all transient and not permanent; The very fact that these creations of our Lord in such unique fashion and in such incarnations only goes to prove His ineffable qualities and attributes; They are BEYOND one's comprehension. Do not do research on why the sweet tasty mango is of this shape, this colour, and this contour, etc., Let us not waste time anymore and let us go right ahead and taste it for we are blessed with an accessibility to reach the mangoes)

[Nammazhwar](#), (our azhwar), the greatest azhwar about whom we will see later, has addressed these three azhwars as "innkavi pAdum parama kavigAL" meaning the greatest poets who sang the loveliest songs or the sweetest songs; All three azhwars were blessed with tamizh gnAnam(knowledge) and bhakti uLLam; All of them, though were not known to each other, were singing the glories of sriman nArAyaNan, and were going from place to place visiting the PerumAL temples to get blessed with Lord's Darshan. They had no other thoughts but for nArAyanan and lived like sanyAsis (recluses); The Lord, may be, wanted them to get together (like what He has done now through maNi) and liked to listen to their discussion about Him and His kalyANa guNAs.

Hence, He brought them to Thirukkivilur separately (at the same time) and what happened there; how they met and recognised each other's bhakti; what all they talked. How ecstatic each one became, what were their outpourings?

So, they had come to Thirukkivilur and each of them had a separate Darshan of Trivikraman (the Lord who appeared as vAmanan, a small brahmachari boy, took viswaroopam and measured the entire universe in one step in vAmanAvatAram) called "UlagaLandha perumAL" and obtained His katAksham.

Due to heavy rain, poigaiAr had to take shelter in a small narrow koodam(hall/veranda) of a house nearby, and being exerted himself so much due to walking, lied down in that place; After some time, BhoothaththAr knocked the house and requested if he can be accommodated due to heavy rain outside.

Being a bhakta, (a) bhaktA does not see who asks for; (b) He offers help as long and as much as he can even if it amounts to more inconvenience to him- (a lesson we all have to learn) he welcomed bhoothaththAr lovingly saying "Inside, there is place for one man to lie down; but two can sit; please come in "(oruvar padukkalAm; iruvar amaralAm)". After formal introduction, it took little time to realise that they are birds of the same feather; and they talked and discussed about emberuAn's leelA's and guNAs. There is yet another knock and there stands our pEyAr asking for a favour to accommodate him due to heavy downpour. Not surprisingly, both bhaktAs said in chorus "Please come in; We can stand and accommodate you also" (oruvar padukkalAm; iruvar amaralAm; moover niRkalAm). It is in Giving that we receive;

All three joined themselves in discussing Glorious attributes of Trivikraman Sriman nArAyaNan and were deeply excited to describe what each one of them felt and feel towards their (our) Lord. They felt happy exchanging information of

various sthalam(temples) visited by them and were getting more and more excited to know from one another their great anubhangaL.

While they were standing all the time (in a space that is just sufficient for only three people to stand) discussing namperumAls' nityakalyANa guNas, suddenly they found themselves cramped; and they could not even move about; It was real squeezing against each other; They were perplexed as to why all of a sudden, there is less space as if there are more than three persons; And there appeared (with the help of their Divine vision blessed by the Lord Sriman nArAyaNan), sakshAth sriman nArAyaNan (chathur bhujam, chandra roopam, sanghu, chakram, Bright ThirumaN and srichoorNam on His beautiful forehead; pattu peethAmbharam, karpooora vasam, etc.....)

Three AzhwArs were literally crying, tears rolling down their cheeks, Goose pimples all over their bodies; Chests expanded as if they are going to burst with full of happiness; Their palms were glued to each other; and they were feeling highly elated;

Each one of them (one by one) sang 100 poems(pasurams) flowing from their mouths as if they are clear "neerOdai", stream of river; BhagavAn listened to them with His full concentration and satisfaction all their pasurams and after blessing them, disappeared.

They always went together to other temples, and On their way, the three azhwArs also were blessed with

1. a darshan of sitapiratti, lakshmana, bharatha, sathrukna, hanumathsametha Sri Ramachandra at Ayodhdhi,
2. a darshan of Lord ThiruvEnkadamudaiyAn down the hill (not at tirumala, but at tirupathi), when they hesitated to step on the Hill and turned back; such a place is called "AzhwAr theertham" even today.
3. Offering a charkAyudhA to Vishnuvarthanan, a king at kanchipuram for winning a battle. and
4. later, joining with another azhwAr, by name Thirumazhisai azhwAr (on their way)

A Glance at their marvellous compositions:

1. **poigaiAzhwAr** composed the first 100 pAsurams "**mudhal thiruvandhAdhi**" (andhAdhi means the first word of one verse will be last word of the previous verse) starting with the first one: vaiyam thagaliyA, vArkadlE neyyAga/ veyyakkadirOn viLakkAga/ sudarAzhiyAn adikkE soottinEn son mAlai/ Idar neenghugavE enRu/

Meaning: Lord nArAyaNa, who holds the Divine chakrAyudha, is the cause of this wonderful universe and the seas. I am singing these mAlai(Garland) of verses(pAsurams) and dedicating to Him, whose vision I had is the light of the lamp of the earth, and oil being the seas, the sun being the source of the light;

2. **BhoodaththAzhwAr** composed the second 100 pAsurams "**irandAm thiruvandhAdhi**" starting with the first one: anbE thagaliyA, ArvamE neyyAga/ inburugu sindhai idu thiriyA/ naNpurugi GnAna chudar viLakku EtrinEn/Gnana thamizh purindha nAn/

meaning: Here, it is the love as the lamp and involvement as the oil and azhwAr says " I dedicate myself to the service of the lord, by singing this song that blesses wisdom(GnAna), with love as the lamp, endearing involvement as the oil(Ghee), and knowledge as the wick of the torch" .

3. **PEyAzhwAr** composed the third 100s called "**moonRAM thiruvandhAdhi**", with the first one as follows: thirukkaNdEn, ponmEni kaNdEn- thigazhum/arukkan Ani niRamum kaNdEn-seruk kiLaRum/ ponAzhi kaNdEn puri sangham kai kaNdEn/ en Azhi vaNNan pAl inRu/ What a song! AzhwAr just says: " I found the Glorious, GOLDEN form of the Lord. I have seen the Glory of Sri and nArAyaNa and His beauty and His Sea colour, His brightness and brilliance like the Sun and His sanghu (Divine Conch) on one hand and chakrA (Discuss) on the other;"

Thirumazhisai Azhwar

This is a biography of the GREAT AzhwAr by name "Thirumazhisai AzhwAr" (born at Thirumazhisai, to Bhargava rishi and his pathni kanakangi after an unusual of 12 months stay in the womb). Seeing the foetus that came out as just a lifeless lump of flesh with no arms, legs, etc., they were terribly depressed and with unwillingness left it at the "moongil" (bamboo) bush and proceeded on their spiritual journey. Our Lord Sriya: patih appeared with His consort and blessed the "flesh" with Their katAksham and it turned into an alive, Divya tEjas, cute little bundle of joy; a fully developed and lovely baby which was later picked up with

both the arms affectionately by a tribe(Harijan) named "ThiruvALan". A really blessed couple ThiruvAlan and pankaya chelvi, was very much overwhelmed by the grace of God for this Gift of swarna vigraham-like baby.

Again an unusual (this unusualness is found on many occasions in this AzhwAr's life) phenomenon of not drinking or eating any thing nor any expelling of any waste by this baby saddened them. They really longed to see the baby drink or eat something; It has been happening for quite some time and this unusualness news spread everywhere and attracted lots of people to see and be blessed with the darshan of this divine child, who is growing and developing like any other normal child without absolutely any intake. When a simple, devoted agriculturist old couple paid their visit, they brought some cow's milk with them and the old lady lovingly placed the baby on her lap and offered the milk saying "Oh our beloved thirumazhisaiyE, the one who came amidst us by the grace of Sriman Narayana, please take this milk and remove our worries, dear" and IT STARTED DRINKING, guys. (one can imagine the happiness mixed with "Anandha" tears that must have flowed in the hall!) And they were coming everyday to offer the milk to the baby; one such day the baby AzhwAr showed and signalled the left over milk to be drunk by the old couple; The moment they drank, they regained their youth; yet another marvel by the Divine AzhwAr, who was none other than chakrAyudha (the Discuss of maha vishnu). The "young" old couple, later were blessed with a male child called "Kanikkannan" who at a later stage became a close friend/ardent disciple of ThirumazhisaiAzhwAr.

The AzhwAr, actually had learnt tried all other religions/doctrines., namely., Buddhism, jainism, advaita and in fact became a staunch devotee of Siva (with a name siva vAkya. pEyAzhwAr argued with him, showed him evidences from vedas and smritis to claim sriman Narayana as the supreme deity, and finally initiated him into vaishnavic philosophy and named him bhaktisArar. AzhwAr later declares his struggles in his pAsuram:

**sAkkiyam kaRROm samaN kaRROm, sankaranAr /
Akkiya Agama nool arinthOm bhaktiyAl /
senkatakariyaAnai sErnthOm yAm theethilamE /
yenkatakariyathOnRil /**

"After my futile efforts to know the supreme principle through jainism, buddhism, and saivic philosophy, I am blessed by sriman Narayana to take refuge at the Lotus feet of Sri Devi and have escaped all problems and misfortunes since then."

BhaktisArar visited various sthalams (temples) and came to Thiruve:ka (bhoodhathAzhwAr's birthplace) and was allured by the beauty of the Lord and the scenic beauties and decided to stay there for some time. Our Kanikkannan, too joined bhaktisArar and served him as an ardent disciple (sishyA) to AzhwAr. There was also an old lady (unmarried) who devotedly, whole heartedly served AzhwAr by cleaning, mopping, drawing "kOlams" etc.. AzwAr was greatly impressed by her indefatigable service and devotion towards azhwAr and appreciated her openly; The old lady was moved and regretted that she joined him at this age only and not when she was able so that she could have continued to serve for more years. Hearing that, azhwAr's kind heart melted and showered his graceful look (katAksham) on the lady, who was immediately transformed into an extremely beautiful young lady. (This AzhwAr's miracles are really great, dear vaishNavALs) Later, during a "nagarvalam", the pallava king saw her in azhwAr's place and married her.

After some years, when the king actually noticed that his queen is not ageing and has got the same youthful look while he was getting old, he found out that it was AzhwAr's divine katAksham that did the magic. He asked Kanikkannan who was summoned to the court to make a request to AzhwAr on behalf of the king, Kanikkannan refused saying he and the AzhwAr will not yield and sing for a mortal. That enraged the king and he ordered to banish Kanikkannan from his kingdom. Kanikkannan said "this is not the only sthalam for me; The entire world is His" and walked off.

He went to azhwAr and narrated the incident which forced him to leave that place and begged for his pardon for leaving him; AzhwAr felt very sad that his dearest friend/devoted disciple is leaving him. He did not feel like staying there without kanikkannan. Hence, AzhwAr, too decided to push off from Thiruve:ka. AzhwAr went straight to the temple and prayed wholeheartedly with tears in his eyes and requested the Lord also to come along with them, as he can not think of living without the Lord.

**Kanikkannan pOginRAn kAmaru poon kacchi /
maNivaNNA1 nee kidakka vEndA /
sennAppulavanum pOginrEn neeyum unRan /
painnAgappAi suruttikkoL /**

" Kanikkannan is going out of kanchi Manivanna, I am also leaving with him. You don't have to lie down here any more; You also roll your "nAgam" (serpent bed)

and follow me" and FRIENDS, OUR LORD FOLLOWED THE AZHWAR WITH THE SNAKE ROLLED AND TUCKED UNDER HIS ARMS.

The king next day got the news that the temple is desolated and the entire city looks dark and lifeless, he understood his folly and rushed immediately to chase the trio. He caught them on the way and prostrated on the ground, repenting for what he had done; requested them to forgive him for his mistake and to come back to kanchi. AzhwAr and Kanikkannan, understanding the sincerity of his regret and repentance requested the Lord again to return and stay at kanchi. Needless to say, the Lord obeyed.

**Kanikkannan pOkkozhindAn kAmaru poon kacchi /
maNivaNNA1 nee kidakka vEndum /
sennAppulavanum pOkkozhindEn neeyum unRan /
painnAgappAi viritthukkoL /**

(I will not write the meaning and dilute the rich scene- Whenever I think of this scene, I am very much moved, brothers, by the greatness of AzhwAr and the love/vAtsalyam of our Lord towards the AzhwAr to listen and obey the bhakta's request; Simply excellent; Words fail me to express my feelings.- one sholud really be blessed to even read his biography and his greatness through such miracles; irrespective of author's (my) capability and limited or no knowledge)

Once on his way to Tirukkudantai, he stopped for a while to take rest and he sat on the "ThiNNai" (a sort of bench-pial) in front of a house in Perumpuliyur. A few brahmins were reciting vedas inside that house. On seeing the "harijan" (our AzhwAr), they stopped their recitation since, as per tradition and shAstrAs, Veda was not to be recited in the presence of a person belonging to the fourth caste and our AzhwAr immediately understood and was about to leave when the Brahmins started their recitation.

They forgot the next line and at what point they had left the recitation. The AzhwAr broke open a paddy seed that was lying there with his fingernail to indicate the exact context which had a reference to the paddy seed. The brahmins were simply flabbergasted and astonished and realized the greatness of the AzhwAr and asked for his pardon.

When the Archaka (priest) of the local temple wanted to honour the AzhwAr, knowing fully well his bhakti and GnAna, some people objected and spoke ill of the AzhwAr. Tha AzhwAr felt hurt and prayed to the Lord to show himself to

these people in his physical body to prove that the antaryAmi is the same Narayanan in all living beings, irrespective of the jAti, caste, c reed colour, sex etc.,

**Akkarangal Akkarangal Enrum Aavadhu En Kolo /
Ik Kurumbai Neekki Ennai Eesanaakkka Vallaiyel /
Sakkaram Koll Kaiyane Sadankar Vai Adangida /
Ut Kidantha Vanname Puram Posindhu Kaattide /**

Meaning:" What is the use of your having those resplendent hands if you cannot remove the idiosyncrosy of these ignorant folk and make me powerful in their midst? Lord, with the divine discus in your hand ! Teach these fools a lesson by showing yourself appearing in my very physical body" Again, The Lord obeyed the AzhwAr and showed himself off in the body of AzhwAr and the protestors were simply astonished and prostrated and begged for his pardon. (It only again goes to prove that no one is superior or inferior by birth; it is just bhakti and love for Him which will make us dearer to Him- No one chooses his kulam, parents, life; It is all His mercy)

On reaching Tirukkudantai (Kumbakonam), he let the birchbark leaf containing his writings in the waters of river Kaveri. The leaf floated back to him holding his works viz., '**Tiruchanda Viruttam**' (a poem of beautiful verses) in which he sang the following beautiful verse:

**NinRadhu Enthai Ooragathu Irundathu Enthai Paadagathu /
AnRu Vekkanaik Kidandhathu EnnilAtha MunnelAm /
AnRu NAn PiRandilEn PiRandhapin MaRandilEn /
NinRadhum Irundhadhum Kidandhathum En NenjuLe /**

" Before I was born, He was standing in Ooragam, was sitting in Paadagam and was lying down in Tiruvekka. At that time I was not born with wisdom; When once I was born with this wisdom, I never forgot. Therefore, the Lord left all those places and has taken permanent abode in my heart". The idea is that the great Gnanis never considered themselves as born at all until they realized this ' Artha gnAnam'. And, once they realized this, they had no other avocation than being immersed in the thought of the Lord. This is how Mumukshupadi explains this sentiment.

The other work of the AzhwAr is '**Naanmugan Tiruvantadhi**'- an Antadhi commencing with the words 'Naanmugan' - a reference to the four faced Brahma. The first stanza of the Antadhi categorically states

**Naan Mugani Naraayanan Padaithaan- Naan Muganum /
Thaan Mugamaai Sankaranaithaan Padaithaan /
Yaan Mugamaai Anthaadhi Melittu Arivithen - Aazh Porulai
Sinthaamal Konmin Neer Therndhu**

"The four faced Brahma was born to Narayana and to this Brahma was born Sankara. I am declaring this truth in this Antadhi. Resort to this without any doubt, if you desire to wipe out the pangs of birth"

The AzhwAr was so straightforward, outspoken, fearless and established the oneness and supremacy of Sriman Narayanan and sri vaishnavam. He became an exemplary Sri vaishnava Acharya and it is told that he spent about 700 years meditating on Tiruvallikkeni perumAL Sri Venkata krishnan.

ThirumazhisaiAzhwAr thiruvadigaLE saraNam

NammAzhwar

Let us not worry or bother and attach importance to the time period of nammAzhwAr as it has different time periods; some theories claim 3100 B.C (5000 years ago) and others claim 8 th century A.D. However, the pAsurams composed by nammAzhwAr contain the depths and visions of philosophy equal to vEdAs, (or even more). These pAsurams along with those of other azhwArs were onlt compiled by nAthamuni and later propagated by embermAnAr (Sri Ramanujar) and hence, is even considered as the foster mother of **ThiruvAimozhi** (nammAzhwAr's 1102 pAsurams).

nammAzhwAr's parents, kAri (a veLLALa agriculturist) of Thirukkurugoor and udhayanangai, the childless couple, after praying to the Lord AdhinAthA, (who himself had announced through the archakA that his amsam will be born to them soon) were blessed with a male child with a divya tEjas in the year pramadhi, vaikasi tamil month and visAkam nakshatram on a friday (an incarnation of Vishvaksena, the Chief administrator of Mahavishnu). The parents' happiness was

shortlived only as the baby did not even cry, move or open its eyes or mouth. Since the baby was different from others it was named "mARan" (later called karimaran).

It may be noted that this Divine baby AzhwAr did not eat/move; but did grow like other healthy kids (similar to baby ThirumazhisaiAzhwAr). The grief stricken parents, due to this unusual uncommon child went to Lord AdhiNatha, put the "immobile" baby in an emerald cradle under a tamarind tree besides the temple. This puLiyamaram(tamarind tree) also is supposed to be "AdhisEshan" (the Serpent of Mahavishnu) which grew here before the azhwAr's birth. This tree has flowers, which tiel unripened "puLiyngAi" and not a ripened one (puLiyampazham). This tree, unlike other tamarind tree does not fold its leaves in the nights; and it is still called "uRangap puLiyamaram (the tree which does not sleep), like Lakshmana. (Even today one can witness this phenomenon ay AzhwArthirunagari).The parents observed penance by putting the kid in the cradle at the temple daily. One day when they relaxed by closing their eyes and fell into a short nap, the "little azhwAr" crawled towards the tree bottom and sat down cross-legged and closed its eyes. From then on, the divine child grew in the same state of meditation for 16 years. Needless to say, all sorts of people in that region from all walks of life; and from all religions came to see this marvel. The boy was a 16 year old divya tejas, Golden hued divine form. People affectionately named him nammAzhwAr(our azhwAr), sadagopan, parangusar, etc. (Sisters and Brothers, It is very clear and certain that it is nothing but His grace and order to bless us with this marvellous AzhwAr who has composed pAsurams whose depths of meanings will vary with the readers' capabilities and GnAna / Bhakti to the AzhwAr- A GREAT AZHWAR, REALLY)

The Elephant comes after; while the bell sound can be heard before. Like that the Graceful Lord had sent a brahmin saint by name "**Madhurakavi**" before this azhwAr's birth. This madhurakavi of Thirukkolor was on his pilgrimage tour (by walk, of course) to North India and was fascinated by the Beauty of ayOdhyA. He chose to stay there. Suddenly one night madhurakavi saw a very bright star (a new one which was not there before; nor was it seen by others even when madhurakavi saw it) in the southern direction. He was pulled by the magnetism of this light (in the nights) and started his journey back to south following the course and guided only by THIS SOUTHERN STAR. He found himself at Lord AhinAthA temple and the star's brightness in nammAzhwAr's tEjas. He was simply excited and deeply attracted by the Divine figure and Golden hue of AzhwAr's face. Since he was a sanskrit and Tamil scholar and a great philosopher, too he wanted to test the azhwAr, without knowing that the azhwAr does not talk or open his eyes.

He just threw a small stone into a nearby pond and for that splash sound, our azhwAr opened his lotus eyes. Madhurakavi asked in tamil "Seththathin vayiRRil siRiyadhu piRandhAl yetthai thinRu engE kidakkum?" (meaning: If the small is born in a dead's body(or stomach), what will it eat and where will it stay?)

nammAzhwAr, the one who has not opened his mouth since his birth (not even for food) opened his lips and answered "aththaith thinRu angE kidakkum" (meaning: It will eat that and stay there).

The small one refers to the individual soul and the dead one refers to the gross matter, the body. When the soul enters the body, the body comes into life; and when it leaves, it becomes a corpse. The soul experiences the pleasures and pains through the body and its senses and reaps only what it has sown quite unaware and unconscious of its true nature of its being part of the Almighty, as His body. So the soul will eat that and stay there; When the soul realises its true nature and does prapatti to Him Sriman Narayanan (realising the body/mind and intellect as not attached to its nature), it will eat His thoughts, verses and pAsurams as his "annam" and will stay there(at His abode as His servant rendering service to Him).

Madhurakavi was greatly impressed at AzhwAr's depth of answer and his philosophy. He prostrated at the feet of AzhwAr and with tears in his eyes said " O, souther sun! Please take me as your disciple: Please make me cross the ocean of Births and deaths. Please protect me". Seeing him at his feet, nammAzhwAr said " Stay with me and write my pAsurams on Sriya:patih". From then on nammAzhwAr sang with utmost Bhakti, pAsurams on Sriman Narayanan and The Lord along with MahAlakshmi on His Garuda appeared before nammAzhwAr and blessed him. Not only that, my dear brothers. It is also told that all perumAls from various thiruthalams (Divya Desams) appeared one by one before him and got their quota of pAsurams. Such is the Greatness of "our AzhwAr". nammAzhwAr stayed under that tamarind tree for 35 years. His pasurams are compared to essence of Rig, yajur, sama & adharvana vedas. After living for 35 years he wished to reach His abode (and so did the Lord, too). Madhrakavi's eyes were welled with tears and was immensely pleased and excited when he saw his AchAryA became one with the Lord and united with Him. Simulataneously, he was also blessed with a swarna vighraha (Golden statute) of nammazhwAr which he consecrated at the Tamarind tree. He performed daliy ArAdhanA to his AzhwAr and even ignored the Lord Sriman Narayana since then.

This NammAzhwAr was always a favourite for Sri Ramanuja , Sri vedantha desika and all seers of visishtadvaita, due to its essence of our great vaishnava philosophy and the doctrine of saranagathi.

NammAzhwAr composed the following:

1. Thiruviruttam (100 verses as the essence of Rg vEdA)
2. ThiruvAsiriyam (7 verses as the essence of yajur vEdA)
3. Periya ThiruvandhAdhi (87 verses as the essence of atharvaNa vEdA)
4. ThiruvAimozhi (1002 verses as the essence of sAma vEdA)

The sentiments expressed in every single pAsuram of nammAzhwAr reflect Bhakti ecstasy of NammAzhwAr and will take us to such an interest and Bhakti for Sriya: pathih sriman Narayana. It is impossible to select the best verse as all are equally excellent.(We will discuss his pAsurams in another series)

parasara bhattar's thanian on nammAzhwAr:

**vAn thigazhum sOlai madhil arangar vAn pugazh mEl /
Aanra thamizh maraigal Ayiraum- EenRa /
mudhal thAi sadagOpan moymbAl vaLarththa /
Edhat thAi ErAmAnujan /**

" ThiruvAimozhi' 1000 verses are the vedas which declare the auspicious qualities of Sri Ranganatha. The natural mother is sadagopan(nammAzhwAr) and the foster mother is Sri Ramanuja, since he based his enire kalakshEpams on ThiruvAimozhi.

**mikka iRainilayum meyyAm uyir nilaiyum/
thakka neRiyum thadaiYAgI -thokkiyalum/
Oozh vinaiyum vAzhvinaiyum Odhum kurugaiyOr kOn/
yAzhin isai vEdaththiyal.**

"The ThiruvAimozhi" (tamil Vedam) composed by kurugaiyor kon-nammAzhwAr, contains the five realities namely.,

1. the nature of the Eternal ParamAtma
2. the nature of the Eternal jeevAtma
3. the means for the jeevAtma to attain the goal of ParamAtma
4. the blocks and hurdles on the way and

5. the goal of life i.e mokshA.

NammAzhwAr thiruvadigaLE saraNam

Madhurakavi Azhwar

AzhwAr Madhurakavi is the one who helped us by compiling the outpourings of NammazhwAr; Not just that, he also sang 11 beautiful "andhadhi" style pAsurams starting with "**kaNNinun siRutthAmbhu...**" which do not have any parallel to any other pAsuram/slOka for Acharya Bhakti. He sang these pasurams only in praise of his Acharya "nammAzhwAr" and claimed, in the end, that one can attain mOkshA certainly and definitely after reciting just these 11 pAsurams. It is also told that Nathamuni, who compiled 4000 pAsurams of AzhwArs, was blessed with a darshan of nammAzhwAr and was given a set of all 12 AzhwArs' pAsurams (by NammAzhwAr himself) after he recited Madhurakavi's 11 bhakti-laden pAsurams on nammAzhwAr 12000 times. (Brothers, that is the dynamite packed power of Madhurakavi's pAsurams). Let us be blessed by the biography of this mahan.

Madhurakavi (meaning in sanskrit the sweet poet), a vainathEya (divine bird) incarnate, was born in the year Easwara, chitrai month and in chitrai nakshatram at ThirukkOLoor. He learnt Tamizh and sanskrit and became a great scholar in both the languages. He was a great BhaktA of Sriman Narayana and had an excellent conduct. He was on visits to the North India and obtained divya Darshans of Ayodhya, gaya, Badri, Dwaraka etc., and He chose to stay at Ayodhya as he could not resist being attracted by the Holiness of Sri RAMA's birth place. From there, he was dragged by an uncontrolled desire to follow the new Southern BRIGHT Star/Light appeared in the sky (as seen only by his eyes at night) and found himself at the feet of the Greatest AzhwAr "NammAzhwAr". After a brief encounter (Please read the post on NammAzhwAr for details), he prayed to NammAzhwAr requesting him to protect and accept him as his disciple. From then on, he stayed with NammAzhwAr and compiled all pAsurams of NammAzhwAr. Madhurakavi was so much devoted to NammAzhwAr, his Acharya, that he held him equal to (higher than) Lord Sri Narayana (You will agree that the Lord asks for that Bhagavatha Bhakti more than Bhagavadh Bhakti).

After NammAzhwAr departed from this earthly world, he was blessed with a Golden vigraham of NammAzhwAr which he consecrated and performed ThiruvarAdhanA and uthsavams in his honour. He was impressed by nammAzhwAr's works so much that wanted to stage NammAzhwAr's works in front of other scholars. the sangam poets objected to such claims and praises NammazhwAr who had no connection with Sangam (a big deal!). Madhurakavi, it seems was saddened by this protest and was weeping literally. NammAzhwar, appeared as an old Brahmin and consoled him saying " Do not woory about these petty issues, my child, You just place this pasuram of "**Kannan kazhaliNai...**" on a boat (sangap palagai) and watch the fun" and disappeared. Madhurakavi did the same and the boat, it is told capsized throwing out all the jealous, haughty poets while it retained only the leaf containing "Kannan kazhaliNai.."

It is also told that each one of those poets struggled to reach the shore and composed a verse dedicating to NammAzhwAr. And when they were about to publish their verses, they were simply AMAZED to find that each one wrote the same verse in same words; (What a marvel! what a divine AzhwAr and Divine Disciple ! - simply made for each other)

The sangam chief says " NammAzhwAr's works are superior and other poets are like flies compared to Garudan (that is NammAzhwAr); fire flies (minmini) in the presence of sun; dogs in front of the ferrocious tiger; wolf before the Lord Narasimha, ugly clumsy dwarfs dancing before the havenly beautiful Oorvasi- All their works are not equal to even one utterance of nammAzhwAr."

Madhurakavi's eyes were full of tears for his (his Acharya's) success; The eleven pAsurams are counted as part of 4000 verses simply because the whole of 4000 pasurams is claimed to be Bhagavadh vishayam while Madhurakavi's is on his Acharya which is the central gem that sheds lustre on the other jems of the garland (so says Manavala mamunigal). It is the work that holds the key to the treasure of other pAsurams.

Needless to say, Nathamuni's thaniyans (Thaniyan means dedicated verse) on this AzhwAr depict the glory of AzhwAr and it is necessary for us to be blessed by such Great Bhaktals; Before we conclude about this mahan who performed Acharya Nishtai and attained the feet of mOksham, let us get benefitted by the rich two thaniyans of Nathamuni (in sanskrit):

**Aviditha Vishaya Antharas /
Sadaarer Upanishadam Upagaana Matra Bogah /**

**Abhi Saguna Vasaath Tad Eka Seshee /
Madhura Kavir Hridaye Mamaavirastu /**

" Here is one who knew none other than Nammalwar; the one who made it his mission in life to sing the Tamizh upanishadam of Nammalwar; The one being overwhelmed by Nammalwar held him as his very God; Let such Madhurakavi fill my heart" (our hearts, too)

**VERonRum Naan aRiyEn Vedam Tamizh Seitha /
Maaran Sadakopan VaN Kurugur - YeRu EngaL /
Vaazhvaam EnRu Ethum Madhura Kaviyaar Emmai /
AaLwaar Avare SaraN /**

Madhurakavi said -" I do not know anything other than Nammalwar also known as Maaran(original name of NammAzhwAr) who rendered in Tamil the essence of the Vedas and who is the head of Tirukkurugur. This Madhurakavi is our master. He is the guardian of the group of Prapannaas.

MadhurakaviAzhwAr thiruvadigaLE saraNam
Nathamuni ThiruvadigaLe saraNam

KulasekarAzhwar

KulasEkarAzhwar was born as a prince to ChEra king Dhidavradhan and nAdhanAyagi during 8 th century(?) in the month of mAsi and the nakshatram of punarpoosam(same as that of Lord Rama). The child looked divine and made everyone who saw it happier and cheerful. The entire kingdom was in a jubilant mood. The kid was named kulasEkaran and when he grew he was taught all sAstrAs, epics, arts, Tamil and Sanskrit and was also given training on fighting, Horse riding, Elephant riding, etc. In each endeavour, he excelled and came out in flying colours. When Dhidavradhan became old, kulasEkaram ascended the throne and since then he was ruling like Lord Sri Rama and brought in RamaRajyam to his kingdom. People were very happy and there was rich harvest throughout the

year; there were regular rains and there was only subheeksham. Hence the citizens had great amount of love and respect for their king kulasEkarA.

Once without knowing kulasEkarA's strengths, the neighbouring kings (Chola and pAndyA) came to fight and during the battle kulasEkarA won with no difficulty. Impressed PandyA king gave his daughter to kulasEkarA for marrying her. kulasEkarA was blessed with a son (whom he named dhidavradhan) and a daughter ILai.

One night, The Lord wished to divert kulasEkarA's attention to Him and he appeared as Lord Tirupati Venkatachalapathi in the king's dream and blessed him. The king was overwhelmed with the Lord's love and became silent and was only thinking of the Lord at all times. He became totally like water in Lotus leaf (Water never wets the Lotus leaf) and was ruling the kingdom without any attachment; He was spending his time more and more on Thiru vArAdhnam and Bhajans and listening to stories of Rama and KrishNa. He even started disliking the battles since he did not like to see more loss of lives in the battle. He started singing in Tamil and sanskrit with full of love and Bhakti in praise of the Lord. He spent his most of the time only on religious activities and attending discourses. Once when the UpanyAsakar was narrating Rama RavaNa yuddham where the battle was going on for a long time and RavaNa was giving a tough fight, kulasEkarA was so much attached to the story and in the discourse he ordered his Army General to immediately organise to send the soldiers, elephants and horses and the king was also making himself ready for the battle to give a helping hand to Sri Rama. The upanyAsakar and all others were totally perplexed and could not say anything. The upanyAsakar at last came to the king and said" O, mighty king, We need not go. The Lord Rama has already killed ravaNa and is on his way back to AyOdhyA for his pattAbhishEkam". That made the king silent and he came to normal; Such was kulasEkarA's bhakti for Rama. It is told Lord Rama appeared in his dream that night and said" kulasEkarA, I am deeply moved by your readiness to offer me help in the battle. I see you are having blind affection and live for me , you did not realise my Strength and parAkramam. We can win asurAs with no effort; You are acting just like LakshmaNA, who is also attached to me deeply. From today you will be called kulasEkarA perumAL like ILayaperumAL LakshmaNA. Even today he is revered as kulasEkarA perumAL. The pAsurams he sang were compiled under "perumAL thirumozhi". One can see his feeling of deep regret for not being born during RamA's time in his pAsurams.

As he was getting more and more involved in Bhagavadh Bhakti and Bhagavadha Bhakti and was spending all his time in such activities, the ministers were not clear

as to how to bring the king back to his administration. The king had even consecrated a Golden statue of Sri Rama in the palace where he was spending most of the time with other pundits and upanyAsakALs. Once during a Ramanavami day (the birthday of Sri Rama), the king was astonished to see a big nice Navaratna mAlai which had adorned Sri Rama missing. He was confused as to how somoen can come inside the palace with so much security and so many people around. The ministers were asked; One of them (may be the chief minister) hesitantly stammered to say " May be ..O .king.....one of upanyAsakALs, or pundits...could.....have.....take...." He did not even finish his statment. The king was shivering and was literally shocked to hear that statement as if he has stepped on a Red hot burnt iron; He could not believe his ears as to how these minister can even think of these GREAT BHAKTAAS as ones who could have flicked; "What are you saying? Are you talking about these adiyArs of Sriman NARAYANA. Are you not ashamed to say that? Is your tougue still alive? How dare you think them as thieves when their love is only for th Lord and they consider the Gold and dust the same; Those UTTHAMARGAL - Do you think they have stolen the MAALAI? . He did not stop with that. He called somone to bring a pot wherein he had arranged to place a poisonous snake; Bewildered ministers obeyed. He showed them the pot with the snake inside. He said and prayed to the Lord" If the mAlai has been taken by one of the BhaktALs, let the snake bite me; If not, I will come out unscathed.". He put his hand inside the pot. The snake NEVER TOUCHED his hand. The minister came out openly saying "we are very sorry and we beg your pardon. We are the ones who removed the MALAI and put the blame on BhaktA so that you will start disliking them and will concentrate on administrative matters. Please forgive us for this irresponsible act." KulasEkarA thought silently after listening to all this and understood the underlining concern of his ministers for the kingdom and the rule. He immediately decided to bring his son into the pictute and trained him for some time before he started off his kshEtrAdanam throughout India singing Lord's Glories and GuNAs.

He visited almost all the temples and he lost his heart for Sri Rama. He has sung lullabies for Sri Rama as "RaghavanE ThAlElO!". He has even sung pAsurams on Devaki's misfortune of not able to enjoy kaNNan's leelA's and " thollai inbam" which yasOdhA was blessed with. One can greatly be moved by his pAsurams where in he longs for being born as a step in Tirupathi Lord's temple or a fish in the Holy pushkaraNi or a seNbhaga tree in Tirupathi(standing in front of the temple) or a Big stone which can not be removed so easily; He even wished to be born as a servant holding the Golden Bowl in front of Sriman nArAyaNan to spit the water after washing, girgling and cleaning His mouth in the morning. Such was his desire to serve the Lord ceaselessly and that too from a king!.(One can imagine

our plight with so little(or no) material possessions and for that we walk with so much pride with even a very little achievement(which too is possible only with His grace)).

He lived till 67 years and then reached His abode and it is also told that his daughter ILai followed her father kulasEkara perumAn and was also blessed with the Lord's ThiruvArLu.

A sample pAsuram to taste the sweetness and longing deaire of AzhwAr before we conclude this post.

**AnAtha selvatthu arambaiyargaL thaRsoozha
vAnALum selvamum; maNNarasum yAn vENdEn |
thEnAr poonchOlai thiruvEngadatthu chunaiyil
meenAi piRakkum vidhiyudaiyOnAvEnE ||**

Such an "ARPUTHAMAANA" pAsuram. He says" I do not want to be a king even if it is to rule this earth and the "vAn IOkam" where there is great wealth, and where there are beautiful damsels dancing around; I do not wish that; All that I want is to be born as a fish in the pond (PushkaraNi) in Thirupathi (as mentioned earlier, or a tree standing in front of Thirupathi or a big rock [or at least as a tall building]).

PeriAzhwar and Andal

Before getting into periyAzhwAr charithram, let us have a glance at the Great Villiputthoor charithram, where periyAzhwAr hailed from. In "Then PAndya" kingdom, there is a small town called putthoor, where great sholars pundits were residing. Nearby there is a forest where there were hunters living in it. The chief of these hunters had two sons named villi and kaNdan.

One day these two guys villi and kaNdan went inside the forest for hunting as usual. They spotted a tiger and it escaped the arrows from their bows. KaNdan started chasing vigorously and went deep inside the forest. After som time, the tigt hid behind a tree and pounced on kaNdan and killed him. Villi waited for kaNdan for along time and started seraching for him with a worried look on his face about his dearest brother. When he spotted the dead body of kaNdan, his heart

almost stooped with grief and cried heavily and fell unconscious on his darling brother's body.

During his unconsciousness, he had a scene in front of his eyes; Srīman NarAyaNan with His consort VishNu pathni MahAlakshmi appeared and uttered opening His "pavaLachchevVai" thus:"O villi, Do not lament and cry. Do not worry. We will get back your brother's life. And you both go to find out the Big Banyan tree in the midst of this forest where my moorthy has been lying for quite a long time. You both will also find a cave nearby the tree where there is lots and lots of Golden jewels and coins and treasure available. You can take them as much as you wish. using that wealth, you both need to deforest that place and build a temple and surrounding town." Then the Lord disappeared.

When villi came back to consciousness, he did not know whether what he saw (in his unconscious state) was true at all and was confused. But suddenly kaNdan got up alive as if he just woke up from sleep (without any wound even). Villi explained the whole thing to his darling brother and both of them hugged each other for having been blessed by the Lord and having been chosen by the Lord to establish the temple for Sriya: pathih. (I wish we too had been just hunters like villi and kaNdan, rather than studying all sorts of degrees and leading a life which in now way helps us reach towards the Lord.)

Then they did exactly as was told and with great enthusiasm built the temple with the co operation of all his people (who were pleasantly surprised at the Lord' mercy on their kulam). The place became an excellent sthalam and the temple looked majestic with VadabhathrasAyee as the moorthy. The place even today is being referred as Villiputthoor (named after the brother Villi).

Great scholars, BhaktAs, pundits migrated from putthoor to this holy place and started residing in this place. One of them was Mukunda Bhattar and he was a VaishNava GnAni and his wife was Padmavalli, a GuNavathi and a perfect match for Mukunda Bhattar. Both of them were parama bhaktAs of VadabhathrasAyee. On an auspicious day they were blessed with a male child and they named the child as VishNu chittar; means the one who thinks of VishNu always in his mind. The kid lived upto his name fully and always was contemplating on ways and means to achieve the Lord's DayA. He did not wish to spend and waste his time on education (vEdAs and SasthrAs) and concentrated only on praising the Lord. (PoiginRa Gnanamum pollA ozhkkamum...). He knew that when Lord KrishNa appeared he had a liking for wearing Garlands made from variety of flowers. He chose that kinkaryam to pluck flowers in the early morning and make an excellent

garland out of it to adorn the idol of Sri VadabhatrasAyee. He even sold some of his property and bought a small place near his home (and the temple) and converted that into a beautiful Nandavanam (a Garden). He grew all kinds of creepers and plants for various flowers and the Holy Thulasi. The place also housed a small beautiful pond where there was a clear crystal like water as pure as VishNuchittar's heart and mind. His time was wholly spent on cultivating this garden only and beatify them in order to get more and more and flowers for the Lord. (What a superb life! What a great Bhakti!) The flowers bloomed; Tulasi plant became bigger and bigger; The entire Garden looked divinely beautiful and had an exquisite sugandham (smell) due to jasmine, rose, lotus, pArijAtham, alli, Thulasi, etc., etc.. Every morning, before the Sun rises VishNu chittar took bath completed his NityakarmAnushtAnangal, went to his garden and plucked all kinds of flowers to prepare garlands and garlands of various types for the Lord, while he sang songs in praise of the Lord. He used to take them to the temple and enjoy the scene of Lord wearing all his garlands. He got an immense satisfaction and great amount of blissful happiness in that. He was also blessed with a spouse Vrajai who also had similar taste for performing service to the Lord. (Never complain about your wife (or husband); If she had been better, she would have got a better husband!)

During those times (9 th century A.D?), there was a king by name "VallabhadEvan" ruling that area (Then madurai). He was a good king and was ruling excellently; He was a great VishNu BhaktA and wished to know the meaning of vEdAs and the glory of the Supreme truth. He enquired his chief minister on his desire and as to how to go about pursuing his interests. The minister said " Let us bring vEdic scholars and ask them your questins and seek clarifications from them; Whoever furnishes good, satisfactory reply and clarifies you can be greatly rewarded, O mighty king.". The king agreed and the announcement was made throughout the kingdom and it was alos told that there will be a bag containing Golden coins hanging at the top and with the power and truth of the vEdic statement/principle, it shall fall automatically. There were many scholars, pundits, vEdic viRpannargaL, arguments, discussions, seminars, pArAyaNams, etc, etc.; But the bag still was hanging! The true vEdic underlying principle/statement was known to anybody; The king was terrible disappointed. The Lord now plays! Sriman NarayaNan, Sri Vadabhatra sAyee appeared in VishNuchitthA's dream and said" O BhaktA, I am impressed with your poomAlai kainkaryam. Tomorrow you go the palace and speak vEdic principles and get the reward". VishNuchitthar said" I am not at all well versed in vEdAs; I did not even study them; I wasted(!) my time without learning all these vEdAs; I have doing only a simple Garland preparation for you, Lord. I can not tell any vEdic truths,

since I do NOT know.". The Lord smiled; O VishnuchittA, You are only an instrument. We will speak through you. Not to worry; Just proceed. (ennE BhagawAn's vAtsalyam to bring His BhaktA to the limelight!)

The Lord appeared in the Chief minister's dream too and asked him to arrange to bring VishNuchittar the next day in the palanquin with full honours(GREAT!). The Next day VishNuchittar prayed the Lord and boarded the pallakku (palanquin) and came to the palace with full honours. The scholars laughed at his greed for they knew his limited (or no) knowledge on vEdAs. They made sarcastic statements at him loudly. But once our VishNuchittar started his explanation (after a small prayer) the murmurs stopped; The sarcasm disappeared; People sharpened their ears. The king, the ministers the people and the scholars, everybody could follow the simple statements which were full of deep meanings and were coming as if the waves were coming out of the great ocean; The entire meaning of his statement was clearly understood by one and all and when VishNuchittar made a concluding statement that Sri MahAvishNu, the Sriya: pathih, is the only paramporuL who is protecting and blessing the whole Universe and all beings and is the only underlying principle of all four vEdAs, the bag FELL by itself! and fell into the hands of VishNuchittar. The king got up immediately with full of tears in his eyes and prostrated at the feet of VishNuchittar. He appreciated "I am now clear. You have clarified all my doubts. Sriman NarAyaNanE paramporuL. I have NEVER heard such deep meanings in such simple explanation". All scholars lowered their heads in utter shame and removed their pride and celebrated VishNuchittahr's victory. The king gave away further more lots of prizes and addressed him "BhattarpirAn". VishNuchittar said "O king, I am dumb. I never spoke. It is HE who spoke here thorough me. He is the flutist. I am only a bamboo stick. I am only a plant. He is the one who bloomed the flower. I am only a puppet. He is the karthA and a puppetter. Please do not say anything to me. Please do not prostrate at my feet. Let us all prostrate at HIS FEET. Come." and he said this deeply moved, hands shaking and shivering due to the Lord's mercy on his lowly self.

The king made VishNuchittar sit on the Royal Elephant and arranged for a great procession in the streets of his kingdom. Everywhere people thronged to see the blessed soul and everywhere people were shouting "BhattarpirAn vAzhga! BhattarpirAn vAzhga!". VishNuchittar was all the time crying with Anandha kaNNeer and was having his palms glued together with his mind fully thinking of him and His mercy. When all these festivities were going on, Do you think our Lord will lie down in PARKADAL. No! He has also wished to see this great scene and enjoy His BhakthA being admired and appreciated. He along with

MahAlakshmi appeared on GarudA in the sky and the whole lot of crowd, the king the ministers, the jealous scholars everybody SAW HIM AND HIS CONSORT ON GARUDA! (What a blessed place and blessed people. Were we not even insects in that place during that time?). Seeing the Lord VishNuchitthar was ecstatic and using the bells which the elephant was wearing he made THALAMS and sang "pallaaNdu, pallaaNdu PallAyiraththAndu PalakOdi NoorAyiram" (Long live for many years, Long live for many years for Hundreds of thousands of years!) He is giving AsirvAdhams to the Lord! for living eternally and for ever!. **That is why he is called PERIYA AZHWAR - The eldest AzhwAr because he greeted the Lord himself!**

After being conferred "Bhattar pirAn", periyAzhwAr continued on his mAlai kankaryam, while he enjoyed singing pAsurams on kannan. He sang as if he became His mother, yasOdhA. He bathed him, fed Him, dressed Him; played with him; and enjoyed and imagined all thollai inbam which yasOdhA had undergone. The Child's azhaghu, mischiefs, leelAs, were all sung by periyAzhwAr. All his pAsurams are to be read, re-read and enjoyed. All were bhakti laden pAsurams and taste like Grape fruit soaked in Honey.

One such day (on Adi pooram day) when he was plucking flowers and thulasi leaves in his beautiful nandhavanam, he heard a faint cry of a baby, which appeared as an incarnation of BhoomAdEvi. He was pleasantly surprised to find a little bundle of joy with beautiful pretty limbs and a divine golden face with great amount of tEjas, he immediately picked up the female child with both the arms lovingly and showered her with lots of kisses. His wife vrajai was extremely thrilled to hug the God-given child in their nandhavanam and melted with vAtsalyam for the kid. When they hugged the child they felt as if it is Lord BalakrishNan himself whom they were holding; They were getting tremendous amount of joy by bringing up this blessed pretty girl, whom they named "**kOdhai**".

Kodhai with their love, affection, and bhakti laden pAsurams and Bhagavadh kankaryam grew up with a GREAT amount of Bhakti for kannan (not surprisingly, since, kannan was also brought up by periyAzhwAr in the same house through his pAsurams). KODhai grew up with "koLLai azhaghu", and with lots of intellect and GnAnam on bhagavadh vishayangaL. She also developed a great amount of affinity to kannan while she helped her father in his kankaryam. She also used to pluck flowers and prepare garlands along with her father. Her talks and thoughts were always on kannan. With the garlands, she used to accompany her father to VadapathrasAyee temple to have His darshan.

Years rolled by and kOdhai grew up like a beautiful mullai creeper(kodi); Along with that, her bhakti for kannan too exponentially grew up and she longed to see him and be blessed by him. Her love for the Lord was so much that she even wished to marry him. She took a vow to marry him only and could not think of getting married to any other person. She even dreamt of him coming to her like a male elephant adorned with pattu and peethAmbharam for the Great marriage with kOdhai. She spent her time always with such dreams of SenkaN thirumAl holding her hands and "agni valam". PeriyAzhwAr seeing all this got worried as to how he could make his darling daughter accomplish her wish(when it is not just impossible for anyone to marry the Lord).

Once, periyAzhwAr as usual prepared garlands of flowers and thuLasis and kept them in a safe, clean place and came out. KOdhai, seeing such beautiful garlands, thought for a while, "If I am going to marry only him, why should I not wear these garlands before He does?" and she did wear them. (What an apachAram for an ordinary person! But our kuzhandhai is sAkshAt BhoomAdEvi and is there any thing wrong in wearing His garlands?) She saw herself wearing the garlands one by one and admired her beauty by looking at the mirror. When she heard some footsteps, she immediately removed them and placed them as usual. When periyAzhwAr adorned the Lord with those garlands, that day the Lord looked exquisitely beautiful and there was even a smile on his lips. The garlands were spreading an excellent sughandham throughout the temple and every one was talking about the speciality of garlands that day. PeriyAzhwAr did not know why on that day it was so different and special when there was nothing extraordinary he did on that day. It was same flowers; same thuLasi and same way of preparations. Why then all this good smell and beauty? He did not know. (We know.).

This continued everyday. Kodhai wore them secretly and saw herself; Lord enjoyed wearing them with great amount of happiness and satisfaction with good smell. No one knew why. One day on a krishna jayanthi day, periyAzhwAr saw kOdhai wearing the garland and he got terribly angry and depressed; felt very much sad and hurt and with lots of sorrow and "vEdhanai" asked her" kOdhaiyE, my child, why did you do such a mahA pApam? Is it not meant for the Lord, Sriman nArAyaNan? How can you impurify by your wearing them, my child?". Kodhai replied with regret and justification" appA, When there is Sriman NarayaNan is in my heart I wished to see him wearing them; Will the Lord get angry by a bhakthA wearing it?". She was welled with tears with the feeling of guilt and periyAzhwAr's heart melted seeing his darling child crying. He lightly hugged her and consoled her saying "Not that, kOdhai, This is meant for the God our Lord, Will it not become impure by our wearing it, kaNmaNi.. Okay. Do not

worry.. Do not do this again. Today I will make another garland. Let it become waste. Don't cry." He made another set of garland and adorned the Lord and that day there was no smell; no beauty and no brightness on His face; nor there was any smile on His lips, too. The bhattars (archakAs) were also confused.

PERiyAzhwAr felt sad that he became angry with his sweet child that day for the first time and the Lord also did not look well with the second set of garlands. He had a restless sleep and just before dawn, Govindhan appeared in his dream. He opened His red beautiful coral lips and said" My dearest vishNuchittarE! PeriyAzhwArE!, BhattarpirAn!, For singing paamaalai(pAsurams) and wearing my poomaalai(garlands) only, kOdhai appeared as your daughter and that is what I love to wear, too. She has ruled over me with her paamaalai and poomaalai and hence, shall be called "**AandAL**" hereafter. Do not try to stop her from wearing the garlands. She should continue wearing them." PeriyAzhwAr woke up and realised kOdhai's perumai and greatness. He became excited greatly thrilled to know that she is the one who ruled the Lord and called her " ANdALE!". He explained everything to her and AndAL's face became red with "vedkam"(shyness) and blushed. She became widely known as "Soodikkoduttha sudar kodi".

AndAL wrote **TiruppAvai** (30 verses) as a nOnbu to perform prapatti to the Lord and seek refuge at His Lotus feet. There were great seers who came later appreciated the depths of this philosophical composition of AndAL. When periyAzhwAr brought marriage discussion to kOdhai, she mentioned only Govindhan's name as Her groom. PeriyAzhwAr knew well of her intentions, since he himself was the culprit for his bringing her up only with kannan's thinking at all times. He also knew that Sri AranganAthan was her heartthrob who stole her heart. He was rightfully worried as to how it is possible to get her married to the Almighty. His worry and burden increased day by day as much as Sri AndAL's love for the Lord increased.

The Lord appeared in periyAzhwAr's dream and asked him to come to Sri Rangam the next day. He also appeared in the king Pandyan vallabhan's dream and asked him to arrange to bring AndAL and periyAzhwAr to Sri Rangam with full honours. Next day the King along with his parivArangal, Srirangam kOil archakAs, the chief officers, ministers, all people of Sri villiputthoor, thronged at periyAzhwAr's house. Palanquin, kudai(umbrella), kavari, temple elephant and Royal elephant were all brought to bring the blessed great father and the daughter. The ladies beautified the already beautiful lloking AndAL with pattu, ponnagai, maNI, etc.,. PeriyAzhwAr and vrajai brought kOdhai slowly lovingly and affectionately to the palanquin. Sri AndAL boarded and sat down in the palanquin, symbolifying

"peNmayin ilakkaNam". Throughout the way there were arches of flowers and decorations and festive looks. People thronged to see the blessed Beauty of Villiputthoor. (How nice it would have been, sister and brothers.- How great our Sri AndAL would have looked in such an attire with the pretty face getting prettier with "nANam".) They reached Sri Rangam and the temple. They were guided straight to the Sanctum sanctorum, the sannidhi of Thiruvarangan. Our kOdhai stepped into the inner court, looked at him and His face and immediately merged and united with the Lord as a JOTHI (a light).

PeriyAzhwAr and Vrajai were saddened with terrible grief and were crying heavily for having missed their darling daughter to the Lord. Even though periyAzhwAr knew all bhakti and vEdha poruL, etc., etc., he could not control his tears for the separation from his dearest kOdhai.

**"Oru magaLai udaiyEn; ulagam niRaindha pugazhAl |
ThirumagaL pOl vaLarthEn senkaNmAl dhAn koNdupOnAn ||"**

(meaning: Only one daughter I had; The one who became very famous (with her love for Lord); I brought her up like mahAlakshmi; (Now I have lost her;) That Red lotus eyed Lord has snatched her from me) (Poor periyAzhwAr. We can really feel his feelings and sadness. Those who have sisters and daughters will know the feelings; More so when the daughter will not even come home for thalai DeepAvaLi or delivery, etc., She has gone for ever!)

periyAzhwAr and vrajai felt old suddenly for having lost the child. With the help of the king, he consecrated an AndAL statue in Sri Villiputthoor and till last day he was doing his usual kanikaryam of Malai to Sri VadabhathrasAyeey but with a heavy heart thinking of kOdhai always.

**pAthagangaL theerkkum paramanadi kAttum*/
vEdham anaitthukkum vitthAgum *- kOdhai thamizh/
ayyaindhum ainshum aRiyAdha mAnidarai/
vaiyam sumappathum vambhu./**

(The one which removes all our sins and shows the feet of The Lord; Equal to all vEdAs and even the essence of all vEdAs; they are the THIRTY verses of ThiruppAvai sung by kOdhai; and if one does not know that, he (or she) is a BURDEN to the earth.- Oh my dearest sisters and brothers, Please make it a point to recite these excellent 30 verses every morning and be blessed by Sri ANdAL,

who is none other than Bhoomi pirAtti and can only save us from our samsaeric afflictions.)

PeriyAzhwAr thiruvadigaLE saraNam
AndAL thiruvadigaLE saraNam

Thondaradippodi Azhwar

This biography is about ThoNdaradippodiAzhwAr, who called himself as "the Dust at the feet of BhagavataIs", was born to a vedic brahmin by name, vedavisarathar in Thirumandangudi in the month of Margazhi and in "kEttai" nakshathram, in the family of sOzhiya vaishnava (who had their "kudumi" (tuft) on the top front portion and not behind); He was an incarnation of vanamAlA (Divine Garland of Lord Maha vishnu) and he was named "Vipranarayana". He was taught Tamil, Sanskrit, vedas, upanishds, etc., at an early age and he mastered them with no effort and shone like a bright *tEjasvi*. He was also well versed in writing and singing Tamil poetry and was fully well versed in Shastras. He had no pride (vidhya garvam) and was humble and modest to the core and hence, he was respected by everyone in the locality.

He became highly devoted to Sriman Narayana and he took a vow to stay as a bachelor throughout his life so that he could devote his full time and energy to perform kankaryam to the Lord Sriya: patih. Like periyAzhwAr, Vipranarayana too was interested only in poomalai kankaryam. He migrated to Srirangam (which he was longing to visit) after his father's death) and he made a beautiful nandhavanam with nice trees to give shadows and cool breeze, flower creepers which yield excellent sugandha flowers, which can be offered to Sriman Narayana, like, Lotus, karunkuvalai, Alli(lily), Thulasi, etc., stream of water flowing in the middle as an offshoot of Cauveri where swans swim gracefully, and so on and so on. It was a serene divine atmosphere in the Nandhavanam and our Vipranarayana stayed there within the garden in a small hermitage. It used to allure anybody walking down there to visit and get a divine experience. Not only that, our Vipranarayana's singing pAsurams in praise of Arangan along with the sruthi of bees and birds humming add beauty to the place.

Every day our AzhwAr gets up in the wee hours, takes a holy dip in nearby Cauveri, applies bright TirumaN kAppu, carries out NityakarmAnushtAnangal, plucks the flowers and Thulasi leaves, makes beautiful garlands, and takes them to Arangan for adorning Him. He enjoys when archakAs place them on the Lord and he stands stupefied by the inexplicable beauty of The Black Emerald; He melts with tremendous amount of Bhakti rasam generated by the sowndharyam of the Lord and enjoys His ThirumEni which is like a big huge mountain; Red Coral lips and mouth(PavaLacchevvAi); Red Lotus eyes; He addresses the Lord:"O Achutha! There is no enjoyment which is equal to admiring your such beauty. Even you give me a post of Indra to rule the Indra lokam and enjoy that position, I still DO NOT NEED them; I just want to serve your feet!". Such a great AzhwAr is he!

The Lord wanted some fun (Leela krishnan); One day, two sisters were coming back after performing a dance performance in front of Chozha king and were attracted by the beauty of our AzhwAr's nandhavanam. When they saw him closing his eyes and meditating on the Lord, they were captivated by his tEjas and charm. He ignored their beauty. Especially the more beautiful younger sister, by name devadevi got more offended and in fact, challenged the other sister that she would make our AzhwAr her slave with her beauty. In spite of her sister's warning and caution not to enter into such an apacharam and endanger herself, deva devi was adamant and decided to embark on it. Disguised and dressed as a sannyasini, she requested him to accept her service to him at his place. Unaware of the plot, he agreed; However he did not let her stay inside his hermittage. He maintained the distance and was as usual performing his kainkaryams unaffected by her presence. She was desperate and felt sad that she was getting nowhere near her vow. One day, when it rained heavily she got drenched and was shivering. Vipranarayana could not say no for her coming into his hermitage (which he avoided till then) and devadevi slowly aroused his sensual desires and our poor Vipranarayanar was hooked!. She virtually made him a slave for her beauty and he forgot all sorts of kainkaryam and singing. His thoughts were only about devadevi and he became so engrossed in his desire for her that he could not bear even a moment separation from her.

When she achieved what she wished, she went back to her place in uttamarkoil (near SriRangam). Her mother didnot allow Vipranarayana to see her unless he brought some money, true to their profession (which he did not have naturally). Vipranarayana felt isolated and was heavily lamenting the separation from devadevi and did not know what to do. In the meanwhile, our Lord Tiruvarangan felt it was enough for Him to playwith His bhakta and hence, appeared as a servant of Vipranarayana calling Himself "Azhagiya manavala dasan" and went to deva

devi's house. He handed over the Big Golden vessel (Thanga vattil) saying that Vipranarayana asked him to give this to her. devadevi's mother went in search of our Vipranarayanar and let him meet her daughter (without telling him why she allowed now; AzhwAr, too did not ask). Next morning, the archakas found one of the "vattils" missing in the Lord's Sannidhi and immediately informed the king. The servant maid of deva devi informed in the meanwhile other homes where she used to work for about this Golden vattil in deva devi's house and the news reached the king. The king after knowing the story arrested our Vipranarayanar without listening to his pleas that he was not at all aware of any Golden vattil; nor did he have any servant working for him, since he himself was so poor. No amount of request or plea helped and he landed up in a dark cell! There he realised everything; his mistakes, his follies, his apacharams of not performing kankaryams to the Lord etc..

The Lord appeared in the king's dream and narrated the whole incident and said that Vipranarayana, His dearest Bhakta, was innocent and he was at no fault at all. Immediately, the king released Vipranarayana and prostrated at his feet and begged for his pardon. Vipranarayana felt greatly moved by the Lord's mercy and daya and sang pAsurams full of bhakti . Having gone through a traumatic experience with devadevi, he never looked back and since then, he became a staunch bhakta and called himself the dust at the feet of bhaktas (ThoNdaradippodi AzhwAr). He composed two poems namely., **Thirumalai** (a garland for the Lord) and **ThiruppaLLiyezhucchi** (waking up the Lord). His pAsurams are really excellent marvellous compositions and one is certain to get moved by the bhakti and longing for the Lord Ranganatha. He did not sing any other sthala ; He sang only in praise of SriRangan.

Before concluding Just one look at one of his GREAT PASURAMS and let us get blessed by Him.

**"OorilEn kANiyillai; uRavu maRRu oruvar illai;/
pAril nin pAtha moolam paRRilEn parama moorthee;/
kAroLi vaNNanE (en) kaNNanE! kadharuginREn;/
AruLar kaLaikaN amma! arngamA nagaruLAnE!/"**

Meaning: I have no place; no properties; no relatives; none other than you; I know only your Lotus feet; O Lord of Blue hued sky colour! You only are my refuge. Can you not hear my cries? Is there any one else to save me except you?"

An excellent pAsuram and how aptly it matches with our lives! May Lord Sri Ranganatha and His AzhwAr ThoNdaradippodiAzhwAr shower Their grace and blessings on us, poor mortals, to help us get rid of this vicious circle of samsara sagaram.

ThoNdaradippodiAzhwAr thiruvadigaLe saraNam

Thiruppana Azhwar

On a Kaisika EkAdasi day in the month of kArthigai, our ThiruppANazhwAr, an incarnation of Sri vatsa mark, the mole on Lord's Chest, where Sri MahAlakshmi resides, appeared (as an "ayOnijA", one who is not born of mortal beings) and was picked up and brought up by a childless pANar couple who belong to pANar caste (untouchable "Harijan" caste)(in uRaiyoor near SriRangam on the other side of river kAuvEri at Tirucchirappalli). PANars were known for their sweet voice and singing in praise of BhagawAn Sriman NarayaNan.

Our pANan also grew up singing in praise of Arangan. He used to come daily to the banks of River KauvEri and stand there and sing for hours together in trance enjoying the beauty of Srirangam temple from afar and imagining the Lord's ThirumEni deeply(whom he had not seen since pANars were not allowed to even enter the temple).

On one such morning, the temple chief priest by name "sAranga muni" (known as muni for his devotion and piety towards the Lord Arangan) came to the River bank to collect water for NamperumAL's Thirumanjanam(Sacred Bath of Archa moorthy). When he saw one pANan standing on the way, since he belonged to untouchable category(as per the traditions existed then), sAranga muni ordered him to give way and go away from that place. Our bhAgavatA was totally lost in his world of Bhajan. sAranga muni shouted angrily and even threw a small stone at him to make him come to senses(!). The stone hit him on his forehead and it started bleeding! Our pANan realized his blunder and apologised to muni and left the place immediately feeling sorry for his action towards the priest of Arangan. Muni came back to the temple and found the Lord's forehead bleeding and muni was totally astonished and shocked. He felt really sorry for throwing a stone at that pANan and recognised his apachAram. The entire place came to know of the

bleeding scene from Lord's idol; but not aware of the reason. During his restless sleep, Arangan appeared and ordered the priest to bring His bhaktA "pANAn" (whom he had scolded and wounded that day) to the temple as a prAyaschittam for his apachAram to His bhaktA. Loka sArangha muni realised the greatness of PANan and the next morning he rushed to the river bank. He narrated the entire incident to pANan and prostrated to pANan pleading for his pardon. pANan was very much embarassed and was deeply moved by the Lord's grace and dayA on him. But he refused to enter into the temple as he did not want to spoil the purity and sanctity of the earth at Sri rangam. He said that he was not fit to set his foot in the Holy place. Immediately muni carried our "pANan" on his shoulders! (Dearest bhAgavatOttamALs, our muni is also a great person to immediately realise his mistake and did all necessary things to do prAyaschittam incuding carrying the pANan on his shoulders knowing fully well of the superficial caste and untouchablity rules existed in the society. We wish we too are blessed with such mentality to do immediate prAyachittams for all our day to day apachArams without bothering about what others will think of such actions).

Our pANan was carried by Sarangha muni and was brought to Srirangam RanganAthar sannidhi (the Sanctum sanctorum). People thronged to witness this great scene (of a high caste individual none other than the Chief priest bringing on his shoulders the lowest caste pANan to the sannidhi and everyone was moved by Lord's greatness. Our pANan throughout the journey on muni's shoulders was having his eyes closed since 1. he was highly embarassed and 2. he was greatly moved by His daYA and His mercy with which he has been blessed to enter into the temple, which otherwise would have been impossible. That is the reason pANan is called MunivAhanar even today. (Sri vEdAntha Desikan wrote a Sanskritized Tamil commentary in four verses called "Muni vAhana Bhogam".)

On reaching the inner sannidhi of Arangan where the Majestic Lord Sri Rangan, the Black Emerald is having His Yoga NidrA and on seeing that Eternally Beautiful, Merciful Lord's ThirumEni our AzhwAn PANan got down and stood with folded hands glued to each other; faced the Lord and was looking at His entire Soiwlabhya ThirumEni. He thoroughly enjoyed His mEni azhaghu and sang TEN EXCELLENT PASURAMS THEN AND THERE FOR WHICH THERE IS NO COMPARISON AND PARALLEL. Out of 4000 pAsurams, this ThiruppANazhwAr sang just ten! and those ten are RATHINANGAL. One should recite these TEN PASURAMS dialy and should atleast be blessed with one millionth enjoyment of our Sri Rangan's ThirumEni azhaghu. All subsequent seers and AchAryAs greatly pais regards to these pAsurams and ThiruppANazhwAr. (Sri vEdAntha Desikan composed BhagavadhyAna sOpAnam on similar lines

admiring Lord Arangan's ThirumEni azhaghu- One can see in the top verse mentoned herein at the beginning of these posts, VedAntha Desikan refers to PANAN as "NAMPAANANATHAN" (our pANanAthan)).

At the tenth pAsuram (the end) our ThiruppANazhwar says: "Lord RanganAthA is the Supreme Sovereign of the Whole World and all the residents therein; He, who is of the Black Colour and the Nature of (merciful) clouds; who ate the stolen butter with his mouth and his sweet hands; who has stolen my mind and the heart fully; and HAVING LOOKED AND ENJOYED HIS BEAUTY (I swear) my eyes can NOT see and will never see any thing ELSE;" With that excellent pAsuram OUR THIRUPPANAZHWAR merged and united with the Lord Sri Ranganathar.

(Simply great AzhWar, Isn't he?-

Please recite these 10 pAsurams daily after bath in front of your Lord; Just get up 10 minutes early; Please read the meanings of these 10 pAsurams available in Bhakti Archives and appreciate and enjoy the richness of these pAsurams - I remember to have read Sri V.Sadagopan's post on the meaning of ThiruppANazhwar's 10 GREAT pAsurams; However, If you need I can reproduce for all your benefits as a kainkaryam to BhagavathALs. Please let me know)

ThiruppANazhwar thiruvadigaLE saranam

Thirumangai Azhwar

ThiruvAli nAdu was part of ChOzhA kingdom. There, Ali nAdAr (belonged to the fourth caste), an Army General (ThaLapathi) of ChozhA king earned the king's goodwill and respect with his devoted work. He and his wife, vallitthiru were blessed with a beautiful male child, whom they named neelan (due to his dark (neela mEga) colour. He was born in the year nala, on a karigai mAsam, kritigai nakshathram, full moon day and was an incarnation of the Lord's SARngam (Divine bow). Neelan grew up a shrewd smart boy, learning Tamizh and Sanskrit and mastered them; became well versed in sword fight(vAL payiRchi), vil viddhai with, Horse riding, elephant riding, etc. He grew up a young, intelligent, smart, healthy, strong, handsome lad (and yet simple and modest with a religious mind

like his parents) and not surprisingly, people liked him very much. When Neelan's father got old, the chOzhA king, having heard about Neelan, appointed Neelan as the Army General(ThaLapathi). He was agile, dynamic, young and was good at battle fields; and hence captured the neighbouring states; The king was immensely pleased and presented him a small portion of his kingdom, a place called Thirumangai, as a tribute and made him a KING! (He was thereafter called "**Thirumangai mannan**".) That was his first success. And that became the cause for his slipping from all bhakti, devotion, religion etc., etc., and the success of reaching the SimhAsanam at such a young age, (with no chance of becoming a king, otherwise) went to his head. He took to all vices; He was deeply caught in seeking sensual pleasures. The parent were helpless and could do nothing but pray to the Lord to correct their son.

The Lord Sriman nArAyaNA did listen to them. He had organised such a situation that made a dEvamAdhu by name sumangalai(who was performing the kainkaryam of fanning(sAmaram)the Lord) to appear as the most beautiful daughter of a local doctor in Tirumangai, in the name "kumudhavalli" (based on a "sApam" given by kapila muni for her laughing at an ugly face and coarse voice of his disciple). Being an incarnate of dEvamAdhu, she was exquisitely pretty and could attract even a recluse. Our "new" king, Thirumangai mannan heard of her alluringly feminine beauty and wished to see her immediately. When he saw her, he was so much cativated by her darting glance at him, he fell head over heels for her and proposed to marry her. Kumudhavalli, through her father, stipulated two prerequisites for him to qualify for marrying her. They were

1. Her husband should be a (or become a) Sri vaishNavA, wear ThirumaNkAppu on his forehead, and be a true bhaktA of Sriman NarayanaNan. (Sriman Narayanan Himself spoke through her) and
2. Her husband should feed daily 1000 (ONE THOUSAND!) vaishNava bhakthALs.

Our mannan, being intoxicated by her looks, agreed after listening to her conditions immediately. They got married.

So there he was. With a bright ThirumaNkAppu, thuLasi mAlai, he paid obeisance to Sriman Narayana. He started the annadhAnam for 1000 Sri vaishNava bhaktALs. Slowly day by day, our mannan was transferring into a true, sincere devotee of the Lord and was getting tremendous satisfaction from feeding Sri vaishNavALs daily. The enjoyment of Bhakti and BhagavatOttamAL sEvai were really experienced by Thirumangai mannan. While this was going on, the entire

"gajAnA" (treasury) was spent on the annadhAnam kankaryam. So he could not even send the "tax" which he was supposed to send to the chOzhA king every year. So, chOzhA sent a message to pay the tax; but since our mannan could not pay and sent back a reply saying that he will not be able to pay. ChOzhA king got wild and sent soldiers to bring him. Our hero sent them back effortlessly with his fighting skills. ChOzhA king himself came with a heavy army and attacked Thirumangai mannan. Even though Thirumangai mannan's army is small, he fought with tremendous skills and he won the battle. His horse went near the chOzhA king and he got down from the horse. He said: "Oh pErarasE(Big king!), I did not send the tax- I don't deny. But did I spend the money on trivial matters? It was spent for Sri VaishNavALs. How can I stop when your soldiers came to imprison me?". Our chOzhA king was hurt due to his defeat and did not listen to all this. He said, "I made you a king. I gave you all these luxuries. Now you are not even grateful. and you fought with me, too" Our mannan got hurt very badly by that "grateful" statement. He was very much grateful to chOzhA king for all that he had done. So Thirumangai mannan threw away his sword and bowed down before the king and said " Chozha manna! what a word you spoke about me! Am I ungrateful? You forgot all kingdoms which I captured for you. Now I am standing in front of you. Go ahead and do waht you wish to do with me".

The chOzhA king melted and was moved. He hugged thirumangaimannan and said "Don't worry. I know you. But we should pay respects to pErarasar-chitRarsar relation and hence, you are to send your tax within 3 days. Till then, you will be imprisoned in the perumAL temple." There was no way he could get any money and hence, he begged the Lord to help him. The Lord appeared in his dream and suggested him to go to the banks of river vEdhavathi near kanchi where he could find a big treasure of Gold coins and jewels. He narrated the dream to the chOzhA king and thirumangaimannan and few ministers went to kanchi, vEdhavathi river banks and did find a BIG TREASURE. Having heard this news, chOzhA king got up from the throne and whole heartedly bowed down to Thirumangai mannan for his bhakti and thee Lord's mercy on him. He said" I have done a great mistake of taxing a great bhakthA for a small tax issue and caused a hindrance to BhagavathALs' anna dhAna kankaryam. Please take all this treasure and let me send you back with full Royal honours. You need not insult me by paying the tax any more!". The mannan came back with more wealth and with great honours. The citizns of Thirumangai were greatly thrilled by their king and kumudhavalli was proud of her husband.

They revived their kankaryam for 1000 Sri VaishNanvALs more aggressively and attained their happiness and satisfaction as usual. Again, they found themselves left

with no wealth for the kinkaryam. With a view to keeping the promise to his beloved wife, he had to resort to highway robbery from rich people. With the booty, he continued the kinkaryam. One day The Lord Sriya: patih Sriman NarayaNan and Vishnu pathni Sri MahAlakshmi appeared on the highway as a "just married" couple with lots and lots of jewels adorned them. Our mannan turned robber heard of a new rich young couple's coming on the Highway and immediately rushed with his adiyALs. He was very happy to see Them with so many jewels and thanked God(!) for that. They also had a bag containing more ornaments. Our anti-hero demanded Them to surrender all they had. They did precisely waht was instructed to Them; all with Their katAksham on our hero. They put all their ornaments on a piece of cloth. When Thirumangai mannan tried to lift the bundle of ornaments he just could not even move it a bit! He was shocked and perplexed as to why it was so difficult to move it! He went near the Lord Sri mahAvishNu and with a fierce look into His eyes, asked Him " What is the manthram you have for lifting this bundle?. Tell me, else, I will kill you both." He threatened Them with a sword. The Lord and the PirAtti smiled with a gentle mandhahAsam. He asked Thirumangai mannan to come near him and whispered in his right ear "OM NAMO NARAYANAYA". Having heard those EIGHT SYALLABLES (AshtAksharam) right from none other than SRIYA: PATHI himself, his mind, heart became pure!. All his dirt had disappeared! He was simply electrified by the AshtAksharam. He got goose pimples all over his body; He got undescribable blissful happiness! He prostrated fullt at Their Lotus feet with eyes full of tears at Their mercy to bless him despite his shortcomings and negative qualities. They blessed him with Their karunai kataaksham. Then They disappeared. He realised His ThiruvilaiyAdal and the purpose of his birth and poured out tamizh pAsurams on the Lordas if it comes from just opened dam ("madai thirandha veLLam pOI"). He looked at the sky and kept on crying ceaselessly for Their dayA on his lowly self. His hands and the legs were shivering with tremendous amount of Bhakti and love for the Lord.

He came back galloping on his horse to narrate the entire exciting incident to the beloved kumudhavalli. Kumudhavalli, before he started even, asked him as to why his face looked so bright, serene, divine and beaming that day. He said "kumudhA, I have reached the purpose of my manushya janmam kumudhA. I have seen NARAYANA, kumudhA. (nAn kaNdu koNdEn NARAYANAnai). He was too excited to even complete his statements in a coherent manner. (After all, he has been initited by SarvEswaran Himself!). Kumudhavalli said, "Then, I have also reached the purpose of my deputation (by Lord through kapila muni)" and she narrated her story. Our AzhwAr became all the more blissful and happier to know that The Lord Sriya: pathih sent Kumudhavalli only to set him right from his

wrong path and "ThadutthAkoLLified" him. He could not control his tears and sobbed heavily at the Lord's mercy on him. Then he sang GREAT PASURAMS (on NARAYANAN's name) and visited almost about 80 temples (out of 108 Divya dEsams). He built the fort and kOttai (ramparts) of Srirangam without affecting or spoiling [ThoNdaradippodiAzhwAr](#)'s nandhavanam. ("pAdi pAdi paraparappAi thirinthAr")

His compositions were :

1. Periya thirumozhi
2. Periya thirumadal
3. SiRiya thirumadal
4. Thiru nedunthANdakam (TNT)
5. Thiru KurunthANdakam(TKT)
6. Thiru vezhuk kurrirukkai.

His pAsurams are marvellous; excellent and have unsurpassed beauty in them. parAsara Bhattar made use of his TNT to win over his counter part, a advaitin scholar in his arguments and later the advaitin became his disciple 'nam jeeyar'. Sri RanganAtha himself heard and was greatly pleased with that argument reenacted from Bhattar quoting from TNT (Please read excellent posts of Sri V. SadagOpan on TNT and TKT during Feb 96 from Bhakti Archives - a real feast to each one of you).

Thirumangai AzhwAr (a KING, a person who enjoyed the bhOgams so much) walked all the way and visited almost all temples. He is simply GREAT, my dearest brothers and sisters. He is just *SUPERB AzhwAr*. His wordings are his outpourings straight from his heart.

We will conclude this post with my favourite pAsuram of this AzhwAr: Here is one of his periya thirumozhi pasurams:

**vAdinEn vAdi varundhinEn manatthaal/
perun thuyaridum idumbaiyil piRanNdhu/
koodinEn koodi iLaiyavar thammOdu/
avar tharum kalaviyE karudhi/
OdinEn Odi uyvadhOr poruLaal/
uNarvenum perumpadhan therindhu/
naadinEn nAdi nadi nAn kaNdukoNdEn/
nArAyaNA vennum nAmam.**

Being born into this body, a reservoir of profound sorrow, I am repenting, melting and crying, I am filled with pathos and self-pity; I have let myself run after beautiful women, seeking the sensual pleasures from their union; Through the grace of our Lord I have now realised that there is a greater goal and That will deliver me into eternal happiness; I have been searching for this state and have now found it in THE SWEET NAME NARAYANA.

This pASsuram will bring tears to the eyes of any Vaishnava for AzhwAr's Bhakti and love and his heart longing for the lotus feet of our Lord Narayana.

Thirumangai AzhwAr thiruvadigALe saraNam