

SRI POIGAI AZHWAR'S
MUDHAL THIRUVANDHADI
(Text with a Free Translation and Commentary)



N.Rajagopalan

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by

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DEDICATION

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER SMT. N.JAYALAKSHMI AND
FATHER SRI. T.R.NARASIMHAN**

Foreword

In Tamil heritage, the contributions made by the Azhwar Saints of Tamil Na'du are particularly noteworthy for their poetic beauty and rich philosophic content. The life stories of what is known about them as well as their poetic works reveal to us their remarkable personalities. They were born in and around the regions adjoining the rivers Ta'mirabarani, Pala'r and Ka'veri in Tamilna'du. They were all from different walks of life and belonged to different social strata. The common link between their works is their immense love of the divine. They brought the philosophic teachings of vedas and upanishads to the common folks in the vernacular and spoke out against the blind ritualistic practices. They were revolutionaries in some ways and helped to reduce human exploitation.

The transcendental reality was not merely an abstract principle or consciousness for them and the life on this earth was not just an illusion. The reality to them was very personal and was no other than Sriman Narayana meaning "The support and the abode of hosts of souls" with all the glorious, flawless and auspicious attributes. To them, the entire cosmos and all the sentient and the insentient entities in it were alive and pulsing with the underlying divinity of Narayana representing His body and He being the inner controller or the soul. The deity in the temple was not just an icon but very much alive and personal. The outpourings of their love and their personal experience of the Lord came out in the form of the most divine poetry. Azhwars point out very clearly in their works that the most important attribute of the Lord is His immense compassion ("nirhetuka kripa") represented by Sri, the divine mother forever residing in His heart and most easily accessible and Who helps in the ultimate redemption of the embodied souls. Thus Narayana is always known as Sriman Narayana.

The poetic works of these great personalities forming about four thousand verses called the Divya Prabandham have been termed the Tamil veda and held in great esteem by teachers and thinkers alike due to their rich philosophic content. They formed

the basis and inspiration for the philosophy of Visishta'dvaitam (Qualified non-dualism) propounded by Sri Ramanuja.

Many learned scholars have written extensive commentaries on their works bringing out many precious ideas and thoughts hidden as gems in their verses. These commentaries allow us to appreciate and understand their works better. However understanding these commentaries and their vivid explanations require certain proficiency in both Tamil and Sanskrit. Modern students are often not too familiar with the terminology and word usage of the commentators which can also pose significant difficulties. In addition, the modern era actually has thrown us all over the globe in search of economic prospects and left the skills in native languages in many of us to be far less than desired. Thus we need to look for various other aids such as translations to help us. But translations need to take into account the inspired commentaries of the great teachers and scholars who have made a tremendous contribution in this field.

Such a nice task has been undertaken with reference to the work of Sri Poigai Piran by the author N. Rajagopalan in the book entitled "Poigai Piran's Mudal Thiruvandadhi- Text with a free translation and commentary". Sri Poigai Azhwar is usually listed as the first of the three Mudal Azhwars and as such can be considered the foremost of the twelve Azhwars. His work "Mudal Thiruvandadhi" that is available to us consists of one hundred verses set in the style of Andadhi which means the ending word (or its syllable) of the first verse forms the beginning word of the next verse. The one hundredth verse in turn hooks up to the first verse forming a lovely garland of verses maintaining the eternal thread of continuity. The poetry is captivating and the words chosen by the Azhwar are precise and precious. The beauty of the poetry lends itself to musical arrangement and singing which add to their enjoyment besides facilitating ease of recall. When the meaning is understood, then the recitation or singing

of these verses can become a nice method of dynamic meditation for any aspirant of the divine.

The author has provided an elegant and succinct rendering of a free translation of these unique one hundred verses of the Azhwar using the interpretation of Sri Periyavachan Pillai as given in his commentary. The work captures the meaning well and provides additional commentary which should help all beginners and those less versed in Tamil to have a nice glimpse into the richness and beauty of the philosophic poetry of the Azhwar.

May the grace of the Azhwars and the Lord ever always shine on my brother Sri. Rajagopalan and encourage him in similar enriching endeavours.

Respectfully Yours,

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PREFACE

Poigai Azhwar's 'Mudhal Thiruvandha'thi' forms part of the 'NAALAAAYIRA DIVYA PRABHANDHAM', the collective works of the Azhwars, who were Sri Vaishnavite saints of South India. The Azhwars were all worshippers of Lord Vishnu as the Supreme Soul (Parama'thma), and sang in praise of the Lord both as immanent in the universe and as transcendent and beyond it. They sang of Him in all His five 'pra'ka'ra's', or modes as 'ParaVa'sudeva' in Sri Vaikuntam, in 'vyuha' form in 'Kshira'bdhi', in His various 'vibhava'vatha'ra's' as Sri Rama, Krishna, etc. as 'antarya'mi' immanent in all creation and in "archa" form in the temples erected for Him. To them, God was as real and immanent in the 'archa' form as He is real and transcendent in Sri Vaikuntam.

They experienced, and articulated their experiences of, the Lord in all His glory, both in 'Nitya Vibhuti' in the transcendent form, and in the 'Lila 'Vibhuti' in the material universe, as extolled in the Upanishadic invocation, "OM, pu'rnam adah, pu'rnam idam, pu'rna't pu'rnam udacyate I pu'rnsya pu'rnam a'da'ya pu'rnam eva'vasisyate II"

The complete whole or the Supreme Absolute Truth is the complete personality of this Supreme Soul. Because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him such as this phenomenal world are also complete in themselves. Because He is the complete whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance. To the Azhwars then, God was a living presence experienced in the totality of His being and manifestation in His myriad creation, and not a mere abstraction or intellectual perception of an impersonal 'Brahman'. He lived in them and they lived in Him. or as one of the Azhwars beautifully expressed this

inextricable interrelationship, “உன்னைக் கொண்டென்னுள்
வைத்தேனென்னையுமுன்னி லிட்டேன்.”

Poigai Azhwar was the forerunner of the Azhwar tradition ,who hailed from

Kanchipuram.Poigai Azhwar,along with Budat Azhwar who was born in Mahabalipuram, and Pei Azhwar born in Mylapore in Chennai,are referred to as ‘Mudhal Azhwars’,and were born on successive days in the same month and year.

They came together for the first time in a place called Thirukkovalur,in the front passage of a house usually called ‘dehali’ or ‘rayzhi’,while seeking shelter from rain on a stormy night.As the space therein was very small, they were barely able to squeeze in there,but all the same getting to know each other and sharing their experiences of their peregrinations to various ‘divya-desa’s’.Suddenly, they felt a strange pressure in the total darkness as if there was a fourth person in their midst.Being sages they lit a light through song to find out the reason for the apparent pressure they felt.

The fourth person was none other than Sri Narayana Himself, Who had materialised in that damp,dark passage eager to share their presence and ‘anubhava’.Each of them described their experiences as they felt.Sri Poigai Azhwar sang of the entire world of matter as a lamp,the seven seas as the ghee, and the bright sun as the flame, and dedicated his song to the Lord sporting the sparkling ‘Sudarsana’’.Budat Azhwar lit the spiritual lamp dispelling the inner darkness of ‘agna‘na’, visualising his love for Narayana as the lamp, yearning as the ghee,and mind pining away in divine bliss as the wick.In the resultant light of inner awakening,the ‘self’

melted and dissolved in the Lord. Pei Azhwar who was listening to these outpourings exulted in the direct perception of Narayana in the company of His divine consort Sri,or ‘Thiru’.The Brahman of the Upanishads had revealed Itself

to them; and by their Tamil verses they restated the truths contained in the Upanishads in the language of the land, Tamil. The 'Divya Prabhandham' was thus born. Actually, Poigai Azhwar himself has referred to this incident in one of his 'pasurams'.

Poigai Azhwar's 'Mudhal Thiruvandhathi' is mellifluous poetry surcharged with great spiritual fervour, affirming the 'parathvam' of Sriman Narayana, and the body-soul relationship of the entire phenomenal world to the 'Parama Purusha', and dispelling the ignorance stemming from the mental veil of 'maya'. He has sung in ecstasy about many of the 'vibhava' 'vatha' 'ra's' like Sri Varaha, Vamana, Rama, Krishna etc. and also about

God's presence in 'archa' form in shrines like Thiruvenkatam, Sri Rangam, etc. The enchanting natural beauty of the Venkata hills and the incomparable greatness of the Lord of Thiruvenkatam find especial and frequent allusion in his verses. Thiruvenkatam is the favourite resting place of the Lord, in the description of the Azhwar, which the 'nitya suris' of Sri Vaikuntam cherish as their own, and where everyone from the vedic wise men to devout young women with sparkling eyes hasten in the predawn hours, when scattered stars are still visible on the firmament, carrying incense, flowers, and holy water. The awesome beauty of the ecology of the hills, the habitat of the dignified kurava tribe, elephants and pythons is recapitulated in vivid detail by the Azhwar, such as the imagery of the lined python rushing into its hole terrified of the sapphire-like stones strewn on the hillside thrown at the encroaching elephants by kurava people, mistaking them for stars falling from the sky, or of the elephant frozen in fright at the sight of the fire-sticks in the hands of the kurava hunters wending their way home on a dark night.

Poigai Azhwar assures us in the end that the Supreme

Being is forever with us.He that rests on the waves of the milk ocean,and is present on the Venkata hill is also there in the inner recesses of our being.In affirming this profound truth that God is forever in our hearts as 'Antarya'mi', the Azhwar establishes the essence of ' Sri Vaishnava Sidha'nta'' to the effect that the Way (upaya) is Sriman Narayan, and service at His Feet is the fruit, (upeya),(Saranam, Sarma).

This book is a small attempt in the direction of reaching out the message of the Azhwars to those interested in,but not able to savour, the treasure of their poetry in original.

The pages that follow contain a free translation of Sri Poigai Azhwar's 'Mudhal Thiruvandhathi'.The notes that are appended to the translation incorporate supporting references and annotations based on the salient aspects of the commentary of Sri Peria Va'cha'n Pillai,the famous 'Vya'kya'nakarta'' of 'Divya Prabhandham',as recapitulated by Ubhayaveda'nta Sri S.Krishnaswami Iyengar Swami (Sudarsanar) , Editor of 'Sri Vaishnava Sudarsanam'. I am grateful to Dr.N.Ranganathan, Toronto Canada for his kind foreword.I also place on record my gratitude to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for their financial assistance enabling the publication of this work. I am also grateful to Sarvasri B.G.Kukillaya, P.S.Vasu and and their staff at Universal Print Systems for all their help in the design of the cover and format of the book and preparation of the inputs.

30th September,1999.

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ஸ்ரீ :

ஸ்ரீமதே ராமானுஜாய நம:
ஆழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம் .

பொய்கையாழ்வார் அருளிய முதல் திருவந்தாதி.

தனியன் - **Invocation (Single Invocatory Verse.)**

கைதைசேர் பூம்பொழில்சூழ் கச்சிநகர் வந்துதித்த
பொய்கைப் பிரான் கவிஞர் போரேறு - வையத்
தடியவர்கள் வாழ வருந்தமிழ் நூற்றந்தாதி
படிவிளங்கச் செய்தான் பரிந்து

Born in Ka'nchinagar set amidst beautiful gardens lush with wild flowers, Poigai Pira'n who is akin to a king bull among poets, lighted up this earth, in his compassion, with his hundred-verse magnificent Tamizh Poem, so that all devotees of the Lord may live their lives meaningfully.

This verse called 'thanian', in Tamil, literally meaning a single introductory verse about the author, was composed by Sri Mudhalia'nda'n in praise of Poigai Piran who was born in the sacred city of Kancheepuram, or Kanchi once known as the 'Satyavratha Kshetra', where Lord Brahma is believed to have performed an 'Asvamedha yagha'. Sri Nigama'nta Maha Desika, who has composed a hymn of ten verses called the 'Veghasethu Stotram', in praise of the deity of this 'Kshetra', has hailed Kanchi as 'முக்தி தரும் நகரேழில் முக்கியமாம் கச்சி', (the most preeminent among the seven most sacred places), in his Tamil hymn 'Adaikkalappathu'. Poigai Piran, a reincarnation of Sriman Narayana's 'Pa'nchajanyam', was born in the Tamil month of 'Aippasi', under the star 'Thiruvonam', in a lotus tank adjacent to the 'Yathotka'ri Sannidhi'. The Lord here reclining on A'dhishesha literally followed the dictates of His devotee Sri Thirumazhisai Pira'n, a contemporary of Poigai Piran, and has

accordingly come to be endearingly referred to as ‘Sonnnavannam Seidha Perumal’-literally, ‘The Lord Who did as He was told’.Poigai Piran was the precursor of the Azhwar tradition , and the eldest of the first three Azhwars, respectively called Poigai Azhwar , Budat Azhwar,and Pei Azhwar, born on successive days in the same month. All the three Azhwars share another unique feature in common in that each of them composed a ‘prabhandam’, of hundred verses in ‘andhati’ style, that is the last word or syllable of the earlier verse being repeated in the beginning of the next verse. Poigai Piran’s ‘Prabhandam’ has been commended by Sri Thiruvarangathamuthana’r, in his ‘Sri Ramanuja Noottrandhati’, as a bright light containing the essence of the ‘Sruthis’,and mellifluous Tamil, which dispelled the affliction of spiritual darkness.

SRI DESIKA’S INVOCATION.

Sri Veda’nta Desika, in his Tamil work ‘Prabhanda Sa’ram, has dedicated the following verse to Poigai Piran.

அருள்மிகுத்தொரு வடிவாய்க்கச்சி தன்னில்
 ஐப்பசிமாதத்திருவோணத்து நாளில்
 பொருள்மிகுத்த மறைவிளங்கப் புவியாருய்யப்
 பொய்கைதனில் வந்துதித்தபுனிதா, முன்னாள்
 இருள்தனில் தண் கோவலிடைகழிச் சென்று
 இருவருடன் நிற்கவுமாலிடை நெருக்கத்
 திருவிளக்காமெனும் வையந்தகளிநூறும்
 செழும்பொருளாவெனக்கருள் செய்திருந்தநீயே.

Thou Sacred Being,That materialised on this earth in a lotus pond in the city of Kanchi,under the star ‘Thiruvonam’ in the month of ‘Aippasi’, the very Embodiment of benign grace, to enlighten the truths contained in the Vedas, for the liberation of the denizens of this world. With that purpose, on a stormy night a long time ago, Thou stood in a small dark corridor of a house in Thirukkovalur with two other kindred souls, when Lord Narayana with His Consort Lakshmi wedged in Thy midst, craving Thy physical closeness. Then, Did not Thou shower Thy grace on me in the form of Thy poetry of One hundred verses,starting ‘Vaiyam Thagaliya”, that is verily the Light That guides us to steer clear through this ‘samsa’ra’?

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS.

According to historical belief, the first three Azhwars came together for the first time on a stormy night, seeking shelter in an anteroom of a house in Thirukkovalur, near the shrine of Thrivikrama, which is a 'svayam vyaktha kshetra' in Tamil Nadu. The anteroom was a small place, as it usually is, in South Indian houses of olden times, as it mostly serves as a passage or corridor, with a raised platform on one side which serves as a couch. So this anteroom was just about spacious enough for one person to lie down. Poigai Piran who was the first to seek shelter in the house, was lying down on the platform, when Budat Azhwar arrived and knocked on the door to ask if he could find shelter from the storm. Poigai Piran let him in with the response that the room was big enough for the two of them to sit together. While they both were seated thus in the room, immersed in sharing their mutual experiences about their peregrinations to various 'divya kshetra's', Pei Azhwar, knocked on the door, and asked if he too could find some shelter from the rain and wind. The two Azhwars opened the door to invite him to join them, saying that the room which was big enough for one person to lie down, and two persons to sit comfortably, was still sufficient for all the three of them to stand. The three Azhwars thus came to be standing in the confined space sharing their thoughts and experiences about their visits to various 'divya desa's', when suddenly, they felt jostled and detected the presence of a fourth person amidst them. That was none other than Sri Narayana Himself in the company of His Consort, the Divine Mother. The Azhwars wanted to find out who it was that was crowding in on them. Their quest and discovery made them break out in song in the shape of the first three 'Prabhandams', respectively known as the 'Mudhal Thiruvandhati', 'Iranda'm Thiruvandhati', and 'Moonra'm Thiruvandhati', of hundred verses each.

Poigai Piran, articulating the spiritual realisation culminating from his 'parabhakthi', sang about the body-soul relationship of the whole manifest universe to the Lord, and compared it to a light which helped him to pay his obeisance to the Lord's Feet. Budat Azhwar found that light inside his mind as a dimension of the inner wisdom born out of his spiritual experience, which is referred to as 'paragnanam'. From this flowed his 'Thiruvandhati', in praise

of Sriman Narayana. Pei Azhwar, who was listening to these outpourings reached the state of 'parama bhakthi', a state in which the experience of the Lord and the absence thereof, spells the difference between life and death, and exulted in the direct perception of Sriman Narayana in the company of His Consort, in his 'Thiruvandhati'. It must be pointed out, however, that their experiences do not constitute gradations in their intensity but only a variation in the outer expression of their experiences. The substratum of that experience was the same in each of them, viz., Sriman Narayana.

MUDHAL THIRUVANDHATHI

1. வையந் தகளியா வார்கடலே நெய்யாக
வெய்ய கதிரோன் விளக்காக-செய்ய
சுடராழி யானடிக்கே சூட்டினேன் சொன்மாலை
இடராழி நீங்குகவே யென்று.

**This world is a lamp, the surrounding oceans the butter oil,
And the blazing sun its wick; Let me dedicate my garland of
Verses at the Feet of the Lord who sports the sparkling
'Sudarsana', so the suffering of this world may pass.**

This verse underscores the 'sesha-seshi', (body-soul) relationship of this universe to Sriman Narayana. By visualising the world as a lamp lighted by the sun, the Azhwar draws our attention to the underlying truth that this manifest universe is controlled by a Supreme Being at Whose will, the surrounding waters which constitute three-fourths of the world's surface do not deluge the land surface, and the sun and the stars remain fixed to the firmament twenty-four hours of the day, day after day, year after year, for thousands of years, true to the Upanishadic pronouncement 'பிஷோதேதி ஸர்ய:'. Thus, the Azhwar establishes the fact that it is the Lord Who is the ultimate cause of the universe with the Supreme Intelligence and the Power to create and control the universe with its myriad worlds, beings and things, and capable of protecting them, by destroying all hostile forces however mighty.

2. என்று கடல்கடைந்த தெவ்வுலகம் நீரேற்றது
ஒன்றுமதனை யுணரேன் நான் -- அன்று
தடைத்துடைத்துக் கண்படுத்த வாழி இதுநீ
படைத்திடந் துண்டுமிழ்ந்த பார்.

When was it that Thou churned the oceans or for what world Thou Accepted the offering of water? Where was I, without witnessing all this, When Thou built and destroyed the bridge across the ocean, or reverted to Thy slumber on the Ocean? Is it not the same world that Thou created and retrieved from under the oceans, the same that Thou swallow at 'pralaya', and reinvent after aeons have passed?

In this pasuram, Poigai Piran wonders why anyone should indulge in second-guessing the 'parathvam' or the ultimate overlordship of Sriman Narayana, when the direct proof is there right before us, this earth which bears the repeated imprints of the Lord in His various 'Vibhava avatha'ra's', as Sri Varaha, Vamana, and Sri Rama. As Vamana, He accepted the offering of water from Mahabali symbolically in acceptance of the the three steps of land space that He had asked for from him. As Sri Rama, He built the bridge across the ocean to Sri Lanka, and destroyed it after decimating Ravana and his army in the battle-field. As Sri Varaha, He delved deep down into the ocean in hot pursuit of the demon Hiranyaksha who had hidden the earth under the ocean, and retrieved it after killing him. To Azhwar's fertile imagination all this looks just like yesterday, because the waves and surf of the oceans look just the same to his eyes, as aeons ago.

3. பாரளவு மோரடிவைத் தோரடியும் பாருடுத்த
நீரளவுஞ் செல்ல நிமிர்ந்ததே-சூருருவின்
பேயளவு கண்ட பெருமான் ! அறிகிலேன்
நீயளவு கண்ட நெறி.

Oh Lord, How can I define or delineate the dimensions of Thy Deeds?

Did they not meet their end, who imagined they did?

**With one Step, Thou outdistanced the ends of this earth,the
Other scaled the limits of the surrounding oceans. With a mere
suck, Thou set limit to the life of the demoness who came in
the garb of a divine nymph.**

In this pasuram, Poigai Piran's heart continues to dwell on the magic spell cast by Thrivikrama'vatha'ra, in which the Lord, took His giant strides, with a special grace,which has been the object of repeated glorification in the Srutis. The Vishnu Suktham, starts its prayer with a tribute to the three Steps that the Lord took, with the words, 'யதோ விஷ்ணுர்விசக்ரமே', 'இதம் விஷ்ணுர் விசக்ரமே', 'த்ரீணீபதா விசக்ரமே', etc. to describe the unique grace with which the Lord took His Steps, grace as befitting the Owner of the properties. Thinking about all this, the Azhwar's mind immerses for a moment on the Krishna'vatha'ra, in which as a tiny Baby still in the cradle, the Lord terminated with just a suck, the life of the demoness Putana who had come to suckle the Baby with poison smeared over her breasts. Can anyone dare to set any limit to the Lord's Deeds, wonders the Azhwar.

4. நெறிவாசல் தானேயாய் நின்றானை யைந்து
பொறிவாசல் போர்க்கதவஞ் சாத்தி- அறிவானாம்
ஆலமரநீழ் லறம்நால்வர்க் கன்றுரைத்த
ஆலமமர் கண்டத் தரன்.

**What of me? A long time ago,Siva of the blue neck so
turned by consuming venom, and overcoming the insurmountable
pull of the five organs of Knowledge, instructed the four sages
on the right path under the banyan tree. Yet, he barely knew
Thee, That are both the Means and the End of All existence,
Oh Lord !**

This pasuram refers to the episode of Siva in the role of Sri Dakshinamurthi, instructing the sages, Agastya, Daksha, Pulastya and Kashyapa, on the various aspects of dharma. Siva had himself attained enlightenment by meditating on Sriman Narayana, under the same banyan tree as the one under which he instructed the sages. Azhwar's message in this pasuram, is that since Narayana is both

the 'upa'ya', and the 'upeyam', it is not possible to realise Him without His grace.

5. அரன் நா ரணன் நாமம் ஆன்விடைபுள்ளுந்தி
உரை நூல் மறையுறையுங் கோயில்-வரைநீர்
கரும மழிப்பளிப்புக் கையதுவேல் நேமி
உருவமெரி கார்மேனி யொன்று.

His name is Hara the Destroyer, Thou art Narayana the ultimate Haven of All beings and things. His preferred means of carriage is the Bull, Thine Is Sri Garuda, the embodiment of Vedas. He is the subject of man-made 'Agama's', Thou are the substance of the eternal Vedas. His abode is the hard rock, Thou reside in the cool waters. His role is destruction, Thou are the Protector of All beings. His weapon is the spear, Thine is the Sudarsana. His form is like fire, Thy Form is like the cool dark cloud. But, he like everything else is Thy Body.

In this pasuram, the Azhwar drives home the point that it is Narayana, Who is the 'parama tattva'. It is not only Siva, but the whole of creation that is the 'sareera', or body of Sriman Narayana. This is evident from the 'prama'na's', which speak the truths about the creation and its Creator and Sustainer. The Vedas state, "ஸர்வ பூதாந்தராத்மா நாராயண:", "அந்தர்பஹிஸ்ச தத் ஸர்வம் வ்யாப்ய நாராயண: ஸ்தித:" ஸிவஸ்ச நாராயண:", "அந்த : ப்ரவிஷ்டஸ்ஸாஸ்தா ஜநாநாம் ஸர்வாத்மா", etc. Narayana is the Soul of all beings. Inside and outside, Narayana pervades all this. Siva is Narayana. Present inside, He is the Sustainer and Soul of all beings.

6. ஒன்றுமறந்தறியே னேத நீர் வண்ணனை நான்
இன்றுமறப்பனோ வேழைகள் -அன்று
கருவரங்கத் துட்கிடந்து கைதொழுதேன் கண்டேன்
திருவரங்க மேயான் திசை.

A long time ago, when I was entrapped inside the womb, I had witnessed the Qualities of the Lord of Srirangam, and worshipped Him. I have not through the ages forgotten any of that experience. Lo, the Poor Of the earth, who are bereft of That knowledge. How will I forget Him now Who is lying on the Ocean?

The Azhwar says that he was blessed with the experience of Sriman Narayana, when he was still in the womb of a mother, not in this birth but several countless births ago. It is said that the self who is blessed with the 'kataksham' (the witnessing of), Sri Madhusudhana, when he is being born, is a 'sa'thvika', a pure being-, and is oriented towards 'moksha phalam'. The Azhwar has not forgotten any of that experience of the Lord's 'swarupa', 'rupa', 'guna', and 'vibhuti', at any time. Would he forget it now when he is in the position of being able to instil that knowledge of 'bhagavad vishayam', in countless others caught in the vicious cycle of 'samsa'ra', with no clue whatever of their goal.?

7. திசையும் திசையுறு தெய்வமும் தெய்வத்
திசையும் கருமங்க ளெல்லாம்-அசைவில்சீர்க்
கண்ணன் நெடுமால் கடல்கடைந்த காரோத
வண்ணன் படைத்த மயக்கு.

The worlds in various directions, the deities in charge of those directions, the tasks being carried out by them in keeping with their roles—All this is the Design of His, slated to draw a mental veil, — The dark-hued Krishna resembling the ocean and the rain-clouds, of immortal auspicious qualities, The Lord with abiding love for His devotees, Who churned the ocean.

This manifest phenomenal world, the various deities who are discharging their assigned roles of creation, destruction, etc. are all a screen erected by Narayana as part of His 'lilavibhuti' or manifestation of His cosmic sport. Only those who have real love for Him, are blessed with the insight to penetrate this screen and find Him through His grace. Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita,

‘தை வீ ஹ்யேஷா குணமயீ மம மாயா தூரத்யயா,
மாமேவ யே ப்ரபத்யந்தே மாயாமேதாம் தரந்தி தே’ II (Gita,7.14.)

‘This three-fold maya (desire, hatred, and attachment), which is divinely ordained is difficult to cross. Only those who surrender unto me are able to surmount this maya’.

8. மயங்க வலம்புரி வாய்வைத்து வானத்
தியங்கு மெறிகதிரோன் றன்னை-முயங்கமருள்
தேராழி யால்மறைத்த தென் நீ, திருமாலே
போராழிக் கையால் பொருது.

**Oh Beloved of Sri ! Why didst Thou mystify the minds
of all warriors,**

**In the fierce army-filled battle-field, by blowing on
Thy ‘ Panchajanya”,**

**Engaging Bheeshma in battle by taking up the ‘Sudarsana’
in Thy hand,**

**And making the sun, in its course on the sky, disappear,
by the same ‘Chakra”.**

The Azhwar has a mild dig at the Lord by posing a question to Him in this pasuram. He asks, ‘You are known as the Satyasankalpa’. You had pledged before Duryodhana, that you would not take up arms in the Kurukshetra’ war. But how is your action of charging against Bheeshma with your Sudarsana etc. consistent with this title of ‘Satyasankalpa’? By addressing the Lord as ‘திருமால்’, the Azhwar obliquely suggests, that all this action was probably inspired by the Divine Mother, with Her overwhelming compassion to the point of even partiality towards His devotees, the Pandava’s in this case. The Azhwar knows that His ‘sankalpa’, can never be ‘asatya’, or untrue, for does He not also have a general supervening dictum that He will do anything to protect His devotees. The same Bheeshma who was an ardent devotee of Sri Krishna took a vow on the battle-field that He would somehow

make Sri Krishna take up His 'Chakrayudha'. The Lord had to honour the resolve of His devotee. His action therefore in threatening to wield His 'Chakra', against Bheeshma is after all a fulfilment of His 'asritha rakshana satyasankalpa', that is protection of the word of a dear devotee.

9. பொருகோட்டோ ரேனமாய்ப் புக்கிடந்தாய்க்கு அன்றுன்
ஒரு கோட்டின் மேல்கிடந்த தன்றே-விரிதோட்ட
சேவடியை நீட்டித் திசைநடுங்க விண்துளங்க
மாவடிவின் நீயளந்த மண்.

It is this earth which Thou in illimitable size, with the heavens and directions fraught with fear, measured with Thy Feet resembling the wide-open lotus. But then, on a previous occasion, the self-same earth that Thou as an incomparable Boar with battle-sharp teeth, had brought up from under the depths of the oceans, had lain contained in the space of a mere edge of one of Thy teeth.

Poigai Piran expresses his amazement at the astounding mind-boggling feats of the Lord in the Trivikrama and Sri Varaha avathars's. As Trivikrama, the Lord had in one step scaled the ends of this earth and the netherworlds. Then this earth came within the ambit of His Foot. But when as Varaha, the Lord had dug into the depths of the oceans and brought up the earth freeing it from the clutches of the asura Hiranyaksha, this earth just about resembled the size of a mole on his shining, fiercely sharp, tooth. The Azhwar wonders whether it was really necessary for the Lord to assume such a disproportionately large size to retrieve a mere mole-like earth. The implication is that it is merely indicative of the boundless generosity of heart of the Lord Who driven by His 'rakshana sankalpa', does not hesitate to assume a far larger form than apparently necessary. The great Acharya Periavachan Pillai, compares it to the generosity of a noble man who orders a feast for forty persons even when he is aware that the guests expected for the meal are no more than four.

10. மண்ணும் மலையும் மறிகடலும் மாருதமும்
விண்ணும் விழுங்கியது மெய்யென்பர்-எண்ணில்
அலகளவு கண்டசீ ராழியாய்க்கு அன்றிவ்
வுலகளவு முண்டோவுன் வாய்.

The Sages confirm as true that Thou as a mere Child swallowed this earth, the Surrounding mountains, oceans, the air, and the canopy of the sky above. When contemplating this deed, one wonders if this world just about measured the size of Thy Mouth, Oh Lord of innumerable auspicious qualities and holding the beautiful 'Chakra'.

Poigai Piran continues to marvel at the enigmatic contrast in the range of deeds of the Lord. While it is true that as Varaha, the Lord performed the 'small' task of lifting this earth from under the oceans, sages like Sri Markandeya confirm that as a tiny child lying on a floating banyan leaf, the Lord performed the incredible task of swallowing all the worlds for their safe-keeping at the time of the 'pralaya'. Thiruppanazhwar in a fascinating description of Sri Ranganatha in his Prabhandam 'Amalana'dhi Pira'n', says 'ஆலமாமரத்தினிலைமேல் ஒருபாலகனாய் ஞாலமேழுமுண்டான் அரங்கத்தரவின ணையான்', referring to this episode. Is He bound by any yardsticks, when the task is that of protection of the worlds and the countless life-forms contained in them?

11. வாயவனை யல்லது வாழ்த்தாது கையுலகம்
தாயவனை யல்லது தாந்தொழா - பேய்முலைநஞ்
சூனாக வுண்டா னுருவொடு பேரல்லால்
காணுகண் கேளா செவி.

My tongue will not sing the praise of anyone but Him, nor my hands will worship anyone but the Mighty One Who measured the worlds with His Feet. My eyes will not set sight on any form, nor ears hear of any name except My Lord Who drank the venom of the demoness's breast, as if it was nectar.

In the first ten pasurams, the Azhwar spoke of his deep love for the Lord in His various avatha'ra's. In this pasuram, the

Azhwar affirms the single-pointed involvement of even his sense organs in the adoration of the Lord.

12. செவிவாய்கண் மூக்குடலென் றைம்புலனும் செந்தீ
புகிகால்நீர் விண்பூதமைந்தும் -அவியாத
ஞானமும் வேள்வியும் நல்லறமு மென்பரே
ஏனமாய் நின்றார்க் கியல்வு.

They say that the five instruments of cognition, the five elements that make up the body, indestructible spiritual wisdom, the path of action in a spirit of non-attachment, and the pursuit of spiritual practices are the means of attaining The grace of the Lord Who once took the form of the Boar.

The instruments of cognition, the body, mouth, eyes, nose, and the ears, the spiritual knowledge rooted in devotion, qualities like non-attachment and wisdom that help foster that devotion – all these are looked upon as the means for attaining liberation. Kalidasa says ‘Sareera ma’dhyam khalu dharmasa’dhanam’, i.e., the body is the first instrument of dharma., (Kuma’ra Sambhavam 5.33.). Sri Ramanuja observes in Sri Bhashyam, ‘தைலதாராவத விச்சிந்த ஸ்ம்ருதி ஸந்தானரூபம்த்யானம்’, ‘Constant remembrance which is like the flow of oil, is meditation.’ Of Karma’ nushtanam, or observance of one’s obligatory practices, the Brhadha’ranyaka Upanishad states, ‘தமேதம் வேதாநுவசநேந ப்ராஹ்மணு விவிதிஷந்தி யஜ்ஞேந தாநேந தபஸாநாஸகேந’ —(B.U. 6.4.22). Those who have realised the Brahman desire to seek the Parama’thman, through recitation of vedas, renunciation, charity, and contemplation. The components of ‘Sadhana bhakthi ‘ have been defined as follows; i. a discriminating life discipline, ii. non-attachment, iii. conscious cultivation of interest in ‘bhagavad vishayam’, iv. pursuit of daily obligatory ‘karma’s’, to the extent possible, v. development of qualities like truthfulness, integrity, compassion, charity, non-violence, and self-contentment, vi. equanimity of mind. Purusha Suktham says that who knows Him thus is liberated in this birth itself, ‘தமேவம் வித்வாநம்ருத இஹ பவதி’. But it is well to remember

that the fountain-head of this bhakthi is also Him, by virtue of His 'nirhethuka krupa', for is He not the One, Who as Sri Nammazhwar says in his first pasuram of 'Thiruvoi Mozhi', 'மயர்வற மதிநலமருளினை யவனவன்'.

'He is at once the 'upa'ya' and the 'upeya'. 'யமேவைஷ லப்யஸ் தஸ்யைஷ ஆத்மா விவ்ருணுதே தநூம் ஸ்வாம்.'

13. இயல்வாக வீன்துழா யானடிக்கே செல்ல
முயல்வா ரியலமரர் முன்னம் - இயல்வாக
நீதியா லோதி நியமங்க ளால்பரவ
ஆதியாய் நின்றாரவர்.

From time immemorial, the blessed eternal beings have always been in attendance at the lotus Feet of the 'tulasi' garland-clad One. But He is ever in the forefront to bless others who, in earnest, recite His auspicious Names, and follow the pursuits prescribed in scriptural texts.

The Azhwar observes that it is not as if the Lord is only accessible to the 'Nithya Suris' of Vaikunta who are always in attendance on Him, with garlands, holy water, and incense. 'சூட்டு நன்மாலைகள் தூயன வேந்தி நன்னீர் ஆட்டி அந்தூபம் தரா நிற்பர்.' He is facile enough for worldly beings like us to reach, if only we recite His names and observe the pursuits prescribed in the Sa'stra's, for reaching Him. The Sa'stra's prescribe, i.observance of fasts and other measures of self-rectitude, ii. listening to the a'cha'rya' about the teachings of Srutis, (Sravanam) iii.internalising the teachings, (mananam), iv. Worship of the Lord, (archanam), v. singing His praise, (nama-sankirthanam), and rendering service at His Feet, and the feet of His beloved devotees, ('Bhagavad- 'bha'gavatha pa'da sevanam'). The Azhwar stresses 'நீதியால்', and 'இயல்வாக', meaning 'in proper manner', and 'to the best of one's ability', respectively. This is what is spoken of by Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita as 'abhya'sa yoga' or 'practice of devotional service', and 'math-karma parama', or 'dedicated to My work'. (Gita.12.9,12.10).

14. அவரவர் தாந்தா மறிந்தவா ரேத்தி
இவரிவ ரெம்பெருமா னென்று-சுவர்மிசைச்
சார்த்தியும் வைத்தும் தொழுவர், உலகளந்த
மூர்த்தி யுருவே முதல்.

Different people in keeping with their differing perceptions adore As their masters different gods and worship their portraits and idols. The truth is though, the Form of Lord Trivikrama, Who set His Foot Over the worlds, is the primary One.

The world is composed of people with widely varying tastes and perceptions, (லோகோ பிந்ந ருசி:), according to their proclivities as stemming from the three-fold guna's. Those in whom 'rajas' and 'tamas', predominate adopt as their masters the demi-gods and worship their idols and portraits, unaware of the significance of the upanishadic pronouncement , 'அஜாயமானோ பஹுதா விஜாயதே', (even though unborn, He appears to be born because of His association with all bodies from Brahma down to a mosquito).

15. முதலாவார் மூவரே, அம்மூவ ருள்ளும்
முதலாவான் மூரிநீர் வண்ணன்-முதலாய
நல்லா னருளல்லால் நாமநீர் வையகத்துப்
பல்லா ரருளும் பழுது.

The Trinity of Brahma', Vishnu, and Rudhra' are the Supreme God-head. Of the Trinity, the Foremost is the Lord resembling the wide blue oceans. Without the grace of the Benevolent One Who is the First Cause, It is futile to seek the grace of others in this ocean-covered world.

The Veda's make innumerable references to the Trinity as the Supreme God-head. Of these three, the Upanishads declare that Sriman Narayana is the 'ParaBrahman'. Mahanarayana Upanishad states that Brahma, Rudhra, Indra, and other gods have their origin from Narayana. (Nara'yana't Brahma' Ja'yate', Na'ra'yana't Rudhro Ja'yate', etc.) Narayana Suktham states that everything in this

universe is pervaded inside and outside by Narayana, and He is Brahma, Siva, Indra etc. (அந்தர் பஹிஸ்ச தத் ஸர்வம் வ்யாப்ய நாராயணஸ்தித ஸ ப்ரஹ்மா, ஸ ↓வ, ஸேந்த்ர: ஸோசக்ர: பரம: ஸ்வராட்). Purusha Suktham states 'புருஷ ஏவேதம் ஸர்வம்' , (Everything is Purusha), 'ஸ பூமீம் விஸ்வதோ வ்ருத்வா' ,(He pervaded the whole earth),etc. That Supreme Being is Narayana Who is glorified elsewhere in Narayana Suktham as 'நீலதோயத மத்யஸ்தா வித்யுல்லேகேவ பாஸ்வரா' (The Flame inside the heart brilliant like the lightning at the centre of the rain-cloud) Or as inimitably phrased by Thirumazhsai Pira'n in his ' Thiruchanda Virutham' 'அற்புதன் அனந்தசயனன் ஆதிபுதன் மாதவன், நிற்பதும் இருப்பதும் கிடப்பதும் என்நெஞ்சுகளே' 'He is the One Who first created Brahma, and imparted the instruction of the Vedas to him, (யோ ப்ரஹ்மாணம் விததாதி பூர்வம்,...etc. ,S.U.6.18)

Poigai Piran affirms in this pasuram that Sriman Narayana being the primary Cause, the grace obtained by devotion to Him is only fruitful and eternal. The grace of all other gods is trivial and ephemeral as compared to that..Sri Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita, 1. Yo Yo ya'm ya'm tanum bhaktah sraddhaya'rchitum icchati, tasya tasya'chalam sraddha'm ta'm eva vidadha'mi aham II

2. Sa taya' sraddhaya' yuktas tasya'ra'dhanam ihate, labhate ca tatah ka'ma'n mayaiva vihita'n hita'n II

3. antavat tu phalam tesa'm tad bhavati alpa-medhasa'm, deva'n deva-yajo ya'nto mad-bhakta' ya'nti ma'm api. II (Gita 7.21 to 23.)

'Whosoever devotee desires to worship whichever demi-god with faith, I make his faith steady.

Endowed with such a faith, he endeavours to worship a particular demi-god and attains his desires. But in actuality, these benefits are bestowed by Me alone.

Men of small intelligence worship the demi-gods and their fruits are limited and temporary.Those who worship the demi-gods go to the domain of the demi-gods, but My devotees ultimately reach my Domain'.

16. பழுதே பலபகலும் போயினவென்றுஅஞ்சி
அழுதே னரவணைமேற் கண்டு - தொழுதேன்
கடலோதம் காலலைப்பக் கண்வளரும் செங்கண்
அடலோத வண்ணரடி

Setting my sight on the red-eyed, blue-hued One resembling the oceans, resting on A'dishesha on the Milk-Ocean in apparent slumber, with Feet washed by the waves, I prostrated and shed tears with fear gripping me thinking of all the days gone by in utter waste.

Poigai Piran conjures up the vision of the Lord in 'yoga nidhra', on Anantha' on the milk ocean. Even with eyes closed, they look so red to the Azhwar, indicating His deep love for all beings. He resembles to Azhwar's imagination, a Blue Ocean floating on the milk ocean. Suddenly, he is assailed by a sense of frightful remorse thinking about the days and years rolled by in vain. His sense of fear springs from his concern about the future, whether that too would roll by in futility. "Ka'leshvapi ca' sarveshu dikshu sarva'su ca'achyuta I Sareere' ca gathou chapī vartate' me' mahatbhayam "II (Jithante' Stotram 1.9) "Oh, Achyuta, (Who does not let His devotees slip away) At all times, in all directions, in my body, and in what lies in store at the end of the life-trail, fear stalks me".

17. அடியும் படிகடப்பத் தோள்திசைமேற் செல்ல
முடியும் விசும்பளந்த தென்பர்-வடியுகிரா
லீர்ந்தான் இரணியன தாகம் இருஞ்சிறைப்புள்
ஊர்ந்தான் உலகளந்த நான்று.

The realised souls say about the Lord Who tore apart Hiranya's chest with razor-sharp nails, and Who rides the mighty-winged Eagle King, that when He scaled the worlds, His Feet went far beyond this earth, The Shoulders pervaded the directions, and the Crown filled the skies above.

The Lord as Nrsimha tore open the chest of the asura

Hiranyakasipu, like a thread off the bark of a banana tree. 'தொகுத்தவரத்தனா ய்த் தோலாதான் மார்வம் வகிர்த்தவளையுகிர்த்தோள் மாலே'; thus addresses Thirumazhisai Piran Lord Narasimha, in his Na'n Mugan Thiruvandha'thi, Who, in Azhwar's imagery, is beauty personified, 'அழகியான்தானே அரியருவந்தானே'. But Poigai Piran's mind is once again drawn by the thought of Trivikramavatha'ra' in Whose three giant strides, all the worlds were snugly encompassed, யஸ்யோருஷு த்ரிஷுவிக்ரமணேஷு 'அதிஷியந்தி புவநாநி விஸ்வா' - (Vishnu Suktham -2). The Azhwar chides himself that instead of directly experiencing this sight, He is only listening to the story second-hand from others, even if they be sages.

18. நான்ற முலைத்தலை நஞ்சுண்டுஉறிலெண்ணெய்
தோன்றவுண் டான்வென்றி சூழ்களிறறை- யூன்றிப்
பொருதுடைவு கண்டானும் புள்ளின்வாய் கீண்டானும்
மருதிடைபோய் மண்ணளந்த மால்.

Thou art the Lord that drank the poison from the surging breasts of Putana, that ate butter from the pots hung in the ceiling in full view of everyone, that stood His ground against the invincible and cunning elephant, making him come apart in pieces, that tore the beak of the crane asura, that mowed down the two 'marudha' trees, by crawling through them, and as Trivikrama', scaled the worlds.

The Azhwar continues to feel regretful in this pasuram about the many episodes of Sri Krishnavatha'ra, that he had missed. First as a cradle-borne baby, the Lord drank the life of the demoness Putana along with the poison-laden milk of her bosom. A little later, as an urchin, He stole butter from the pots hung in the roof by the gopis of Vrindhavan, daring them openly to catch him and punish him, if they could. As a mere boy, He held His own against the mighty and vicious Kuvalayapeeta' despatched by Kamsa to crush him to death, and pulled him apart limb by limb. Again, He had caught the asura who came in the guise of a crane to kill Him, by his beak and tore him apart with His hands. As a toddler, He had passed through the twin 'marudha' trees, which were actually

two deva's transformed into tree form due to a curse, and brought them down liberating them from their curse.

19. மாலும் கருங்கடலே என்னோற்றாய் வையகமுண்
டாலி னிலைத்துயின்ற வாழியான் - கோலக்
கருமேனிச் செங்கண்மால் கண்படையுள் என்றும்
திருமேனி நீதீண்டப் பெற்று.

Oh, Blue Ocean! How blessed Thou art, to be caressed by the touch of the dark-hued red-eyed compassionate Lord, Who having put away the worlds in His Stomach in safe-keeping and gone to sleep on a floating banyan-leaf, is resting on Thy waves.

The Lord Ma'l with His abiding love for all beings took all the worlds into His Stomach in order to protect them from the deluge of the 'pralaya', and went to sleep as a small baby on a banyan leaf floating on the flood water. How magnificent He looks in that resting pose on the blue ocean with complexion matching the ocean and contrasting red eyes so dear to the Divine Mother Sri. The Azhwar envies the waves of the ocean since they constantly feel the elation of the touch of the Lord's beautiful Form. To the Azhwar's eyes the whole milk ocean on which the Lord is resting appears blue because the ocean reflects the hue of the Lord's body.

20. பெற்றார் தளைகழலப் பேர்ந்தோர் குறளுருவாய்ச்
செற்றார் படிகடந்த செங்கண்மால் - நற்றா
மரைமலர்ச் சேவடியை வானவர்கை கூப்பி
நிறைமலர்கொண் டேத்துவரால் நின்று.

Departing from the Milk Ocean, He caused the shackles round His parents' feet to fall off. Earlier, as Vamana, He playfully scaled and took away the worlds of His adversary. The celestial beings pay their obeisance to this Lord with red eyes and beautiful lotus Feet, with folded hands and flower garlands.

When the Lord descended on this earth as Sri Krishna, the shackles round the feet of His parents Vasudeva and Devaki that the wicked Kamsa had bound them with, fell off on their own. In a broader sense, those that the Lord touched in His avatha'ra, became untied with their bonds of samsa'ra'.

Mahabali was Indra's adversary, but the Lord as Vamana nevertheless took him to be His adversary as well. When invited for a meal by Duryodhana, Sri Krishna promptly turned down the invitation with the retort, 'dvishadhannam na bhokthavyam, dvishantham no bhojaye't I Pa'ndava'n dvishase Rajan, mama pra'na' hi Pandava: II 'One should not accept the hospitality of an enemy, nor should offer food to his enemy. You king bear enmity towards the Pa'ndava's, but Pa'ndava's are very dear to me'.

21. நின்றுநிலமங்கை நீரேற்று மூவடியால்
சென்றுதிசையளந்த செங்கண்மாற்கு - என்றும்
படையாழி புள்ளூர்தி பாம்பணையான் பாதம்
அடையாழி நெஞ்சே யறி.

Listen, Oh my bold heart, to the bewitchingly red-eyed Lord Who accepted the earth by symbolically taking the proffered water in His lovely Hand, and exhausted the space in all directions with just three Steps. Seek and reach the sacred Feet of the Lord Who has for His bed the Adishesha, Whose eternal armour is the mighty Sudarsana' and Whose vehicle is the eagle King Garuda.

The Azhwar exhorts his heart not to be overawed by the thought of those mighty steps of the Lord against Mahabali, because He loves the company of His devotees. To the Lord, the three steps were a mere formality, just an excuse to complete the process because He had asked of Mahabali three steps of landspace. Having exhausted the whole universe in the span of just two steps, the third step landed plump on the bowed head of Mahabali and pushed him down to the nether world. The Lord did not have to walk down to Mahabali as He did. He could have just swooped down at the

sacrifice venue, on His mighty Garuda, but He did this for the sake of His devotee. For that matter, He really did not have to ask anything from Mahabali. He could have just bidden His Chakrayudha' to take off Mahabali's head, and simply taken away all the worlds usurped unjustly by Mahabali. But the latter being His devotee, He had to protect him but also teach him a lesson for his misdeeds.

22. அறியு முலகெல்லாம் யானேயுமல்லேன்
பொறிகொள் சிறையுவண மூர்ந்தாய்- வெறிகமழும்
காம்பேய்மென் தோளி கடைவெண்ணெ யுண்டாயைத்
தாம்பேகொண் டார்த்த தழும்பு.

Oh Lord Who ride the mighty Garuda of multi-coloured feathers, Thou allowed Thyself to be tied with a small rope by bedecked sweet-smelling Yashoda of slender bamboo-like shoulders, for stealing butter. Not only I but the whole world knows about the mark left by the rope on Thy waist.

The Lord asks the Azhwar how he knows that He loves to mingle with His devotees. The Azhwar replies that the whole world is well-acquainted with the Lord's simplicity and accessibility from the Krisnavata'ra' episode of how as a child He allowed Himself to be tied to a post with a piece of rope by His mother Yashoda, for helping Himself to some butter from the urn without her permission.

23. தழும்பிருந்த சார்ங்கநாண் தோய்ந்தவா மங்கை
தழும்பிருந்த தாள்சகடம் சாடி தழும்பிருந்த
பூங்கோதை யாள்வெருவப் பொன்பெயரோன் மார்பிடந்த
வீங்கோத வண்ணர் விரல்.

His Hands carry the tell-tale mark left by the strings of the bow 'Sa'rnga', His Feet bear the impress of kicking to death the cunning Sakata'sura', and what about the mark on the fingers, when the Lord with complexion resembling the blue

oceans took the form of the fierce Lion in human form and tore the chest of the asura' Hiranya, sending some trepidation to even His Consort Sri with her profusion of tresses.

Sri Krishna thought for a moment when His mother Yasoda tried to tie him up with a rope. "Being the Lord of the universe, why should I allow myself to be frightened by a simple woman and bound by her with a rope?". But He gave up the thought, the Azhwar says for a good reason. If it was just one rope mark, on His waist, the Lord could avoid it from the world view, but then the whole body of the Lord is covered with such marks. As Sri Rama, He had to string and carry the bow Sa'rngā', several times for the sake of His devotees, which left an indelible mark on His shoulders. As a mere baby He kicked at Sakatasura who had come to kill him, and sent him cartwheeling to his death. That left a mark on His Feet. As Nrsimha, He tore the heart out of the chest of Hiranya with his nails, sending waves of trepidation to the celestial and other beings, even to His consort Lakhmi, wondering if it signalled the 'pralaya'. That left a mark too on His fingers.

24. விரலொடு வாய்தோய்ந்த வெண்ணெய்கண்டு. ஆய்ச்சி
உரலோ டுறப்பிணித்த நான்று - குரலோவா
தேங்கி நினைந்தயலார் காண விருந்திலையே
ஒங்கோத வண்ணா வுரை.

Oh Lord with Form resembling the surging waves of the ocean, when Thy mother Yashoda caught Thee in the act with butter-stained fingers in Thy mouth, and bound Thee lightly to the grinding stone, Thou broke out in a ceaseless whimper, all the while planning other ways of stealing butter without getting caught. Tell me Sir, was it not true that Thou became then the object of merriment to all and sundry.

In saying, 'விரலொடு வாய்தோய்ந்த', Azhwar seems to empathise with the Lord in His predicament. Yashoda caught Him right in the midst of the act just when He had stuck His small fingers dipped in butter into His mouth, even before He could savour the taste and

swallow it. If atleast He had had the time to enjoy the taste of the stolen butter, the punishment could be considered justified. Azhwar says further, 'குரலோவாதேங்கி நினைந்து', How does the Lord whimper? It is a continuous whimper in an unvarying monotone. But it is a put-on, for the canny 'brat' is already planning other more profitable, and less risky, operations to steal butter. Poigai Piran wonders if there was any woman in Gokulam who missed this sight. All those who, at one time or another, had been robbed of their butter in their houses, now found the occasion finally when the 'thief' was caught and bound to the mortar, thinking amusedly, 'The thief deserves this and more.' The Azhwar jestfully asks the Lord, 'You have said before, "I have never lied before, nor will I ever". 'அந்ருதம் நோக்தபூர்வம் நச வஷ்யே கதாசந'. You tell me, how this jels with your guna's of 'அவாப்தஸமஸ்த காமன்' and 'ஸர்வசக்திமான்'. ('He Who has no more desires to fulfil', and 'All-powerful').

25. உரைமேற்கொண் டென்னுள்ள மோவாதுளப் போதும்
வரைமேல் மரகதமே போல் - திரைமேல்
கிடந்தானைக் கீண்டானைக் கேழலாய்ப் பூமி
யிடந்தானை யேத்தி யெழும்.

My heart will, at alltimes, find fulfilment singing in ecstasy the glory of the Lord, Who is like a sapphire-embedded mountain floating on the waves of the Milk-ocean, and Who in the Form of a Boar retrieved this earth lost in the unfathomable depths of the ocean, and restored it to its position. This pasuram describes the 'sarvasakthi', 'soulabhya' and 'sowsheelyam' of the Lord.

26. எழுவார் விடைகொள்வா ரீன்றுழா யானை
வழுவா வகைநினைந்து வைகல்-தொழுவார்
வினைச்சுடரை நந்துவிக்கும் வேங்கடமே வானோர்
மனச்சுடரைத் தூண்டும் மலை.

The lofty Venkata mountain it is, that puts out the fire of past sins, of those desirous of worldly riches, those who desire

to art with the Lord for the joys of paradise, and also those who constantly seek and pray for proximity of the Lotus-Feet of the Lord wearing the beautiful 'tulasi' garlands, without ever having to part, and stirs the inner flame of the realised beings of the 'parama padha'.

The Azhwar extols the properties of 'Thiruvencatam', the abode of Lord Srinivasa. In the Bahavad Gita, (7.16), Sri Krishna classifies His devotees under a four-fold category, 1. 'Artha', those who are afflicted, 2. 'Jigya'su', those who seek wisdom for heavenly happiness, 3. 'Artha'rti', those who aspire worldly prosperity, and 4. 'Gya'ni', realised beings who wish for nothing except the Feet of the Lord. Thiruvencatam puts out the fire of accumulated 'karma', of the first three sets of devotees of the Lord. At the same time it kindles the gentle fire of love for the Lord of the realised beings.

27. மலையால் குடைகவித்து மாவாய் பிளந்து
சிலையால் மராமரமேழ் செற்று-கொலையானைப்
போர்க்கோ டொசித்தனவும் பூங்குருந்தம் சாய்த்தனவும்
கார்க்கோடு பற்றியான் கை.

The hand of the One Who holds the 'Sankha', which when blown sounds like the thundering clouds, held the 'Govardana', like an umbrella, tore the asura Kesi who came disguised as a horse, shot the arrow that bored a hole through seven trees, broke the battle-tested tusks of the murderous elephant, and pushed down the flower-laden 'Kurundha' tree.

The sight of the throbbing shoulders of the Lord residing in Thiruvencatam stirs memories in Azhwar's mind, of countless feats performed with effortless ease by the Lord as Sri Rama and Sri Krishna.

28. கைய வலம்புரியும் நேமியும் கார்வண்ணத்
 தைய மலர்மகள்நின் னாகத்தாள்-செய்ய
 மறையான் நின்னுந்தியான் மாமதிள் மூன்றெய்த
 இறையான் நின்னாகத் திறை.

**Oh Lord with complexion resembling the beautiful rain-
 cloud, Thy hands hold the ‘Valampuri’, and the ‘Chakra’. Thy
 Consort the lotus-born Lakshmi embellishes Thy bosom. From
 thy navel sprang the four-faced Brahma’, Who is always
 chanting the Veda’s taught by Thee, and showing the way to
 reach Thee, and Rudra’ who destroyed the ‘tri-city’ of high
 towers with a single arrow is but a part of Thy vast Body.**

The beauty, wealth, and lordship of the Lord of Thiruvencatam is dazzling and mind- boggling. The ‘Pa’ nchajanyam’ and Sudarsana’ embellishing the Lord’s Hands point to His Supreme overlordship of all the worlds. With Mahalakshmi adorning His chest constantly, He is the repository of beauty and prosperity. Brahma’ who learnt the scriptures directly from the Lord, and then propagated to others sprang from His navel. Rudra who deems himself as ‘Ishvara”, occupies a portion of His Body.

29. இறையும் நிலனு மிருவிசும்பும் காற்றும்
 அறைபுனலும் செந்தீயு மாவான்- பிறைமருப்பில்
 பைங்கண்மால் யானை படுதுயரம் காத்தளித்த செங்கண்மால்
 கண்டாய் தெளி.

**Oh, My dear heart, The Lord of all worlds, Who is at
 once this earth, the wide sky, the air, the water and the burning
 fire is the red-lotus eyed Narayana, Who wiped the affliction, and
 saved the life, of big Gajendra of crescent-shaped tusks and
 beautiful eyes, Understand.**

By recounting the episode of Gajendra, the Azhwar reassures us that though The Lord’s ‘aishwarya’ and ‘lilavibhuti’ is awesome, He is also deeply solicitous and protective of His devotees. The

Lord's red eyes are indicative of His immeasurable 'va'tsalya' for His devotees. He is the embodiment of 'a'sritha pa'ra thanthryam'.

30. தெளிதாக வுள்ளத்தைச் செந்நிறீஇ ஞானத்
தெளிதாக நன்குணர்வார் சிந்தை - எளிதாகத்
தாய்நாடு கன்றேபோல் தண்டுழா யானடிக்கே போய்நாடிக்
கொள்ளும் புரிந்து.

The mind of those devotees whose consciousness has found absolute balance, free from sensual distractions through inner realisation easily finds its niche in the Feet of the Lord wearing the cool 'tulasi' garland, even as a calf instinctively finds its own mother amidst the herd.

The mind referred to here is that of a person who has realised his position vis-à-vis the Lord, i.e. his being a 'sesha-butha' Just as the calf finds its true mother amidst a herd of cows with natural ease, the mind of the devotee who through self-realisation attained by unswerving 'bhakthi' towards the Lord easily finds its haven in the sacred Feet of the Lord Who is always wearing the cool 'tulasi' garland. There is no doubt in this, reassures the Azhwar in this pasuram.

31. புரியொருகை பற்றியோர் பொன்னாழி யேந்தி
அரியுருவு மாளுருவு மாகி எரியுருவ
வண்ணத்தான் மார்பிடந்த மாலடியை யல்லால்மற்
றெண்ணத்தா னாமோ விமை.

Would I think for a moment of anything else other than the sacred Feet Of the Lord Who holds the conch in one Hand and the golden 'Chakra' in another and Who assuming a half-human and half-leonine form, tore the chest of the fire-like complexioned Hiranya'.

Hiranyakasipu had a boon to the effect that he had no death from any human or animal or weapons of any sort, thinking that it would assure him of immortality. When the time came, the Lord in a trice assumed the 'nara-simha' form and killed him with His bare nails, without any work for His 'Sudarsana'.

32. இமையாத கண்ணா லிருளகல நோக்கி
அமையாப் பொறிபுலன்களைந்தும்-நமையாமல்
ஆகத் தணைப்பா ரணைவரே ஆயிரவாய்
நாகத் தணையான் நகர்.

Those who can look into themselves and dispel the darkness therein with the aid of their inner spiritual eyes, and hold Him, with His boundless grace, close to their hearts, even if subject to the sway of the irrepressible sense organs will reach the abode of the Lord Who reclines on the thousand-faced A'dishesha'.

Poigai Piran underlines the futility of sense perception in the matter of spiritual awakening; 'Na chaksusha grihyati', states the Mundaka Upanishad, (3-1-8). One needs the light of spiritual awakening to dispel the ignorance clouding the mind and realise the truth about one's relationship, to the Lord, (the 'sesha-seshee' bha'va'). Once the inner spark is ignited with His grace, and one learns to hold the Lord close to one's heart, then even if one is subject to the constant onslaught of the sense organs, he is bound to reach the abode of the Lord in Sri Vaikunta.

33. நகர மருள்புரிந்து நான்முகற்குப் பூமேல்
பகர மறைபயந்த பண்பன் - பெயரினையே
புந்தியால் சிந்தியா தோதி யுருவெண்ணும்
அந்தியா லாம்பயனங் கென் ?

The compassionate Lord gave space to the four-faced Brahma on the lotus that sprang from His navel, and instructed

him in scriptures for the benefit of all others. If one does not meditate on His countless Names, what is the use of mindless practice, in the name of daily rituals like ‘sandya’?

When a child starts his first lesson, he is usually seated by the teacher on a cushion and instructed with great affection. In similar fashion, Sriman Narayana seated Brahma on the lotus flower that sprang from His Navel, indicating His boundless ‘va’tsalya’. Meditation on the Lord and His Names is the only meaningful prayer and not the ritualistic repetition of mantra’s in the name of ‘sandyavandana’ and other japa’.

34. என்னொருவர் மெய்யென்ப ரேழுலகுண்டு ஆலிலையில்
முன்னொருவ னாய முகில்வண்ணு - நின்னுருகிப்
பேய்த்தாய் முலைதந்தாள் பேர்ந்திலளால் பேரமர்க்கண்
ஆய்த்தாய் முலைதந்த வாறு.

Oh, You Enchanter resembling the dark clouds, Who at the beginning of time, slept on a banyan leaf after tucking away the seven worlds in Thy tiny stomach. The incomparable sages of yore affirm as true that while the cunning Putana’ who came in the guise of a mother to suckle Thee lay stone-dead, Thy cow-herd mother of big-set eyes that seem to vie with each other, breast-fed Thee with such melting concern. How incredible?

‘Eko vai Narayana aaseeth, na Brahma Nesanaha’, (Mahopanishad). ‘There was only Narayana, neither Brahma nor Siva’. In the beginning of time, as a mere child, Narayana tucked away the seven worlds in His tiny Stomach, and slept floating on a banyan leaf in the ‘pralaya’. Putana came in the guise of a mother with poison smeared over her breasts to kill the child Krishna by suckling the child. With just one suck at her breast, the child drank the life out of her along with the milk. Even while she lay dead, Yashoda in her loving concern for the child Krishna, took him on her lap to breast-feed him at the same spot. Azhwar expresses his wonder at how the milk from her breasts was like nectar that served as an antidote to the poison fed by Putana.

35. ஆறிய வன்பி லடியார்த மார்வத்தால்
 கூறிய குற்றமாக் கொள்ளல் நீ- தேறி
 நேடியோய் ! அடியடைதற் கன்றே ஈரைந்து
 முடியான் படைத்த முரண்.

Pray, Thou must treat with indulgence the inadequate utterances of Thy devotees, whose love forever falls short of what might be expected. Afterall, did not the hostility of the ten-headed Ravana lead him eventually in another age to attain Thy sacred Feet.?

Azhwar prays for the Lord's indulgence towards ordinary devotees whose love towards the Lord falls very much short of the self-less levels attained by beings such as Yashoda. It is apt to refer here to a similar prayer by Sri Thirumazhisai Piran, 'செய்த குற்றம் நற்றமாகவே கொள்ளாலநாதனே, (திருச்சந்த விருத் - 11). Oh, Lord of the universe kindly accept the faults committed by us as you accept our good deeds. The allusion to Ravana in this pasuram is based on the fact that even though Ravana paid the heavy price of losing his ten heads for the heinous sin committed to the Divine Mother Lakshmi, he still as Sisupala in another time reached the Feet of the Lord, despite his hostility to Sri Krishna.

36. முரணை வலிதொலைதற் காமென்றே முன்னம்
 தரணிதனதாகத் தானே-இரணியனைப்
 புண்ணிரந்த வள்ளுகிராற் பொண்ணாழிக் கையால் நீ
 மண்ணிரந்து கொண்ட வகை.

Earlier Thou had torn to shreds the egotistic Hiranya who had looked upon this earth as his possession. Yet the manner in which with the self-same hand that wields the Sudarsana, Thou asked for and accepted the gift of this earth holds a lesson in clearing our minds of ego-centred thoughts, does it not?

In citing the example of Sri Vamanavathara when the Lord asked for three paces of landspace from Mahabali for the sake of the Devas who had been dispossessed by the mighty asura king,

the Azhwar expresses the hope that the Lord's selfless action serves as a lesson in ridding our minds of all selfish thoughts.

37. வகையறு நுண்கேள்வி வாய்வார்கள் நாளும்
புகைவிளக்கும் பூம்புனலும் மேந்தி-திசைதிசையின்
வேதியர்கள் சென்றிரைஞ்சும் வேங்கடமே வெண்சங்கம்
ஊதியவாய் மாலுகந்த வூர்.

The Venkata hill is the preferred resting place of the Lord Whose lips blow the white sankha', where the learned ones who have the subtle vedic wisdom, capable of cutting asunder lesser gods and goals, hasten from all directions, carrying incense, flowers and holy water to offer their prayers.

As Sri Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita,(2.41),it is those with wayward minds who suffer from multiple mind-sets which have no finality about them. அவ்யவஸாயினாம் புத்தய : பஹுஸாகா அனந்தாஸ்ச). The learned ones on the otherhand, have a sure-fire goal and mind that is single-pointed and rejects all lesser goals and gods They are endowed with subtle vedic wisdom that can sift the truths and take what they want, (வேண்டிய வேதங்கள் ஒதி). Nammazhwar says 'உணர்ந்துணர்ந்து உரைத்துரைத்து இறைஞ்சுமின் மனப்பட்டதொன்றே '(திருவாய் மொழி 1.3.6)' Vyasa Bhagava'n says, 'ஆலோட்ய ஸர்வ ஸாஸ்த்ராணி விசார்ய ச புந:புந:'. Having analysed all Shashtra's,and thought over again and again'

38. ஊரும்: வரியரவ மொண்குறவர் மால்யானை
பேர வெறிந்த பெருமணியை - காருடைய
மி ன்னென்று புற்றடையும் வேங்கடமே மேலசுரர்
எம்மென்னு மாலதிடம்.

On the Venkata hill, the sliding snake with lined skin hastens into its hole terrified of the sight of the dignified Kurava's hurling sapphire-like stones at the black elephants

which have strayed into their territory. It is the hill of the Lord which the eternal beings of Vaikunta cherish as their very own.

Azhwar's fertile imagination is enraptured even by the sight of a snake slithering into its hole on the Thiruvengkata hill. The apparent reason for this is the presence of Kurava people who are supposed to belong to the lowest stratum of society. But the Azhwar observes that on this hill, they bear a quiet dignity about them because they have been denizens of the sacred hill and its forests for successive generations. These Kuravas are now hurling stones which resemble sapphires strewn on the hillside, to drive away dark-hued elephants which have transgressed into their domain. To the snake's eyes, this looks like the sparkle of lightning on a sable cloud. Hence it is terrified and hurries into its hole. It is the hill again, which the eternal beings. (nithya suris) of the Lord's abode cherish as their prized possession.) (யத்ர பூர்வே மாத்யா ஸந்தி தேவா:- பு.ஸு.க்தம்). 'வடவேங்கடமாமலை வானவர்கள் சந்தி செய்ய நின்றான்' - அமலனாதி-3.

39. இடந்தது பூமி யெடுத்தது குன்றம்
கடந்தது கஞ்சனைமுன் னஞ்ச - கிடந்ததுவும்
நீரோத மாகடலே நின்றதுவும் வேங்கடமே
பேரோத வண்ணர் பெரிது.

Aeons ago, the Lord with complexion resembling the great blue ocean, retrieved this lost world as the great Boar. Then as Krishna, He held up the Govardana hill like a parasol, and destroyed Kamsa in sheer fright. He rests between incarnations on the waves of the milk ocean, but forever stands waiting to bless us at Thiruvengkata.

The Lord is the eternal Saviour and has time and again demonstrated this. He saved this world when it was lost in the deluge of pralaya'. Then when Indra in fury sent the rain clouds to carry out an onslaught on Gokulam, He protected the afflicted people and cattle by holding up the Govardana' as an umbrella. He despatched

the fierce Kamsa to his death. Between incarnations, He rests on the Milk Ocean. But He is forever there standing on Venkata hill, to relieve us mortals of our suffering.

40. பெருவில் பகழிக் குறவர்கைச் செந்தீ
வெருவிப் புனந்துறந்த வேழம் - இருவிசும்பில்
மீன்வீழக் கண்டஞ்சும் வேங்கடமே மேலகரர்
கோன்வீழக் கண்டுகந்தான் குன்று.

It is the Venkata hill, where on the dark night, the encroaching elephant is frozen in fright at the sight of the burning fire-stick held in one hand of the Kuravas treading their way, and bow and arrow in the other, and the falling stars streaking across the sky, Which is the abode of the Lord Who along time ago, exulted after snuffing out the life of Hiranya.

Azhwar's imagery of the elephant's fright at the sight of the fire-sticks (used in olden days to light the way), and weapons in the hands of the Kurava men wending their way home on a dark night, and the shooting stars, is more for hailing the awesome beauty of the Venkata hill, where the Lord Who is the Protector of all beings resides. The elephant has nothing to fear especially from the Kurava inhabitants of the forests on the hill. In fact they are always concerned for the safety of the elephants inhabiting the forests. As Thirumazhsai Piran says, 'வைப்பன் மணிவிளக்கா மாமதியை மாலுக்கென்று எப்பொழுதும் கை நீட்டும் யானையை எப்பாடும் வேடுவளைக்கக் குறவர் வில்லெடுக்கும் வேங்கடமே' (நான். திருவ.46) 'the Kuravas of Thirumalai take up their bows and arrows only if some intruders or poachers try to ensnare and encircle their elephants'.

41. குன்றனைய குற்றஞ் செயினும் குணங்கொள்ளும்
இன்றுமுதலாக வென்னெஞ்சே - என்றும்
புறனுரையே யாயினும் பொன்னாழிக் கையான்
திறனுரையே சிந்தித் திரு.

Oh my heart, from this moment on, even if only for outward expression, and for ever, dwell your thoughts on the greatness of the Lord of the golden Sudarsana in His Hand. The Lord then will overlook even your mountain of follies, and graciously acknowledge your dedication.

Hasn't the Lord Himself said in Srimad Ramayana,(Yudd.Kanda.18.3) "mitra bha'vena sampra'ptham na tyajeyam kadhanchana, Dosho yadyapi tasya sya'th sadha'medadhagarhitam II". 'I will never give up anyone who only comes to me in the garb of a friend;even if he has shortcomings,for goodones it is not to be deprecated.' For is He not the One with boundless indulgence, Who says of a stumbling devotee, in the words of Perizhwar, (பெரியாழ் திரு.4.9.2.) 'செய்தாரேல் நன்று செய்தார்'

42. திருமகளும் மண்மகளு மாய்மகளும் சேர்ந்தால்
திருமகட்கே தீர்ந்தவா ரென்கொல் - திருமகள்மேல்
பாலோதம் சிந்தப் படநா கணைக்கிடந்த
மாலோத வண்ணர் மனம்.

The love of the Lord – with form like the cool blue ocean resting under the canopy of Anantha with his mirror-like hood, amidst the spray of milk particles – for Goddess Sri is special, such that it predominates in the Lord's relationship with Sri Devi, Bhoo Devi, and Nila Devi. What marvel !

Sri Parasara Bhattar has in his comments on the spirit of this pasuram mentioned that Bhoo Devi and Nila Devi are like instruments of enjoyment to the Lord and Sri in their relationship, like flowers and sandalwood paste. (Sri Guna Ratna Kosa, 26).

43. மனமாசு தீரு மருவினையுஞ் சாரா
தனமாய தானே கைகூடும் புனமேய
பூந்துழா யானடிக்கே போதொடு நீரேந்தி
தாந்தொழா நிற்பார் தமர்.

Devotees carry flowers and fragrant water to offer at the Feet of the Lord, wearing the garland of tulasi leaves that look forever fresh, as if they still remained planted on the earth, and prostrate before Him. At this instant, the 'avidya' clouding the mind vanishes, and even irreversible 'Karma' does not bind, as the enriching flow of bhakthi engulfs them.

Azhwar exhorts the Lord's devotees to offer flowers and fragrant water symbolic of offering ourselves at His Feet.' குட்டு நன்மாலைகள் தூயனவேந்தி விண்ணோர்கள் நன்னீராட்டி அந்துபம் தரா நிற்கவே', (திருவிருத்தம்). He assures us that the real wealth is that which enriches the inner self, that is 'para bhakthi', 'paragyanam', and 'parama bhakthi'.

44. தமருகந்த தெவ்வுருவ மவ்வுருவம் தானே
தமருகந்த தெப்பேர் மற்றப்பேர் - தமருகந்து
எவ்வண்ணம் சிந்தித் திமையா திருப்பரே
அவ்வண்ண மாழியானாம்.

The Lord Who holds the golden Disc assumes that Form, in which His devotees desire to worship Him, that Name which they wish to ascribe to Him, and that Symbol that they visualise of Him, and constantly meditate upon.

Azhwar's words reflect Sri Krishna's statement in the Gita,(4.11.), 'ye yatha ma'm prapadyante' ta'msthathaiva bhaja'myaham'. 'In whatever way my devotees come to me, I accept and bless them in the same way'. There is an anecdote about Sri Ramanuja who during his 'nithya bhiksha' vrithi' was shown by some urchins some lines drawn on the ground representing according to their imagination,

the Lord's Body.Sri Ramanuja immediately set down his 'bhiksha" vessel on the ground and prostrated before the image that the urchins had drawn.

45. ஆமே யமர்க் கறிய வதுநிற்க
நாமே யறிகிற்போம் நன்னெஞ்சே ! - பூமேய
மாதவத்தோன் தாள்பணிந்த வாளரக்கன் நீண்முடியை
பாதமத்தா லெண்ணினான் பண்டி.

My good heart, on that occasion when the evil Ravana prostrated at the feet of Brahma seated on the lotus-flower did not Narayana, taking the form of a babe on Brahma's lap forewarn him by counting the heads of the Rakshasa' king with His tiny toes? Can Brahma and the Devas grasp the greatness of the Lord. Be that as it may,we who are the recipients of His grace perhaps have a better clarity of mind to understand His greatness.

The story told in this pasuram relates to the episode of Ravana on completion of his austerities and penance, prostrating before Brahma to ask for the boon of immortality. At that instant, Sriman Narayana taking the form of a child materialised on Brahma's lap and forewarned him of the danger of granting Ravana's prayer, by counting his heads with His small toes.In thus counting Ravana's heads, Narayana signalled to Brahma that those heads would oneday have to be plucked off by Him.This episode is related also in Moonra'm Thiruvandha'ti, 'ஆய்ந்த வருமறையோன்' -(77), and in Na'nmugan Thiruvandha'ti, 'கொண்டுசூடங்கால் மேல் வைத்த குழவியாய்'

46. பண்புரிந்த நான் மறையோன் சென்னிப் பலியேற்ற
வெண்புரிநூல் மார்பன் வினைதீர - புண்புரிந்த
வாகத்தான் தாள்பணிவார் கண்டீர் அமரர்தம்
போகத்தால் பூமியாள்வார்.

Narayana washed away the sin of Siva wearing the white tread across his chest, with blood from His own Chest – the sin Of plucking the head of Brahma who was the first to be imparted vedic instruction by Narayana. Those who bow to the Feet of that Lord will attain the bliss of the eternal beings and attain it here on this earth.

‘யோவை வேதாம்ஸ்ச ப்ரஹ்ரிணோதி தஸ்மை’ says Svetha’svatara Upanishad,(18).Sriman Narayana imparted the knowledge of the vedas to Brahma. According to Ma’thsya Purana’, Rudra committed the cardinal sin of ‘brahmahathi’ by plucking the head of Brahma who was his own father, and wandered the four corners of this earth with Brahma’s head stuck to his hand, which he held as a begging bowl Finally, when he reached the Himalayas, he prayed to Narayana for his deliverance. Then Narayana by piercing a part of His body filled Siva’s bowl with the flowing blood. The ‘kapala’ came unstuck from his hand owing to Narayana’s grace, and broke into thousands of pieces. Thirumazhisai Piran refers to this incident in the pasuram ‘அலங்கல் மார்வில் வாசநீர் கொடுத்தவன்’ (Thiruchanda Virutham 43.) Azhwar affirms the upanishadic statement, ‘amritha iha bhavati’, in saying that the bliss of Vaikunta can be attained here on this earth.

47. வாரி சுருக்கி மதக்களி றைந்தினையும்
சேரி திரியாமல் செந்நிறீஇ - கூரிய
மெய்ஞ்ஞானத் தாலுணர்வார் காண்பரே மேலொருநாள்
கைந்நாகங் காத்தான் கழல்

Those who bridle and bring under tight control their five senses that, like elephants in heat, run amok along bylanes, and make them stand still, and direct their awareness towards Him with the aid of their subtle understanding will reach the sacred Feet of the Lord Who once saved the life of Gajendra.

Sri Krishna says in Gita,(2.59) 'விஷயா விநிவர்த்தந்தே நிராஹாரஸ்ய தேஹிந : 1 ரஸவர்ஜும் ரஸோப்யஸ்ய பரம் த்ருஷ்ட்வா நிவர்த்ததே'. II 'Devoid of food for indriya's,the indriya's leave their hold on the man. But the craving(that inheres in the indriya's) leaves only when one experiences the true inner self'. Spiritual awakening is what breaks the stranglehold of the sensory desires in man.' 'உபாஸனம் த்ருவா ம்ம்ருதி'. Constant remembrance is upa'sana'. Again, Sri Krishna teaches us in the Gita,(18.55), 'பக்த்யா மாமபி ஜாநாதி யாவாந் ஸ்சாஸ்மி தத்வத: ததோ மாம் தத்த்வதோ ஜ்ஞாத்வா விஸதே ததநந்தரம்' 'He who, by devotion, understands how I am in form and substance, then by the same devotion having thus understood,reaches me.'

48. கழலொன் றெடுத்தொருகை சுற்றியோர் கைமேல்
சுழலும் சுராசுரர்க ளஞ்ச - அழலும்
செருவாழி யேந்தினான் சேவடிக்கே செல்ல
மருவாழி நெஞ்சே மகிழ்ந்து

Oh, my heart deep like the ocean, rejoice and hold close to the crimson Feet of the Lord, Who with one hand caught the legs of, and tossed into the void, His sworn enemies like Namusi, and Held aloft in another, the flaming- red Sudarsana raring to swipe at the adversaries, raising fear in the minds of deva's and asura's alike.

49. மகிழல கொன்றேபோல் மாறும் பல்யாக்கை
நெகிழ முயல்கிற்பார்க் கல்லால் - முகிழ்விரிந்த
சோதிபோல் தோன்றும் சுடர்பொன் நெடுமுடி எம்
ஆதிகாண் பார்க்கு மரிது.

Barring those who strive to let go of the cycle of being born in different bodies, like the seeds of the 'maghizha' tree set in different value slots for counting, for others with mere desire to see my great Lord,the Prime Cause of everything, He

Who is donning a dazzling golden crown, and resembles a brilliant broad band of light, is very difficult to reach.

In some old arithmetic exercises, the seeds of the 'maghizha' tree used to be set in different value places, sometimes low, sometimes high. Azhwar likens our repeated births, sometimes as lowly animals, and sometimes as high beings to the above exercise. Our effort should be to develop our spiritual potential through detachment and devotion. Without this, a mere hollow desire to reach the Lord, all the time running after ephemeral and evanescent goals cannot secure for us His grace.

50. அரியபுல னைந்தடக்கி யாய்மலர்கொண்டு ஆர்வம்
புரிய பரிசினால் புல்கில் - பெரியனாய்
மாற்றாது வீற்றிருந்த மாவலிபால் வணகைநீர்
ஏற்றானைக் காண்ப தெளிது.

Controlling the near-intractable five sense organs and worshipping Him, with offerings of pure love and thoughtfully gathered flowers, it is easy to attain the One Who accepted the symbolic sprinkle of water, from the giving hands of the proud and unfailingly generous Mahabali.

'தஸ்யாஹம் நிக்ரஹம் மந்யே வாயோரிவ ஸுதுஷ்கரம்', (Gita 6.34.), said Arjuna to Sri Krishna.' So I consider the mind difficult to control like the wind'. Azhwar said in the previous pasuram how difficult it is to reach the Lord, and yet in this pasuram, He sets down a very simple formula to attain Him which is pure unremitting love without falling a prey to the sense organs, and a symbolic offering of cleanly and earnestly gathered flowers in fervent prayer.

51. எளிதி லிரண்டடியுங் காண்பதற்கு என்னுள்ளம்
தெளியத் தெளிந்தொழியும் செவ்வே - களியில்
பொருந்தா தவனைப் பொரலுற்று அரியா
யிருந்தான் திருநாம மெண்.

Oh my heart, If you attain the inner clarity meriting the reward of being blessed, by the proximity of His sacred Feet, He will also be immensely pleased. Did He not demonstrate this when He as Nrsimha, bestirred to wipe out, His insufferably egotistic adversary? Hence, meditate on His sacred Names.

The clarity underlined here is that born out of control of the five sense organs emphasised in the forty ninth pasuram. Then He will also reciprocate in a clear,unmistakable way.The proof is Prahlada who was clearly focused in His love for the Lord and when he was threatened by the egotistic asura Hiranya, the Lord as Nrsimha acted in a trice to wipe him off the face of this earth.

52. எண்மர் பதினொருவ ரீரறுவ ரோரிருவர்
வண்ண மலரேந்தி வைகலும் - நண்ணி
ஒருமாலை யால்பரவி யோவாது எப்போதும்
திருமாலைக் கைதொழுவர் சென்று.

The eight Vasus,the eleven Rudra's, the twelve Adithya's, and the two Ashvini Deva's, carrying multi-coloured flowers wend their way everyday, and reciting constantly the unparalleled Vedic hymns, pray with folded hands to the Consort of Mahalakhmi.

'Meditate on His Names' said the Azhwar in the previous pasuram. As if underscoring this mandate, the Azhwar makes the point how even the proud thirty-three demi-gods in heaven who consider themselves lords, approach everyday the Lord of all creation Sriman Narayana in the company of the Divine Mother Sri, in prayerful submission constantly reciting the Purusha Suktham, hailed as 'வேதேஷு பௌருஷம் ஸுக்தம்.' These demi-gods also carry out 'Brahmopasanam' since they look to Him for their liberation.

53. சென்றால் குடையா மிருந்தால் சிங்காசனமாம்
நின்றால் மரவடியாம் நீள்கடலுள் - என்றும்
புணையாம் மணிவிளக்காம் பூம்பட்டாம் புல்கு
மணையாம் திருமாற்கரவு.

To the Consort of Sri, A'disesha serves as parasol when on the move, as high throne when seated, as foot-rest when standing, as floating bed when resting on the wide milk-ocean, and as a lamp, a mantle, and cradling head-rest.

Sri Alavandar says of Narayana in Stotra Ratna (39), 'தயா ஸஹாஸீன மநந்த போகிநி' -The One Who is present along with His Consort Lakshmi on Anantha. In his service to the Lord, he dons a variety of roles, as parasol, a throne, foot-rest, bed, lamp, mantle, and headrest. In Krishnavathara, did he not follow Vasudeva as an umbrella when he carried the baby Krishna across the Yamuna?

54. அரவ மடல்வேழ மான்குருந்தம் புள்வாய்
குரவை குடமுலைமற் குன்றம் - கரவின்றி
விட்டிறுத்து மேய்த்தொசித்துக் கீண்டு கோத் தாடிஉண்
டட்டெடுத்த செங்கணவன்.

What deeds, the Lord with red lotus eyes had performed openly for the whole world to see, driving out the venomous serpent Kaliya, breaking the tusks of the charging elephant Kuvalaya, grazing the cows, uprooting the 'Kurunda' tree, tearing the beak of the pelican, engaging in romantic dalliance the gopis dancing with milkpots, sucking the life of the demoness Putana, finishing off the twin asuras, Chanura and Mushtika in a wrestling bout, and lifting the Govardana.

The Azhwar recounts the happenings in Lord's incarnation as Sri Krishna, to manifest His 'lilavibhuti'. He danced on the head of Kaliya, but spared his life at the request of his consorts, merely driving him out of his abode in Yamuna, broke the tusks of the wild elephant Kuvalayapeeta, uprooted the trunk of the 'Kurunda'

tree which was actually an asura in tree form, tore off the beak of Bakasura, engaged in 'ra'sakrida' with the gopis, performed the pot dance, finished off the wrestlers Chanura, and Mushtika deployed by Kamsa to kill Him, and lifted on His little finger the Govardana hill to ward off the hail storm created by the enraged and vengeful Indra.

55. அவன்தம ரெவ்வினைய ராகிலும் எங்கோ
னவன் தமரே யென்றொழிவதல்லால் - நமன் தமரா
லாராயப் பட்டறியார் கண்டீர் அரவணைமேல்
பேராயர்க் காட்பட்டார் பேர்.

The messengers of the Lord of Death Yama,cautiously step away from the devotees of Sriman Narayana,whatever the state of their 'Karma',commending them instead with the words,' They are the devotees Of our Master'. What is more, they keep away from even those who, merely bear the names of the devotees of Lord Vishnu Who left His couch, Adishesha to mingle with His devotees as the simple Cow-Herd.

This pasuram is an echo of the advice tendered by Yama to his assistants,(kinkaras) cited in Vishnu Puranam sloka, 3.7.14 to the effect 'பரிஹர மதுஸுதநப் ப்ரபந்நாந் ப்ரபு ரஹமந்யந்ருணாம் நவைஷ்ணவாநாம்'. 'Do not go near the devotees of Madhusudhana. I am the lord of other humans,not of Sri Vaishnavas'. This advice has been beautifully paraphrased by Sri Thirumazhisai Piran in his Nanmugan Thiruvandhati pasuram,(68), 'திறம்பேன் மின்கண்டீர் திருவடி தன் நாமம், மறந்தும் புறந்தொழா மாந்தர் - இறைஞ்சியும் சாதுவராய் போதுமின்களென்றான் நமனுந்தன் தூதுவரைக் கூவிச் செவிக்கு'. Yama further exhorts his kinkaras,' 'கமல நயந வாசுதேவ விஷ்ணோ தரணித ராச்யுத ஸங்க சக்ரபாணே, பவ ஸரணமிதீரயந்தியே வை, த்யஜு பட தூரதரேண தாநபாபாந். (வி.பு 3.7.33)." Those sinless souls who recite 'You are our Refuge,Oh lotus-eyed One, Vasudeva,Vishnu,the Ruler of this earth,Achyuta Who bear the sankha and the Chakra in Thy Hands'.Leave them at a respectful distance". The Azhwar expresses the same thought in his phrase, 'ஒழிவதல்லால்'.

56. பேரே வரப்பிதற்ற லல்லாலெம் பெம்மாணை
 ஆரே யறிவா ரதுநிற்க - நேரே
 கடிக்கமலத் துள்ளிருந்தும் காண்கிலான் கண்ண
 னடிக்கமலந் தன்னை யயன்.

Except reciting His Names even if in disorder, Who can presume to know My Lord. Be that as it may,even Brahma, who stays close to Him seated on the lotus sprung from His Navel can hardly perceive the Lotus Feet of that Lord.

'யோ ப்ரஹ்மாணம் விததாதி பூர்வம யோ வை வேதாம்ஸ்ச ப்ரஹ்மினோதி தஸ்மை' He Who at the outset created Brahma,and Who imparts the instruction of the vedas to him', states the Sveta'svatara Upanishad. Hence Brahma is known as Aja, or 'அயன்' ('ஆதி ஜாயதே இதி அஜ') Even He who is seated on the lotus sprung from the Navel of Sriman Narayana, can hardly comprehend the measure of the Lotus Feet of the Lord. What about others, wonders, the Azhwar in this pasuram.

57. அ யநின்ற வல்வினையை யஞ்சினே னஞ்சி
 உயநின் திருவடியே சேர்வான் - நயநின்ற
 நன்மாலை கொண்டு நமோநாரண வென்னும்
 சொன்மாலை கற்றேன் தொழுது.

I was frightened of the strangle-hold of my sins so near at hand. Thus frightened, and seeking deliverance from them in Thy sacred Feet,I worshipped Thee with this love-laden garland Of verses and recited the verbal floral string 'Namo Narayana'.

Azhwar warns us to beware of the accumulated load of our 'karma' which closely follows us like a shadow.The deliverance from this bondage can come only if we seek the sacred Feet of Sriman Narayana.Poigai Piran set out to do exactly that with his garland of verses suffused with 'shastraic' meaning,and especially the eight-letter 'Thirumantra', 'Om Namo Narayanaya'

58. தொழுது மலர்கொண்டு தூபம் கையேந்தி
எழுது மெழுவாழி நெஞ்சே - பழுதின்றி
மந்திரங்கள் கற்பனவும் மாலடியே கைதொழுவான்
அந்தரமொன் றில்லை யடை.

Be blessed,my heart. Find your liberation in the worship of the Lord, by carrying flowers and incense in your hands. Arise, learning the proper recitation of the Lord's prayer is for the worship of the Lord. Hence there is no reason to tarry. Go to Him.

The Azhwar sets store by learning the 'mantras' about the Lord in the proper manner, that is from an acharya through loving and devoted service to him. Bhagavan is likened to an elephant. If one tries to saddle it, it will toss him aside. But if the mahout gives a hand and guides one onto the saddle, it will gently accept him. The acharya is like the mahout, facilitating our acceptance by the Lord.

59. அடைந்த வருவினையோ டல்லல்நோய் பாவம்
மிடைந்தவை மீண்டொழிய வேண்டில் - நுடங்கிடையை
முன்னிலங்கை வைத்தான் முரணழிய முன்னொருநாள்
தன் விலங்கை வைத்தான் சரண்.

If the anguish,sickness and other untoward effects of the terrible onslaught of past action that keeps one bound, are to be got rid off, Then our refuge is the Lord, Who as Sri Rama, once put His beautiful hand on His bow which resulted in the obliteration of the asura Ravana, who had had the temerity to imprison Sita of slender waist in Lanka.

This pasuram echoes Gita's charama sloka where Sri Krishna exhorts, 'மாமேகம் மரணம் வ்ரஜ - ஸர்வ பாபேப்யோ மோக்ஷயிஷ்யாமி, மா ஸுஃ' 'Surrender unto Me, I shall deliver you from all sins'. The Azhwar says that the very action of Sri Rama putting His beautiful hand on His bow wiped out the pomp and panoply of power of Ravana.

This pasuram is like the centre-piece of the jewel of Azhwar's poetry. The gist of this pasuram is that the situation of the 'jiva'thma'

in the 'samsara' is like that of Sita imprisoned in Lanka. Sita left the task of her deliverance to Sri Rama,' 'தத் தஸ்ய ஸத்ருஸம் பவேத்' - 'It is but appropriate for Him to come and take me'. In a similar fashion, the Jiva without frittering away energy in other means should surrender to the Lord as the Only Refuge, keeping the Divine Mother in the forefront, as the 'purushakara'.

60. சரணு மறைபயந்த தாமரையா னோடு
மரணாய மன்னுயிர்கட் கெல்லாம் - அரணாய
பேராழி கொண்ட பிரானன்றி மற்றறியாது
ஓராழி சூழ்ந்த வுலகு.

Apart from Brahma born in the lotus flower stemming from Thy navel, who was first instructed in the four-fold path of the vedas, the mortal denizens of this world surrounded by the oceans do not know, what power protects them in their life-journey except the Lord, Who holds the mighty Sudarsana in His Hand.

The vedas are referred to as 'சரண்' or means as they declare the four-fold goals or 'purusharthas' of human life, viz. dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Brahma imparts the knowledge of the vedas to the world. The living beings of the world are governed by two immutable laws, the 'sarira dharma', hence, Azhwar says 'மரணாய', and 'a'thma' dharma', 'மன்னுயிர்'. The humanity has no control over these. Sri Krishna says in the Gita, 'மூடோயம் நாபிஜாநாதி'.

61. உலகு முலகிரந்த ஆழியும் ஒண்கேழ்
விலகு கருங்கடலும் வெற்பும் - உலகினில்
செந்தீயும் மாருதமும் வானும் திருமால்தன்
புந்தியி லாய புணர்ப்பு.

All the manifest and unmanifest worlds, the time principle governing them, the beautiful, wavy, blue oceans, the mountains,

the blazing fire, the winds and the sky, are the creation of the Will of the Lord, Who is always in the company of Goddess Lakshmi.

Krishna says in the Gita, (7-4-7), 'Bhumira'ponalova'yuh kham mano Bhuddhireva ca; Ahamka'ra itiyam me bhinna'prakrtirastadha'- 'Earth,water, fire, air,ether,mind,intellect.and ego-this is My prakrti(nature), divided eight-fold'.

'Apareyam itastvanya'm prakrtim viddhi me param; Jivabhuta'm maha'ba'ho yayedam dha'ryate jagat' 'This is the lower aspect.But different from it, know thou, O mighty- armed, My higher prakrti, of the nature of self-awareness, by which this changeful universe is sustained'. 'Etat yonini bhuta'ni sarva 'nityupadha'raya; Aham krtsnasya jagatah pralayasthatha'.'

'Know that these (two prakrtis) are the womb of all beings;I am the origin and dissolution of the whole universe'.

'Mattah parataam na'nyat kinncidasti dhanajaya; Mayi sarvamidam protam sutre 'manigana' iva'.

'Behind me, O Dhananjaya, there is nothing;all this (manifested universe), is strung in Me as a mass of pearls on a thread.'

The word 'திருமால்', makes it clear that the Lord's Consort Sri also has a vital role in 'Jagadsrishti'.This is beautifully stated by Yamunacharya, in sloka 2 of his Chutusloki.

ஈஷத் த்வத் கருணா நிரீக்ஷண ஸுதா ஸந்துக்ஷணாத்
ரக்ஷயதே, நஷ்டம் ப்ராக் ததலாபதஸ் த்ரிபுவனம்
ஸம்ப்ரத்யநந்தோதயம். I

ஸ்ரேயோ ந ஹ்யரவிந்த லோசந மந: காந்தா ப்ரஸாதாத் ருதெ,
ஸம்ஸ்ருத்யக்ஷர வைக்ஷணவாத் வஸு ந்ருணம் ஸம்பாவ்யதே
கர்ஹிசித்.

'The three worlds which were languishing in the absence of the blessing of your look,have blossomed in the nectar of your look of compassion,and are sustained to the levels of immeasurable glory. Without the Grace of Sri Devi Who is ever so dear to the mind

and heart of the lotus-eyed Lord, men cannot attain the heights of worldly prosperity, heavenly bliss or eternal liberation’.

62. புணர்மருதி னூடுபொய்ப் பூங்குருந்தம் சாய்த்து
மணமருவ மால்விடையேழ் செற்று - கணம்வெருவ
ஏழுலகந் தாயனவு மெண்டிசையும் போயினவும்
குழரவப் பொங்கணையான் தோள்.

Hail to the Shoulders of the One Who has for His bed the well-spread and rising Adishesha, which passed through the two inter-twined marudha‘ trees, toppled the flower-laden Kurundha tree, finished off in one stroke the seven bulls in order to marry Nappinnai Devi, and to the consternation of all beings, ascended the seven worlds, and filled the eight directions.

Azhwar hails the soft shoulders of the Lord Who has for His bed the cosy, cool, fragrant spread of Thiruvanatha‘zhva‘n. Yet these Shoulders instead of resting there set out to do so many tasks. The first three episodes listed by Azhwar relate to Krishnavathara. First as a crawling baby, the Lord crawled through two inter-twined marudha‘ trees which were the gandharva’s Nala and Kubara, then toppled the fake flower-laden Kurundha tree which was an asura biding his time to kill Krishna, and then later faced the challenge of seven charging bulls set as wager by the father of Nappinnai, (Nila Devi) for marrying her, and finished them off. The last episode related in this pasuram is about Thiruvikramavathara to vanquish the mighty Mahabali in which Lord Hari assumed Visvarupa and filled all the worlds and directions to the awe and consternation of Devas, asuras and humans.

63. தோளவனை யல்லால் தொழா என் செவியிரண்டும்
கேளவன தின்மொழியே கேட்டிருக்கும் - நாநாளும்
கோணு கணையான் குரைகழலே கூறுவதே
நாணுமை நள்ளேன் நயம்.

My hands will not worship anyone except the Lord, Both my ears will listen only to the melodious words of Him Who is everything to me. My tongue will daily recite the praise of the bejeweled Feet of the One Who has the resplendent Adishesha for His bed. I will never shamelessly go after sensual desires.

‘கேள் அவனது’ He is every Relation in One to us,. ‘மாதா பிதா ப்ராதா - நாராயண’ says Subhalopanishad. ‘கோள் நாகணை’ - bed of immeasurably strong Adishesha. ‘ப்ரக்ருஷ்ட விஞ்ஞாநபலைக தாமநி அநந்த போகிநி’ ‘ - Stotra Ratna -39.’Repository of great wisdom and strength.

64. நயவேன் பிறர்பொருளை நள்ளேன் கீழாரோடு
உயவே னுயர்ந்தவரோ டல்லால் - வியவேன்
திருமாலை யல்லது தெய்வமென் றேத்தேன்
வருமாறென் னென்மேல் வினை.

I will not take for myself that which belongs to Him,Neither will I seek the company of those who are engrossed in lowly concerns about themselves, Nor have any relationship with anyone other than the exalted devotees of the Lord.Nor will I look up to, or marvel at, any god except the Lord of Sri. How will the path of karma point to me?

Poigai Piran considers ‘a‘thma vastu’ inside every being as the possession of the Lord,and thinking of that ‘self’ as the egotistic self is an act of stealing. The sha‘stra’s also equate it with stealing. ‘பிறர்’ in this sense refers to the ‘parama purusha’. ‘உத்தம : புருஷஸ்த்வந்ய :- Gita 15.17. Paramapurusha is different from others. Those who waylay that ‘a ‘thman’ are lowly people.By the same token, those who have the realisation that it is the property of the ‘universal Self’, Sriman Narayana are exalted Srivaishnava’s.

65. வினையா லடர்ப்படார் வெந்நரகில் சேரார்
 தினையேனும் தீக்கதிக்கண் செல்லார் நினைதற்
 கரியானைச் சேயானை ஆயிரம்பேர்ச் செங்கட்
 கரியானைக் கைதொழுதக்கால்.

Those who pray to Him of a thousand Names, endowed with bewitching red eyes, and of dark hue, Who is far and beyond the mental boundaries of anyone, shall never suffer the agony of karma, never descend to hellish depths of 'samsa'ra', nor tread in the slightest, the path of evil proclivities.

'சேயான், நினைதற்கு அரியான்' 'Far beyond where mental boundaries can reach'. 'அப்ராப்ய மநஸா ஸஹ' say the Upanishads. We need His grace to comprehend Him. 'மயர்வற மதிநலமருளினை யவனவன்' says Nammazhwar in Thiruvoimozhi, 1.1.1.

66. காலை யெழுந்துலகம் கற்பனவும் கற்றுணர்ந்த
 மேலைத் தலைமறையோர் வேட்பனவும் - வேலைக்கண்
 ஓராழி யானடியே யோதுவது மோர்ப்பனவும்
 பேராழி கொண்டான் பெயர்.

What the exalted souls desiring liberation recite at the break of dawn, and what the vedic wise-men wish to see is the Feet of the Lord, with the flaming disc resting on the milk-ocean. These holy men constantly hear and meditate upon the sacred names of the Lord with the big Disc.

The term 'உலகம்' in this pasuram refers to 'mumukshus'. 'காலை' also can refer to the prime of youth, as Nammzhwar's pasuram (Thiruvoimozhi 2.10.1.), 'கிளரொளியிளமை கெடுவதன் முன்னம்' stresses that the best stage of one's life is the youth when one's faculties are optimally geared for learning. 'வேலைக்கண்' refers to the milk ocean. 'வேலை' literally means bank. 'கண்' means vast expanse.

67. பெயருங் கருங்கடலே நோக்குமாறு ஒண்பூ
 உயருங் கதிரவனே நோக்கும் - உயிரும்
 தருமனையே நோக்குமொண் தாமரையான் கேள்வன்
 ஒருவனையே நோக்கு முணர்வு.

The rivers flow towards the big blue ocean. The resplendent lotus blossoms at the sight of the morning sun on the sky above. Life reaches the abode of Yama at the end of its journey. The inner consciousness revolves round the Consort of Lakshmi.

It is the nature of the river to flow towards the sea even as the lotus blossoms only in the warmth of the rising sun.' 'செந்தழலே வந்தழலைச் செய்திடினும் செங்கமலம் அந்தரஞ் சேர் வெங்கதிரோற் கல்லால் அலராவால்', (பெருமாள் திருமொழி 5.6.) Similarly, the departing life reaches the abode of Yama the god of death. So the Azhwar concludes that, if there is such a thing as inner consciousness, it can only know one thing, and that is Sriman Narayana, the Consort of Lakshmi. That is the only true knowledge, the rest is ignorance. As Vishnu Puranam declares in 6.5.87, 'ஸம்ஜ்ஞாயதே யேந ததஸ்ததோஷம் ஸ்ரத்தம் பரம் நிர்மலமேகரூபம், ஸந்த்ருஸ்யதே வா஽ப் யதி கம்யதே வா, த் ஜ்ஞாநமதோ ஸ்யதுக்தம். That by which the 'param' which is flawless, pure, unparalleled, is grasped, perceived, and attained is wisdom. ('நாராயணம் மஹாஜ்ஞேயம்'). Anything other than that is ignorance."

68. உணர்வாரா ருன்பெருமை யூழிதோ றூழி
 உணர்வாரா ருன்னுருவந் தன்னை - உணர்வாரார்
 விண்ணகத்தாய் மண்ணகத்தாய் வேங்கடத்தாய் நால்வேதப்
 பண்ணகத்தாய் நீ கிடந்த பால்.

Oh Lord of Srivaikunta, Lord come to tread this earth in various incarnations. Lord of Thiruvengkata hill, Who art the substratum of the musical four vedas. Who can comprehend Thy greatness? Even if one sits in contemplation, through the aeons, who can grasp within his mental frame Thy image? Who can fathom the depths of the milk ocean on which Thou art resting?

Azhwar echoes the doubt expressed by the vedas in the words, 'யோ அஸ்யாத்யக்ஷ: பரமே வ்யோமந் ஸோ அங்க வேத யதி வா ந வேத' 'He Who is the Master of this world and resides in paramapada-even He knows His own greatness or not', it is difficult to say'. Can anyone even presume to understand? That is why even the Vedapurusha speaking about how He has known the 'param' declares, 'வேதாஹமேதம் புருஷம் மஹாந்தம்' that is as 'immeasurable Great Entity'. The Upanishads state that the rare awakened souls comprehend His origin.' 'தஸ்ய தீரா: பரிஜாநந்தி யோநிம்'. None else.

69. பாலன் நனதுருவா யேமுலகுண்டு ஆலிலையின்
மேலன்றுநீவளர்ந்த மெய்யென்பார் - ஆலன்று
வேலைநீ ருள்ளதோ விண்ணதோ மண்ணதோ
சோலைகூழ் குன்றெடுத்தாய் சொல்லு.

Those knowledgeable sages say that it was true that Thou rested at the time of the deluge in the form of a small baby on a banyan leaf, tucking away the seven worlds in Thy small stomach. Oh Lord, Who lifted the Govardana hill surrounded by gardens. Only Thou must tell, if at that moment, the banyan leaf floated on the waters, or hung from the sky, or was meshed with the dissolved earth.

The Azhwar marvels at what the sages of yore have always affirmed about the immeasurable and ineffable 'swaruparupa guna vibhuti' of the Lord. He of limitless form contracted into a tiny baby and inside the stomach of that baby all the worlds manifest and unmanifest were safely tucked away in a corner at the time of the 'maha'pralaya'. Then, He slept on a small banyan leaf waiting for the waters to recede. Then again in Krishnavathara, as a mere seven-year old boy, He lifted the Govardana hill like an umbrella and held it up on His little finger for seven days and nights giving protection and comfort to hundreds of people and cattle of Gokulam from the fury of Indra.

70. சொல்லுந் தனையும் தொழுமின் விழுமுடம்பு
செல்லுந் தனையும் திருமாலை - நல்லிதழ்த்
தாமத்தால் வேள்வியால் தந்திரத்தால் மந்திரத்தால்
தாமத்தா லேத்துதிரேல் நன்று.

While you have all your faculties in tact, pray to the Consort of Lakshmi. It is good when the mortal frame is in shape, that you worship Him daily with a garland of beautiful flowers,or sacrifice,or performance of daily obligatory karma, prayers, or singing of His praise whatever.

Azhwar exhorts us in this pasuram to seek the Lord's grace through the 'purushakara' of the Divine Mother Who intervenes with the Lord for our sake, even while all our faculties and physical powers are in tact, The Azhwar lists a host of ways in which we can do that,including just reciting His Names.It is said that Nanjeeyar asked his master Bhattar if one should not follow a system to recite the Lord's Names.Bhattar answered him thus, 'Does a person who goes to bathe in Ganges for self-purification need to bathe in a pond first?'

71. நன்று பிணிமூப்புக் கையகற்றி நான் கூழி
நின்று நிலமுமுது மாண்டாலும் - என்றும்
விடலாழி நெஞ்சமே வேண்டினேன் கண்டாய்
அடலாழி கொண்டான்மாட் டன்பு.

O my sea-like deep heart,I implore you. Even if you succeed in overcoming age and disease,and get to live through the aeons and rule the worlds, never,never let go of your love for the Lord Who wields the golden Sudarsana.

Poigai Piran first refers to the 'kaivalya' purusha'rtha' which promises heavenly happiness.It is simply freedom from the effects of sickness and age,what Krishna calls 'jara'marana moksham'in the Gita,7.29. This is long-lasting through the four aeons but subject to the time principle.Some people approach the Lord for this reward. By the phrase,' நின்று நிலமுமுதுமாண்டாலும்', Azhwar refers to the

higher limits of the 'aishwarya' purusha'rtham. This is again subject to the time principle. Further, no one can aspire to enjoy both purusha'rthams simultaneously. For the 'gnani', the superordinate goal and reward is 'bhagavat kainkarya'. So the Azhwar exhorts, 'no matter what purusha'rtha, you get, never ever give up love of the Lord, because 'bhagavadhanubhava' is beyond the limits of time.'..

72. அன்பாழியானை யணுகென்னும் நாவவன்றன்
பண்பாழித் தோள்பரவி யேத்தென்னும் - முன்பூழி
காணனைக் காணென்னும் கண்ணெவி கேளென்னும்
பூணாரம் பூண்டான் புகழ்.

**Oh my love-filled heart, May you reach out to the Chakra-
holding Lord. May my tongue sing the praise of the beautiful
shoulders of that Lord. May my eyes set their sight on the
Lord Who is beyond time. May my ears ever keep hearing the
praise of the Lord wearing the pearl necklace.**

In the previous pasuram the Azhwar implored his heart not to give up loving the Lord. In this pasuram, his love-filled heart seems to respond to his plea reassuring him not to have any qualms about it but to go on, without let or hindrance, in the pursuit of his devotion to the Lord. Not only the heart but all the instruments of his knowledge such as his eyes, ears, tongue etc. seem to tell him that.

73. புகழ்வாய் பழிப்பாய்நீ பூந்துழா யானை
இகழ்வாய் கருதுவாய் என்நெஞ்சே - திகழ்நீர்க்
கடலு மலையு மிருவிசும்புங் காற்றும்
உடலு முயிருமேற்றான்.

**Oh my heart, regardless of what you do, whether you sing
the praise of the Lord adorned by the beautiful tulasi garland,
or decry Him or ignore Him or ponder over Him, He is the
One Who is the underlying Cause and Sustainer of the gross**

forms like the deep sea and the sprawling mountains, and the prime elements like the sky, and the winds, in effect of the manifest universe, and the pulsating life principle behind it.

Azhwar reminds us that regardless of what we feel about Him, let us pause and ponder what He is, and what the perceived world in its gross and subtle forms is, and the supporting life principle and the consciousness that illumines our knowledge and awareness of what is perceived, which are the modes of His sport. In other words, what the Azhwar implies is that once we understand this truth, it will be impossible to forsake Him.

74. ஏற்றான் புள்ளூர்ந்தா னெயிலெரித்தான் மார்விடந்தான்
நீற்றான் நிழல்மணி வண்ணத்தான் - கூற்றொருபால்
மங்கையான் பூமகளான் வார்சடையான் நீண்முடியான்
கங்கையான் நீள்கழலான் காப்பு.

The Lord Whose favoured vehicle is the mighty Garuda the embodiment of vedic knowledge, the Lord with a form resembling a cool blue jewel on Whose chest Goddess Sri is snugly ensconced, the Lord with a long crown on His Head, and with long Feet from Which sprang the river Ganga, Who Tore the chest of Hiranya for the sake of His devotee Prahlada, is the Protector of Siva of long matted tresses and wearing ashes all over his body who rides the bull, who destroyed in a bonfire, the three fortresses, and who carries, on a part of his body, his spouse Parvathi, and bore on his head the brunt of the torrent of Ganga falling from the sky.

Azhwar enumerates the differences between Sriman Narayana and Siva, to drive home the point that Sriman Narayana is the Protector of Siva.

75. காப்புன்னை யுன்னக் கழியு மருவினைகள்
ஆப்புன்னை யுன்ன வவிழ்ந்தெழியும் - மூப்புன்னைச்
சிந்திப்பார்க் கில்லை திருமாலே நின்னடியை
வந்திப்பார் காண்பர் வழி.

On meditating upon Thee, the lesser gods will leave one alone. On meditating upon Thee the shackles of one's karma unshackle on their own, and cease to bind. Those who meditate upon Thee are not visited by the ugliness of old age. Oh, Lord of Lakshmi, they who worship Thy Feet find the way to their liberation.

The lesser gods like the sun, moon, the five elements, the four parts of the day, manas, yama and dharma are fourteen in all, and designed to bear witness to man's actions. Azhwar says that once they come to know that the Lord has become our Recourse and Goal, they leave the scene, and do not come our way. Please refer to Yama's injunction to His Kinkara's cited in Vishnupura'nam, quoted in pasuram 55.

Srimad Bhagavatam also says in 11.5.4., 'தேவர்ஷி பூதாப்த ந்ருணம் பித்ருணம், ந கிங்கரோ நாயம் ருணீ ச ராஜன்' ஸர்வாத்மநாய: ஸரணம் ஸரண்யம், நாராயணம் லோககுரும் ப்ரபன்ன : II 'O King, whosoever surrenders to Sri Narayana, the Master of the worlds, and the Refuge of all, is neither the bonded servant, nor in debt to any devas, sages, elements, relatives, or forefathers. Azhwar goes on to assure us that once we meditate on Him, the shackles of 'punya', and 'papa, born out of 'avidya', 'anyatha'gnanam', and 'viparitha gnanam', on their own cease to bind us. With that, the physical 'vika'ra's', too leave us. These are the 'vika'ra's' of 'asti', 'ja'yate'', 'parinamate', 'vardate'', 'apakshiyate', and 'mriyate'. They will find the way, 'வழி காண்பர்' even in this world, and in this life.

76. வழிநின்று நின்னைத் தொழுவார் வழுவா
மொழிநின்ற மூர்த்தியரே யாவர் - பழுதொன்றும்
வாராத வண்ணமே விண்கொடுக்கும் மண்ணளந்த
சீரான் திருவேங்கடம்.

They who worship Thee steadfast in their devotion, find their identity, as declared in the vedic gospel of truth. Does not the Thiruvenkata hill of the compassionate Lord Who once scaled the worlds, confer the bliss of Sri Vaikunta,even while warding off stumbling blocks?

ஆத்மா வாஶ ரே த்ரஷ்ட்வ்ய ஸ்ரோதவ்யோ மந்தவ்யோ
'நிதித்யாஸிதவ்ய: (Bri. Upanishad, 6.5.6.)' The 'a'thman' that is
peceived and is to be listened to, is to be contemplated and
meditated upon'. 'வழிநின்று தொழுதல்' - Brihadaranyaka
Upanishad says, 'உபாஸநம் த்ருவா ஸ்ம்ருதி, தர்ஸநஸமாநாகாரதா
ப்ரத்யக்ஷதாபத்தி', 'upa'sana',constant remembrance, eqanimity,and
reaching a state of oneness with the Self'.Sri Krishna says in the
Gita, 'பக்த்யா மாமபி ஜாநாதி யாவாந்யஸ்சாஶஸ்மி தத்வத: ததோ மாம்
தத்வதோ ஜ்ஞாத்வா விஸதே தத நந்தரம்' 'II (Gita 18.55.) 'What I
am in reality,(in 'svarupa''and 'svabha'va'), he who understands by
his devotion, then realises my true identity., and attains me through
the same devotion.'The upa'saka resorts to the instruments of
'sa'dhana bhakthi', viz. 'sravanam',,'mananam',,'dhya'nam',
'upa'sanam', and 'dharsanam'.The 'prapanna'' on the other hand
is steadfast in total surrender looking upon the Lord as the Way.
Both ultimately reach their goal and realise their identity with the
'param jyothirupa sampath',viz.Sriman Narayana.The forte of the
'upa'saka'' is his steadfast application.The strong point of the
'prapanna' is his determination in looking upon Sriman Narayana
as the Way.Moksha is not a new state.It is the rediscovery of one's
true self for ever which remained bogged down in the 'prakriti
samslesha''.In the latter part of the pasuram, Azhwar states that the
Thiruvenkata hill assures the same bliss.

77. வேங்கடமும் விண்ணகரும் வெஃகாவும் அஃகாத
பூங்கிடங்கின் நீள்கோவல் பொன்னகரும் - நான் கிடத்தும்
நின்றா னிருந்தான் கிடந்தான் நடந்தானே
என்றால் கெடுமா மிடர்.

If merely one recounts that the Lord is in state, standing, seated, reclining, and in stride respectively at the Venkatadri, Srivaikunta, Thiruvekka, and the beautiful and enchanting Thirukkovalur of densely blooming, flower-laden paths, then all the perils that hover round one's path in all these states, simply vanish.

Azhwar mentions these four 'divya-desa's' only to assure us that not only Thiruvenkata, but in fact all 'divya-desa's' have this feature of washing off our sins.

78. இடரார் படுவா ரெழுநெஞ்சே !வேழம்
தொடர்வான் கொடுமுதலை சூழ்ந்த - படமுடைய
பைந்நாகப் பள்ளியான் பாதமே கைதொழுதும்
கோய்ந்நாகப் பூம்போது கொண்டு.

Arise, my dear heart, to worship the Feet of our Lord with beautiful flowers, gathered from the wild 'punnai' tree, the One Who has for His bed, the dazzlingly hooded, spacious Anantha, the Lord that once felled the viciously powerful crocodile which stalked Gajendra. What suffering can ever torment anyone who worships Him thus?

Poigai Piran says that the Lord is easily pleased even with flowers that grow in the wild.

79. கொண்டானை யல்லால் கொடுத்தாரை யார்பழிப்பார்
மண்தா வெனவிரந்து மாவலியை - ஒண்டாரை
நீரங்கை தோய நிமிர்ந்திலையே நீள்விசம்பி
லாரங்கை தோய வடுத்து.

At the instant, when Thou as Vamana asked for three paces of land from Mahabali, and his symbolic sprinkling of water fell on Thy pretty, outstretched Hand, did not Thy Hands grow tall in the twinkling of an eye, ensconcing the denizens of the heavens in their protective fold? Yet, is it not the way of this world that it belittles the Taker, and not the giver, Who presumes to give that which does not really belong to him.?

The tiny Vamana grew in an instant as Trivikrama, encompassing not only this earth, but all the worlds. Azhwar says 'நீள் விசம்பிலார்..... தோய நிமிர்ந்திலையே', of the denizens of the upper worlds like Brahma etc. who flocked to rub against the Lord's form to show their love, and seek refuge under His protective fold. Poigai Piran states a truism about the way of the world which is full of people who, more often than not, construe a virtue as a weakness and vice versa. The Lord contracted Himself into diminutive Vamana and asked for just three paces of this earth, out of this limitless universe which truly belongs to him. Instead of marvelling at His generosity of heart, the world cavils at Him as a 'cheat', Who showed one form to ask for a gift apparently small, but took away everything in the end. On the other hand, there is no one to criticise Mahabali who, even when he was fully aware of the true identity of the tiny brahmin boy as Sriman Narayana Himself, still dared to gift away the property of the Lord Himself.

80. அடுத்த கடும்பகைஞர் காற்றேனென் றோடி
படுத்த பெரும்பாழி சூழ்ந்த - விடத்தரவை
வல்லாளன் கைகொடுத்த மாமேனி மாயவனுக்கு
அல்லாது மாவரோ ஆள்.

Can one be a supplicant to anyone other than the Lord of amazing powers, and enchanting form Who entrusted the

venomous snake to the hands of the strong Garuda, when the former fearing for his life, at the hands of his traditional enemy,had hastened to seek the protection of the Lord Himself.

The story recounted in this pasuram is that of the nether world snake Sumukha whom Garuda (Peria Thiruvadi) had marked as his next meal.Becoming aware of Garuda's design, Sumukha sought the protection of Sriman Narayana when He was in Indralokha' as Upendra.Garuda asked Upendra if He would take his meal away from him,when he was His mode of carriage. Narayana chastised Garuda saying that when He was carrying all the worlds including Garuda, how could Garuda presume to think that he was carrying the Lord. So saying the Lord put His right Hand on the body of Garuda who unable to bear the weight of the Lord's Hand, stood feeble in body and prayed to the Lord for forgiveness. Narayana then entrusted Sumukha to the care of Garuda,by placing the snake on his hands.

81. ஆளமர் வென்றி யடுகளத்து ளஞ்ஞான்று
வாளமர் வேண்டி வரைநட்டு - நீளவைச்
சுற்றிக் கடைந்தான் பெயரன்றே தொல்நரகைப்
பற்றிக் கடத்தும் படை.

The sacred names of the One Who set down the 'Mantara' mountain as the churner and tied the long snake Vasuki as the rope round it, a long time ago,to aid the victory of deva's in the fierce battle-field teeming with adversaries, are the protective charm that takes His devotees to safe haven,beyond old cavernous hell.

The Lord's names are more powerful than the Lord Himself.Even if the Lord appears to be beyond our reach,His Names are always near at hand and come to our rescue.Was that not proved more than once in the case of Draupadi's 'vastra'paharanam',and Gajendra'.

82. படையாரும் வாக்ஷணஞர் பாரசிநாள் பைம்பூம்
தொடையலோ டேந்திய தூபம் - இடையிடையில்
மீன்மாய மாசூனும் வேங்கடமே மேலொருநாள்
மான்மாய வெய்தான் வரை.

The damsels with sparkling eyes resembling spears carry beautiful flowers, and incense sticks for offering prayers to the Lord of Venkata hill on the holy twelfth day of the fortnight. That Venkata hill where the fragrant smoke from the incense rises high screening and making blurred the scattered stars on the firmament, is the abode of the One Who shot an arrow once since long past, to finish off that trickster asura who came disguised as a deer.

Azhwar refers to 'dva'dasi' when Sri Vaishnavas break their previous day's fast after prayers to Sriman Narayana. Because it is dawn, some scattered stars are still visible on the sky. But the fragrant smoke that rises from the incense sticks carried by the damsels who hasten for their morning worship, spreads wide and high to obscure the sky and the visibility of the stars. Azhwar says that the Venkata hill is the abode of the Lord Who in an earlier incarnation as Sri Rama, shot an arrow that felled the trickster Maricha who had come disguised as a golden deer to cast a spell on Sita.

83. வரைகுடைதோள் காம்பாக ஆநிரைகாத்து ஆயர்
நிரைவிடையேழ் செற்றவா நென்னே - உரவுடைய
நீராழி யுள்கிடந்து நேரா நிசாசரர்மேல்
பேராழி கொண்ட பிரான்.

Oh Lord, resting in the surfing milk ocean, Who directed the mighty Sudarsana against the asura adversaries, how did Thou lift up the Govardana as an umbrella on the stem of Thy Shoulders to shield the cattle herd from rain, and fight and kill the seven bulls set as a wager by the cowherds?

The first episode referred to in this pasuram, relates to the

extermination of the asura twins Madhu and Kaidaba. Azhwar marvels that instead of wielding the mighty Sudarsana to subjugate Indra when he unleashed his onslaught of rain on Gokulam, Sri Krishna Himself lifted up the Govardana on His fingers to give shelter to the people and cattle of Gokulam from the fury of Indra's action. That apart, when they set the conquest of seven charging bulls as the wager for the hand of Nappinnai, the Lord prevailed over and killed the bulls. Azhwar asks the Lord how, the implication being that it is the Lord's limitless va'tsalya' towards His devotees that made Him make those exertions.

84. பிரானுன் பெருமை பிறரா ரறிவார்
உரா யுலகளந்த நான்து - வராகத்
தெயிற்றளவு போதாவா நென்கொலோ எந்தை
அடிக்களவு போந்தபடி.

Oh Lord, How come that the same earth which snugly fitted the size of my Master's Foot when Thou strode the worlds effortlessly, appeared to be just a fragment of Thy tooth as Varaha? Who but Thou can comprehend Thy Greatness?

The apparent inconsistency in the question posed by the Azhwar to the Lord is explained thus. Under Mahabali's hegemony there was no threat to the integrity of this earth, or security of its beings, because Mahabali had only taken it away from Indra's suzerainty. But Hiranyakasipu posed a greater threat since he had taken this earth under the ocean and hidden it. As such the latter's action was fraught with far greater peril to the survival of life itself. Hence the Lord's protective instinct in Sri Varaha avathara predominated over that in Sri Vamanavathara.

'உன் பெருமை பிறர் ஆர் அறிவார்' asks Poigai Piran, echoing the doubt expressed in the vedic statement, 'ஸோ அங்க வேத யதி வா ந வேத', 'whether that Maha'purusha' understands His Greatness or not.'

85. படிசண் டறிதியே பாம்பணையினான்புட்
கொடிகண் டறிதியே கூறாய் - வடிவில்
பொறியைந்து முள்ளடக்கிப் போதொடு நீரேந்தி
நேறிநின்ற நெஞ்சமே நீ.

O my heart, which is firmly fixed on the goal of reaching Oneness with Him, With control over the five feckless sense organs, And with flowers and holy water in hand. Tell me, if you Have witnessed and enjoyed the beauty of the Lord resting on Anantha or His flag sporting the eagle King Garuda.

Sri Krishna said in the Gita, 'சந்சலம் ஹி மந:'. Thirumangai Azhwar says, 'நின்றவா நில்லா நெஞ்சு' (பெ. திரு.1) and 'கண்டவா திரிந்த தொண்டனேன்' (பெ. திரு.1.6.3.). to underline the fickleness of the human mind.

86. நீயும் திருமகளும் நின்றாயால் குன்றெடுத்துப்
பாயும் பனிமறைத்த பண்பாளா - வாசல்
கடைகழியா வுள்புகாக் காமர்பூங் கோவல்
இடைகழியே பற்றி யினி.

Oh my Lord of deep campassion Who lifted the Govardana to ward off The blitz of hailstorm. Did Thou not materialise with the Divine Mother Sri Before me in the corridor at Thirukkoyalur – Where both art and nature overflow to embellish its beauty – Without appearing to be not entering nor exiting?

Azhwar says 'பாயும் பனி மறைத்த பண்பாளா', to signify the falling hailstorm, unleashed by Indra's wrath. Thirumangai Azhwar referring to the same event says, 'கல்லெடுத்துக் கல் மாரிகாத்தாய்' (திரு -நெடு 13.). The Lord stood in the corridor, (where the three Azhwars were standing), without appearing to be not entering the house nor going out. Outside are samsaris who aspire for worldly pleasures. Inside is the sage well-versed in the intricacies of the way to follow. Bhagava'n in contrast seeks the company of the Azhwars who look upon Him as the Goal as well as the Means. So the Lord in Thirukkoyalur has come to be referred to as 'Dehaleesan',

(இடைக்கழிப் பெருமாள்) about Whom Sri Desika has composed a stotra called, 'Dehaleesa Stuti'. Poigai Piran says 'நீயும் திருமகளும் நின்றாயால்'. The Divine Mother is always there to intercede with the Lord for Her children, pleading, 'கிமேதந்நிர்த்தோஷ க இஹ ஜகதி' (பூர் குண') ந கம்சிந் நாபராத்யதி', (ரா.யு.116.44). 'Is there anyone in this world,who is not guilty of infractions?' Is She not 'அகலகில்லேன் இறையும் மலர்மேல் மங்கை' - (திருவாய் மொழி 6.10.10.)

87. இனியார் புகுவா ரெழுநரக வாசல்
முனியாது மூரித்தாள் கோமின் - கனிசாயக்
கன்றெறிந்த தோளான் கனைகழலே காண்பதற்கு
நன்கறிந்த நாவலஞ்சூழ் நாடு.

The beings of this beautiful land of Jambudvipa are well acquainted with the way to reach the anklet-adorned Feet of the Lord of lovely Shoulders which hurled the killer asura who came disguised as a calf at another asura who stood hidden in a wood-apple tree. Who will enter the teeming gates of hell from now? O emissaries of Yama, bolt those gates securely without ire at us.

Azhwar says that even if the beings are 'samsa'ris', steeped in other pursuits they are wise enough to understand that living around the 'divya desa' of Thirukkoyalur is the surest insurance to reach Sri Vaikunta. 'அச்சவை பெறினும் வேண்டேன் (திருமாலை -1).

88. நாடிலும் நின்னடியே நாடுவன் நாடோறும்
பாடிலும் நின்புகழே பாடுவன் - சூடிலும்
பொன்னாழி யேந்தினான் பொன்னடியே சூடுவேற்கு
என்னாகி லென்னே யெனக்கு.

When my mind wanders, it will only wander round Thy Feet. When I sing everyday,I shall sing only Thy praise.If I think of wearing anything on my head,I shall only like to wear the

golden Feet of the Lord Who holds the golden Sudarsana. What does it matter to me what happens,?

Azhwar looks upon the Lord as his Goal in the three-fold manner of mind,tongue,and body ('மனோவாக்கு காயம்'). Azhwar rounds up the pasuram saying that he is not concerned what others do,in the manner of Nammazhwar in Peria Thiruvandhati,(25)

'ஆரானு மாதானும் செய்ய அகலிடத்தை
ஆராய்ந்து அது திருத்தலாவதே - சீரார்
மனத்தலை வன் துன்பத்தை மாற்றினேன் வானோர்
இனத்தலைவன் கண்ணனால் யான்'

89. எனக்காவா ராரொருவ ரே, எப்பெருமான்
தனக்காவான் தானேமற் றல்லால் - புன க்காயாம்
பூமேனிகாணப் பொதியவிழும் பூவைப்பு
மாமேனி காட்டும் வரம்.

The colour of 'ka'ya'm' flower blooming in its congenial soil, and the colour of 'poovai' flower which blossoms but a little at every gaze,brings to my mind, crystal clear, the beautiful Form of the Lord.Is there anyone equal to me,blessed as I am? Even the Lord of all worlds is but equal to Himself, but not to me.

Azhwar's ecstasy in contemplating the complexion of the Lord's Form, and seeing Him reflected in everything that he sees,knows no bounds in this pasuram sending him into seemingly boastful rapture. The reason for Poigai Piran's ecstasy lies in his 'bhagavadhanubhavam'born out of the Lord's own 'nirhetukakrupa'. It drives him to feel that even the Lord Who is unequalled on His own in His 'Seshithvarasa', is, for that reason, unequal to him.One may refer in this connection to Nammazhwar's Peria Thiruvandhathi pasuram, (49)

'கொண்டல்தான் மால்வரைதான் மாகடல்தான் கூரிருள்தான்
வண்டறாப் பூவைதான் மற்றுத்தான் - கண்டநாள்
காருருவம் காண்தோறும் செஞ்சோடும் கண்ணனார்
பேருரு வென்றெம்மைப் பிரிந்து.

Again in Na'chia'r Thirumozhi, Anda'l says (9.4.)

'பைம்பொழில் வாழ் குயில்காள் மயில்காள் ஒண்கருவினைகாள்
வம்பர் களங்கனிகாள் வண்ணப்பூவை நறுமலர்காள்'

90. வரத்தால் வலிநினைந்து மாதவ நின்பாதம்

சிரத்தால் வங்கானா மென்றே - உரத்தினால்

ஈரியாய் நேர்வலியோ னாய விரணியனை

ஓரியாய் நீயிடந்த தூன்.

Oh, Madhava, Thou did as incomparable Nrsimha tear asunder with Thy strength the formidable Hiranya who deserved his fate. Was it because he became too inflated with his ego due to the boons that he had obtained, and failed to bow at Thy Feet in reverence?

'ஈரியாய்' has two meanings, 1. 'deserved to be torn apart, 2, also 'worthy adversary'. Hiranya became too vain, thinking about the boons he had obtained from Brahma, little realising that Brahma's capacity to grant those boons stemmed from Narayana's grace.

Azhwar poses a rhetorical question at the end of the pasuram. The answer obviously is no because Azhwar knows very well that the Lord does not need Hiranya's obeisance to add to His Greatness. For is He not in the words of Thirumazhisai Piran, நான்முகன்திரு.75 'நலமாகுத் தீக்கொண்ட செஞ்சடையான் சென்று, என்றும் பூக்கொண்டு வல்லவாரேத்த மகிழாத வைகுந்தச் செல்வனார்'

Then what was the reason for the Lord's fury against Hiranya?

It was because the latter wrought unpardonable suffering on the Lord's beloved devotee Prahlada. Kurathazhwar expresses this beautifully in his Varadarajasthavam,(68)

'யத பராத ஸஹஸ்ரமஜஸ்ரஜம், த்வயி மரண்ய உபாவஹத் வரத தேந சிரம் த்வமவிக்ரிய : விக்ருதிமர்ப்ப கநிர்ப்ப ஜநாத கா:' II

'O Varada, since he ceaselessly committed thousands of heinous sins towards Thee, Thou Who had never known anger in

a long time became furious in only a little time by the provocation of his heaping cruelty on Thy devotee Prahlada.'

91. ஊனக் குரம்பையி னுள்புக் கிருள் நீக்கி
ஞானச்சுடர் கொளிஇ நாடோறும்-ஏனத்
துருவா யுலகிடந்த வூழியான் பாதம்
மருவாதார்க் குண்டாமோ வான்.

Will they ever see deliverance that do not everyday remember to bow before the Feet of Him Who, entering this frame of flesh remains inside to dispel the ignorance born out of our sense of identification with the mortal frame, and kindles the light of spiritual awakening, Who as Varaha retrieved this earth and protects it at the time of total dissolution?

Poigai Piran asks in this pasuram if those who have no taste for the nectar of the Lord's Feet, can ever hope to reach His abode. Should we not remember Him Who remembers us in our last moments with the assurance, 'அஹம் ஸ்மராம்'. Why should Azhwar say 'நாள் தோறும்' 'மருவாதார்க்கு' when all that is required is 'prapatti' once. The answer is that if once the 'prapatti' is done by a Sri Vaishnava, the imprint of that is not something that goes away. Azhwar drives home the vedic truth 'நாந்ய பந்தா வித்யதேSயநாய'. There is no other way to attain liberation from the bonds of this world.

92. வானாகித் தீயாய் மறிகடலாய் மாருதமாய்
தேனாகிப் பாலாம் திருமாலே - ஆனாய்ச்சி
வெண்ணெய் விழுங்க நிறையுமே முன்னொருநாள்
மண்ணை யுமிழ்ந்த வயிறு.

Oh the Lord of Sri, That art palpable in the form of the sky, the fire, the surging ocean and the wind, and like sweet milk and honey To Thy devotees. Tell me, when Thou swallowed the butter churned by the cow-herd women, did that fill Thy

stomach that once upon a time incubated and brought forth the whole universe?

The Lord is described as 'ava'pthasamasthaka'ma' i.e. one who has every kind of fulfilled desire. But contrary to this description, He as Krishna fondly ate the butter churned by Yashoda and other gopis in Gokulam, because of His boundless va'tsalya. So much is His love for the touch of His devotees. The sky, the fire, the sea, and the wind describe the 'lilavibhuti yoga' of Sriman Narayana. The honey and milk denote the 'nithya vibhuti yoga' of Him to the 'nithya muktha's', who are the denizens of Sri Vaikunta. Apart from, and beyond this 'ubhaya vibhuti', He is 'Lakshmi Natha'.,(திருமால்).

93. வயிறழல வாளுருவி வந்தானை யஞ்சு
எயிறிலக வாய்மடுத்த தென்நீ - பொறியுகிரால்
பூவடிவை யீடழித்த பொன்னாழிக் கையா நின்
சேவடிமே லீடழியச் செற்று.

Oh Lord of beautiful and soft hands that hold the golden Sudarsana, before which flowers pale into insignificance, Who cast the asura Hiranya –that charged at Thee with drawn sword That made stomachs turn- on Thy lap and tore to bits with razor-sharp nails. How come that even after destroying him, Thou continued to flare Thy upper lip flashing Thy teeth in unabated fury?

In this pasuram also, Azhwar poses a rhetorical question and stops short of answering it as the answer is obvious. Since Hiranya's sin was 'bha'gavatha apacha'ra'', Nrsimha Bhagavan's fury was unabated, even after killing Hiranya. 'அத ராமோ மஹாதேஜா ராவணேன க்ருத வ்ரணம் த்ருஷ்ட்வா ப்லவக ஸார்த்தூலம் கோபஸ்ய வஸமேயிவான்' II (ரா.யு.59-136).' Then the great effulgent Sri Rama beholding Sri Hanuman, the preeminent among the Vanaras hurt by Ravana, became very angry.'

94. செற்றெழுந்து தீவிழித்துச் சென்றவிந்த வேமுலகும்
மற்றிவையா வென்று வாயங்காந்து - முற்றும்
மறையவற்குக் காட்டிய மாயவனை யல்லால்
இறையேனு மேத்தா தென்நா.

Excepting Sri Krishna of awesome powers Who rose in anger in the court, spitting fire at His adversaries, opening His mouth declaring 'These are the seven worlds that were inside my stomach', and revealed the whole manifest universe to the learned ones in that assembly, My tongue will not sing in the least the praise of anyone else.

One evident construction of this pasuram is the 'visvarupa darsana' of Sri Krishna in the court of the Kaurava's. This is the construction that has been reflected in the translation given above. Another construction is the 'Markandeya vritha'nta nirvaham' which is related in Mahabharatham, Aranya Parvam. In this episode, the Lord shows the entire universe to sage Markandeya inside His Stomach, after destroying it. In pasuram 64, Poigai Piran had already said, 'திருமாலையல்லது தெய்வ மென்றேத்தேன்' to signify that He will not sing the praise of other gods. In this pasuram, Azhwar goes a step further to say 'இறையேனும் ஏத்தாதென்நா, indicating that He will not sing the praise of even other forms of the Lord like, 'param', 'vyuha' and other 'vibhava'vatha'ra's,(excepting Krishna's).

95. நாவாயி லுண்டே நமோநார ணுவென்று
ஓவா துரைக்கு முரையுண்டே - மூவாத
மாக்கதிக்கண் செல்லும் வகையுண்டே என்றொருவர்
தீக்கதிக்கண் செல்லும் திறம்.

The tongue is there in the mouth to sing His praise. The eminently chantable Mantra of 'Om Namō Narayanaya' is with us for ever. The Way from which there is no return which leads to the land of ultimate liberation, Sri Vaikunta, is ready at hand. Is it not strange then, that there are still misguided ones who choose the path of affliction?

‘நாவாயிலுண்டே’ One does not have to look outside to seek any instrument with which to pray to the Lord. The tongue is there in everyone’s mouth. Budat Azhwar says in the same vein, ‘தாமுளரே தம்முள்ளம் உள்ளதே’. ‘We are there, our hearts are there inside us.’

‘Thiruvashtha‘kara’ mantra is not like ‘sahasra‘kshari ma‘la‘ mantra’, which takes several hours of strenuous recitation. It is just eight letters. Still, how could people run after paths that can lead only to suffering and misery, wonders the Azhwar. Budat Azhwar also echoes the same thought in his pasuram, (இர.திருஇ21). ‘செவ்வே அருநரகம் சேர்வது அரிது’ நாராயணேதி ஸப்தோஸ்தி, வாகஸ்தி வஸுவர்த்திநி, ததாபி நரகே கோரே பதந்தீத்யேதத்புதம்’ II ‘The word Narayana is there, the tongue is under our control. Despite this, it is astonishing how people choose to fall into the fearsome hell.’

96. திறம்பாபெதன் நெஞ்சமே செங்கண்மால் கண்டாய்
அறம்பாவ மென்றிரண்டு மாவான் புறந்தானிம்
மண்தான் மறிகடல்தான் மாருதந்தான் வான்தானே
கண்டாய் கடைக்கட் பிடி.

Oh my heart, realise that it is the red-eyed Lord Narayana Who is the Dispenser of fruits of all karma, virtuous or sinful alike. This earth, the tumultuous oceans, the wind, the sky and the self and the ego different from the above, are all Him, see. Hold steadfast to this truth till the end.

‘செங்கண்மால்’. ‘தஸ்ய யதா கப்யாஸம் புண்டரீ கமேவமக்ஷிணி (Chand. Up., 1.7.)’. Him Who has two Eyes like the blossoming lotus in the sun’s rays.’ Azhwar makes the point that this universe made up of the five fundamental elements and all things inside it, is His manifestation. Apart and distinct from this, the principles of ‘prakriti’, ‘mahad’, and ‘ahanka‘ra’ and the self are also His play-field. He it is Who is their ‘prakari’, ‘sareeri’, ‘seshi’, ‘niyamaka’, and ‘swami’. Azhwar exhorts his heart to hold unfailingly onto this fact till the end.

97. பிடிசேர் களிறளித்த பேராளா உன்றன்
அடிசேர்ந் தருள்பெற்றா ளன்றே - பொடிசேர்
அனற்கங்கை யேற்றா னவிர்சடைமேல் பாய்ந்த
புனர்கங்கை யென்னும் பேர்ப் பொன்.

**Oh Lord of great compassion, Who saved from peril the
Gajendra engrossed in sensual pursuit in the company of his
mate. Was not the golden Ganga who descended from her
celestial course onto the lustrous curls of the ash-smearred Siva
who stretched out His beautiful hands to hold fire to purify
himself, blessed and sanctified By Thy grace at Thy sacred Feet?**

This pasuram recapitulates the episodes of 'Gajendra moksham', and Brahma washing the big toe of Lord Trivikrama with the river Ganga which materialised in Brahma's 'kamandalam', as embodiment of dharma. Ganga thus obtained its purificatory properties by virtue of its association with the Lord's Feet in Trivikramavathara'. ('Sri-Pa'da-theertham'). Vishnu Suktham says,(5) 'உருக்ரமஸ்ய விஷ்ணு: பதே பரமே மத்வ உத்ஸ:' At the exalted Feet of Vishnu, Ganga flows like a torrent of honey. How pure is that Ganga after its coming into contact with the Lord's Feet. 'நரோ யத்ர தேவயவோ மதந்தி', 'That in which Rudra' and others who aspire for 'devathvam' rejoice to immerse.' Refer also in this connection to Thirumazhisai Piran's pasuram, 'குறை கொண்டு நான்முகன் குண்டிகை நீர்ப்பெய்து' (நான்.ம.தி. 9).

98. பொன்திகழு மேனிப் புரிசடையம் புண்ணியனும்
நின்றுலகம் தாய நெடுமாலும் என்றும்
இருவரங்கத் தால்திரிவ ரேலும் ஒருவன்
ஒருவனங்கத் தென்று முளன்.

**Though the virtuous Siva with a body of resplendent
beauty and matted curls, and the Great Lord Who scaled the
worlds go round in two different forms, One of Them like the
rest of all creation is for ever, but the body of the Supreme
Being.**

‘இருவர் அங்கத்தால் திரிவரேலும்’- ‘though going round in two different bodies’.It can also be rephrased as ‘இரு அரங்கத்தால் திரிவரேலும்’, meaning that both Siva and Narayana are defined by two different stages.These differences are in terms already enumerated by Poigai Piran in pasuram 5, relating to name, (Hara,Hari),’rupa’’or form, (golden, dark-hued) va’hana‘ or vehicle,(Bull, Garuda), ‘loka‘ (Kailasa,Sri Vaikuntam),function (‘samha’ra’’,’rakshana’),entourage, (‘bhutagana’s’,’nithya suris’). ‘அங்கத்து என்றுமுளன், ‘ ‘ஸ ப்ரஹ்மா, ஸ ஸிவ:’ (தை.நாராய.-11). He is the ‘Antarya’mi’ of Brahma, Siva etc.

ஏக ப்ராஸீஸரத் பாதம் ஏக: ப்ராசிஷுளன் முதா I

அபரோப்யதரந் மூர்த்நா கோதிகஸ் தேஷுகண்யதாம்II ‘One extended His Foot. Another washed it with joy. Yet another bore that water on his head. You think about who among them is the greatest.’Also refer to Maha Narayanopanishad declaration,’ ‘ப்ரஹ்மா நாராயண: etc.’ ‘யஸ்யாத்மா ஸாரீம்’-‘For Whom all souls are the embodiment’.Also refer to Swami Nammazhwar’s ‘பேச நின்ற சிவனுக்கும் பிரமன் தனக்கும் பிறர்க்கும் நாயகன் அவனே’ ‘He is the Master of Siva, Brahma and others’.

99. உள்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே உத்தம னென்றும்
உள்கண்டாய் உள்ளுவா ருள்ளத் - துள்கண்டாய்
வெள்ளத்தி னுள்ளானும் வேங்கடத்து மேயானும்
உள்ளத்தி னுள்ளானென் றோர்.

My good heart, The Supreme Being is for ever with us.He resides for ever in the hearts of those who remember Him.Know too, that He That rests on the waves of the milk ocean and is present on the Venkata hill, is forever there in the inner recesses of your being.

Poigai Piran rounds up his garland of verses with an affirmation of the profound truth that the Lord is forever in our hearts (as ‘Antaryami’) pointing to us our true identity,and to save us from ourselves.Azhwar calls the Lord ‘புருஷேத்தமன்’- ‘The Greatest Being’,(masculine). ‘உள்ளது உள்கண்டாய்’, He is

seated in the most accessible of places inside us. 'அனந்தன் பாலும் கருடன்பாலும் ஐது நோய்தாக வைத்து என் மனந்தனுள்ளே வந்து வைகி', (பெரியாழ்வார் தி.மொ., 5.4.8.).

100. ஓரடியும் சாடுதைத்த வொண்மலர்ச் சேவடியும்
ஈரடியும் காணலா மென்னெஞ்சே - ஓரடியில்
தாயவனைக் கேசவனைத் தண்டுழாய் மாலைசேர்
மாயவனையே மனத்து வை.

O my heart, treasure the thought of the One adorned by the cool 'tulasi' garland, Who scaled the worlds in one step, He Who destroyed the asura Kesi, the Supreme Artist of incredible feats. If only, you succeed in that, you will be able to behold those two soft, crimson Feet, softer than the beautiful lotuses, the One That scaled the worlds, and the One That kicked the asura that transformed into a cart into smithereens.

'ஓரடியில் தாயவனை', Azhwar refers to this to illustrate the compassionate qualities of Sriman Narayana, His 'soulabya', 'sousheelya', 'va'tsalya', etc.' கேசவனை' refers to Sri Krishna Who killed the asura Kesi who came in the garb of a horse, to stalk the cow-herd boys, 'சாடுதைத்த' refers to destruction of Sakata'sura'. 'மாயவனையே மனத்து வை' - Azhwar reminds us of our duty, (upa'ya') which is to treasure His thought inside our mind.' 'மாமேகம் ஸரணம் வ்ரஜ்' (Gita) 'நாராணனை நமக்கே பறை தருவான்' (திருப்பாவை) 'ஓண்மலர்ச்சேவடி' 'தேனைமலரும் திருப்பாதம்' (திருவாய் மொழி 1.5.5) 'தவாம்ருதஸ்யந்திநி பாதபங்கஜே' (Stotra Ratna 27). Poigai Piran sums up his magnum opus with the assertion which is the quintessence of Sri Vaishnava Sidha'nta' that the Way (Upaya') is Sriman Narayana and service at His Feet is the Fruit, (Upeya), ('Saranam', 'Sarma', Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam -10.).

முதல் திருவந்தாதி முற்றும்.

பொய்கை பிரானின் வாழித்திருநாமம்
செய்ய துலா ஒணத்தில் செகத்துதித்தான் வாழியே
திருக்கச்சி மாநகரம் செழிக்கவந்தான் வாழியே
வையந்தகளி நூறும் வகுத்துரைத்தான் வாழியே
வனசமலர்க் கருவதனில் வந்தமைந்தான் - வாழியே
வெய்ய கதிரோன் தன்னை விளக்கிட்டான் வாழியே
வேங்கடவன் திருமலையை விரும்புவன் வாழியே
பொய்கை முனி வடிவழகும் பொற்பதமும் வாழியே
பொன்முடியுந் திருமுகமும் பூதலத்தில் வாழியே.

Hail to him who was born unto this world on 'Tula'Thiruvonam'.
Hail to him who came to enrich the beautiful city of Kanchi.
Hail to him who spoke a hundred verses beginning 'vaiyamtagali'
Hail to him who was born in the womb of a lotus flower.
Hail to him who defined the sun as a lighted lamp.
Hail to him who loves the Venkata' hill dearly.
Hail to the beautiful form and golden feet of sage Poigai Piran.
May his golden crown and benign face live forever on this earth.

ஸ்ரீ பொய்கைபிரான் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

