

THIRUVAASIRIYAM AND YAJUR VEDAM



ANNOTATED COMMENTARY IN ENGLISH BY:
OPPILIAPPAN KOIL
SRI VARADACHARI SATHAKOPAN



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SWAMY NAMMAZHWAR'S THIRUVASIRIYAM & YAJUR VEDAM

There are four Dhivya prabhandhams blessed to us by Swamy NammAzhwAr: (1) Thiruviruttham, (2) Thiruvaasiriyam, (3) Periya ThiruvandhAthi and (4) ThiruvAimozhi. PoorvAchAryaas have compared the above four Veda SamhithAs to Rig, Yajur, Atharva and Saama Vedam respectively. adiyEn will focus on ThiruvAsiriyam (Yajur Veda Saamyam) and Periya ThiruvandhAthi (Atharava Veda Saamyam) in this essay.

TANIYAN FOR THIRUVAASIRIYAM SET IN AASRIYAPPAA METER

அருளாளப் பெருமான் எம்பெருமானாரருளிச் செய்தது

கலிவிருத்தம்

aruLaaLap perumaan emperumaanaararuLich cheythathu

Kaliviruttham

காசினியோர் தாம்வாழக் கலியுகத்தே வந்துதித்து ,
ஆசிரியப் பாவதனால் அருமறைநூல் விரித்தானை ,
தேசிகனைப் பராங்குசனைத் திகழ்வகுளத் தாரானை ,
மாசடையா மனத்துவைத்து மறவாமல் வாழ்த்துதுமே.

kaasiniyOr thaamvaazhak kaliyugaththE vandhudhiththu,
aasiriyap paavathanaal arumaRainool viriththaanai,
thEsiganaip paraangusanaith thigazhvaguLath thaaraanai,
maasadaiyaa manaththuvaiththu maRavaamal vaazhththuthumE !

There are seven paasurams in this Prabhandham.

The Taniyan for Thiruvaasiriyam has been composed by AruLALa PerumAL EmperumAnAr. The composer of the Taniyan says: Swamy NammAzhwAr incarnated in Kali Yugam for showering auspiciousness on the people of the world through the blessings of ThiruvAsiriyam as the elaboration of (Yajur) Veda mantrams. The author reminds us to say Jaya Vijayee bhava to this AchAryan with the name of ParAnkusan adorning the shining VaguLaa flower grland on His chest. He wants us to eulogize Swamy NammAzhwAr, the author with a blemish-free mind for His upakAram.

Here are the meanings of the 7 Paasurams of ThiruvAsiriyam according to Dr. K.C. Varadachari.





PAASURAM 1 : VISION OF THE SESA SAAYEE AT THE MILKY OCEAN:

செக்கர்மா முகிலுடுத்து மிக்க செஞ்சுடர்ப்
 பரிதிசூடி ,அஞ்சுடர் மதியம் பூண்டு
 பலசுடர் புனைந்த பவளச் செவ்வாய்
 திகழ்பசுஞ் சோதி மரகதக் குன்றம்
 கடலோன் கைமிசைக் கண்வளர் வதுபோல்
 பீதக ஆடை முடிபூண் முதலா
 மேதகு பல்கலன் அணிந்து ,சோதி
 வாயவும் கண்ணவும் சிவப்ப ,மீதிட்டுப்
 பச்சை மேனி மிகப்ப கைப்ப
 நச்சுவினைக் கவர்தலை அரவினமளி யேறி
 ளறிகடல்நடுவுள் அறிதுயில் அமர்ந்து
 சிவனிய னிந்திரன் இவர்முத லனைத்தோர்
 தெய்வக் குழாங்கள் கைதொழக் கிடந்த
 தாமரை யுந்தித் தனிப்பெரு நாயக
 முவுல களந்த சேவடி யோயே (2) .

sekkarmaa mugiluduththu mikka senchudarp
 parithisoodi, anchudar mathiyam pooNdu
 palasudar punaintha pavaLach chevAy
 thigazhpasuNY chOthi maragathak kunRam
 kadalOn kaimisaik kaNvaLar vathupOl
 pIthaga aadai mudipooN muthalaa
 mEthagu palkalan aNinthu, sOthi
 vaayavum kaNNavum sivappa, mIthittup
 pachchai mEni migappa kaippa
 nachchuvinaik kavar_thalai aravinamaLi yERi
 eRikadaln^aduvuL aRithuyil amarnthu
 sivaniya Nninthiran ivarmudha lanaitthOr





theyvak kuzhaangaL kaithozhak kidantha
thaamarai yunthith thanipperu naayaga
moovula kaLantha sEvadi yOyE! (2)

Like the lustrous emerald-green mountain adorned with huge red-clouds, crimson Sun and cool Moon and wearing many stars with coral-red reefs asleep on the palm of Samudhra Raajan, Thou art wrapt in yellow robe, adorned with crown and necklace, and bright jewels, bright-lipped and red-eyed, with an entrancing body resting on the couch-like serpent, poisonous and brooding. In the midst of the Ocean enjoyest Thou the yogic sleep, so that SivA, Brahma, Indra and other hosts of Gods may worship Thee and seek Your protection ! Oh Thou lotus-navelled One! Oh Supreme Godhead! Oh Thou who hast feet that measured the three worlds! Salutations to You !





PAASURAM 2: SNEHA-POORVA ANUDHYANA BHAKTHI FROM THAT VISION:

உலகுபடைத் துண்ட எந்தை ,அறைகழல்
 சுடர்ப்பூந் தாமரை சூடுதற்கு ,அவாவா
 ருயிருகி யுக்க,நேரிய காதல்
 அன்பி லின்பீன் தேறல் அமுத
 வெள்ளத் தானாம் சிறப்புவிட்டு ,ஒருபொருட்கு
 அசைவோர் அசைக ,திருவொடு மருவிய
 இயற்கை ,மாயாப் பெருவிற லுலகம்
 மூன்றி னொடுநல்வீடு பெறினும் ,
 கொள்வதெண்ணுமோ தெள்ளியோர் குறிப்பே ?

ulagupadaith thuNda enthai, aRaikazhal
 sudarppoon thaamarai sooduthaRku, avaavaa
 ruyirugi yukka,nEriya kaathal
 anbi linpIn thERal, amudha
 veLLath thaanaam siRappuvittu, oruporutku
 asaivOr asaiga, thiruvodu maruviya
 iyaRkai, maayaap peruviRa lulagam
 moonRi Nnodun^alvIdu peRinum,
 koLvatheNNumO theLLiyOr kuRippe?

Through its intense desire to wear on its head the signs of the Lord's sovereignty, the Soul struggles to attain the sacred feet of the Lord (VishNu-Thrivikrama) resounding with ankle bells. That Lord is the world creator-devourer. Abandoning puerile ends, the Soul melts and loses itself in devotion and offers love to Him and delights in enjoying the transcendent nectar-flood. Let it. If the lordship, established place and imperishable strength are obtained over the three worlds, while missing Moksham, will a seeker aim at that? Certainly not.





PAASURAM 3 : IMPORTANCE OF BHAGAVATHA KAIMKARYAM:

குறிப்பில் கொண்டு நெறிப்பட ,உலகம்
மூன்றுடன் வணங்கு தோன்றுபுகழ் ஆணை
மெய்பெற நடாய தெய்வம் மூவரில்
முதல்வ னாகி ,சுடர்விளங் ககலத்து
வரைபுரை திரைபொர பெருவரை வெருவர ,
உருமுரல் ஒலிமலி நளிர்கடற் படவர
வரசுடல் தடவரை சுழற்றிய ,தனிமாத்
தெய்வத் தடியவர்க் கினிநாம் ஆளாகவே
இசையுங்கொல் ,ஊழிதோ றூழியோ வாதே?

kuRippil koNdu neRippada, ulagam
moonRudan vaNangu thOnRupugazh aaNai
meypeRa nadaaya theyvam moovaril
muthalva Nnaagi, sudarviLaNG kakalaththu
varaipurai thiraipora peruvarai veruvara,
urumural olimali naLir_kadaR padavara
varasudal thadavarai suzhaRRiya, thanimaath
theyvath thadiyavark kinin^aam aaLaagavE
isaiyungol, oozhithO RoozhiyO vaathE?

Because of whose will the three worlds tread the good path, He is saluted as their Sole refuge; among the three gods, He is Chief, whose chest is luminous, who in the cool ocean full of high waves that roar like thunder-bolts at which the mountains quake, bound a serpent king (Vaasuki) round the huge (MandrA) mountain and churned for nectar, to That One Supreme God's devotees, we shall become servants, hereafter, creation after creation. His unmatched prowess in Churning for nectar is referred to here.





PAASURAM 4: DESIRE FOR THE AARADHANAM OF THE LORD'S HOLY FEET:

ஊழிதோ றூழி ஓவாது வாழியே .
என்று யாத்தொழ இசையுங் கொல்லோ ,
யாவகை யுலகமும் யாவரு மில்லா ,
மேல்வரும் பெரும்பாழ்க் காலத்து ,இரும்பொருட்
கெல்லா மரும்பெறல் தனிவித்து ,ஒருதான்
ஆகித் தெய்வ நான்முகக் கொழுமுளை
ஈன்று ,முக்கண் ஈசனொடு தேவுபல
நுதலிழு வுலகம் விளைத்த உந்தி ,
மாயக் கடவுள் மாமுத லடியே ?

oozhithO Roozhi Ovaathu vaazhiyE!
enRu yaamthozha isaiyuNG kollo,
yaavagai yulagamum yaavaru millaa,
mElvarum perumpaazhk kaalaththu, irumporut
kellaa marumpeRal thaniviththu, oruthaan
aagith theyva naanmugak kozhumuLai
InRu, mukkaN Isanodu thEvupala
nuthalimU vulagam viLaiththa unthi,
maayak kadavuL maamutha ladiyE?

Will it not come to pass that creation after creation unceasingly undisturbed, we shall seek refuge at the feet of the Primeval Divine Wonderful Being, Who once upon a time, when all the world's were hot and all the worlds and all beings ceased to be, was unattainable by countless souls; Then unaided, the Sole Seed, out of His navel, He brought forth the supremely powerful Brahma, Sivan and other Gods and willed the existence of the three worlds ! Samashti Srushti is referred to here.





PAASURAM 5: THE POWER OF THRIVIKRAMA'S HOLY FEET

மாமுதல் அடிப்போ தொன்றுகவிழ்த் தலர்த்தி ,
மண்முமுதும் அகப்படுத்து ,ஒண்கடர் அடிப்போது
ஒன்றுவிண் செலீஇ ,நான்முகப் புத்தேள்
நாடுவியந் துவப்ப ,வானவர் முறைமுறை
வழிபட நெறீஇ ,தாமரைக் காடு
மலர்க்கண் ணோடு கனிவா யுடையது
மாய்இரு நாயிறா யிரம்மலர்ந் தன்ன
கற்பகக் காவு பற்பல வன்ன
முடிதோ ளாயிரம் தழைத்த
நெடியோய்க் கல்லதும் அடியதோ வுலகே?

maamuthal adippO thonRukavizhth thalarththi,
maNmuzhuthum agappaduththu, oNsudar adippOthu
onRuviN sell_i, naanmugap puththEL
naaduvayan^ thuvappa, vaanavar muRaimuRai
vazhipada neRI_i, thaamaraik kaadu
malarkkaN NOdu kanivaa yudaiyathu
maay_iru naayiRaa yirammalarn^ thanna
kaRpagak kaavu paRpala vanna
mudithO Laayiram thazhaththa
nediyOyk kallathum adiyathO vulagE?

Making Thy one lotus-foot face downwards covering the Earth entire, Oh Thou Primordial Cause! With the other brilliant lotus-foot hast Thou covered the entire sky, so that the Brahman's world felt wonder and joy and the gods, the path shown by the VedAs tread! With eyes like the lotus-garden in bloom, with lips like (bhimbA) fruit, wearing a crown, lustrous like the dawn or an infinite-rayed thousand Sun, Thou art with a thousand shoulders like the Kalpaka forest (that grandest all)! To Thee canst not the worlds be devoted slaves? Oh Lord!





PAASURAM 6: OBSTACLES TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THE LORD'S HOLY FEET:

ஓஓ .உலகின தியல்வே ஈன்றோ ளிருக்க
மணைநீ ராட்டி ,படைத்திடந் துண்டுமிழ்ந்
தளந்து ,தேர்ந்துல களிக்கும் முதற்பெருங்
கடவுள் நிற்ப புடைப்பல தானறி
தெய்வம் பேணுதல் ,தனாது
புல்லறி வாண்மை பொருந்தக் காட்டி ,
கொல்வன முதலா அல்லன முயலும் ,
இனைய செய்கை யின்பு துன்பளி
தொன்மா மாயப் பிறவியுள் நீங்கா
பன்மா மாயத் தழுந்துமா நளிர்ந்தே .

O_O! ulagina thiyalvE InRO Lirukka
maNainI raatti, padaiththidan thuNdumizhn
thaLanthu, thErnthula kaLikkum muthaRperuNG
kadavuL niRpa pudaippala thaanaRi
theyvam pENuthal, thanaadhu
pullaRi vaaNmai porunthak kaatti,
kolvana muthalaa allana muyalum,
inaiya seygai yinbu thunbaLi
thonmaa maayap piRaviyuL nIngaa
panmaa maayath thazhunthumaa naLirnthE.

Alas! Man's nature is this: to adore the wooden doll, whilst his mother, who brought him forth is unattended stands before him unattended! Whilst the Supreme God -- who brought forth the world, raised it, created it out of Himself, measured it, muses on it and saves it-- exists, to worship some other god(s), what one has seen reveals one's stupidity that causes pain to the knower (of truth): their services to the lesser gods causes pain and causes them to engage in other prohibited actions. The fruits granted by these undesirable pursuits are nothing but joys mixed with grief. They become the causes of complete submergence, unceasing, in the beginningless vast deluding samsArA, through manifold deluding things of senses.





PAASURAM 7: PARAMA PURUSHARTHAM IS THE WORSHIP OF SRIMAN NAARAYANAN:

நளிர்மதிச் சடையனும் நான்முகக் கடவுளும்
தளிரொளி யிமையவர் தலைவனும் முதலா ,
யாவகை யுலகமும் யாவரும் அகப்பட ,
நிலநீர் தீகால் சுடரிரு விசும்பும்
மலர்சுடர் பிறவும் சிறிதுடன் மயங்க ,
ஒருபொருள் புறப்பா டின்றி முழுவதும்
அகப்படக் கரந்து ஓர் ஆலிலைச் சேர்ந்தவெம்
பெருமா மாயனை யல்லது ,
ஒருமா தெய்வம்மற் றுடையமோ யாமே?

naLirmadhich chadaiyanum naanmugak kadavuLum
thaLiroLi yimaiyavar thalaivanum muthalaa,
yaavagai yulagamum yaavarum agappada,
nilan^Ir thIgaal sudariru visumbum
malarsudar piRavum siRithudan mayanga,
oruporuL puRappaa dinRi muzhuvathum
agappadak karanthu_Or aalilaich chErnthavem
perumaa maayanai yalladhu,
orumaa theyvammaR RudaiyamO yaamE? (2)

He upholds Rudra, who wears the Moon on his matted locks, Brahmaa the four-faced, Indra, the chief of of the dEvAs! Having the color of green leaf, He upholds all the worlds including the earth with all its creatures and all the elements, water, fire, air and light-pervaded ether, the brilliant Sun and Moon with their splendid rays. All are kept without falling asunder through His power within Himself, so that they are not seen (in PraLayaa). It is He, who is resting on the banyan leaf (in the ocean at cosmic withdrawal). Him, our Lord, the Great Maayavi alone, and no other God shall we adore.

In the final paasuram of ThiruvAsiriyam, Swamy NammAzhwAr answers the question raised by a veda Manthram: "Kasmai DevAya HavishOvidEma?" (To which God should we offer oblation/aahUthi?). Swamy Nammazhwar answers that question unambiguously and with certainty that we should offer our worship to that Sarvan, Sakala GuNa ParipUrNan celebrated



by the VedAs and Saathvika PurANAs as the One in whom all things attain rest and seek refuge (Saravm SamApnOsi tatOsi Sarvah).

CELEBRATION OF THIRUVIKRAMAVATHARAM IN THIRUVASIRIYA PRABHANDHAM

Swamy Nammazhwar has been awed by the vision of Thrivikraman, who grew from a Vaamana roopam to the directions-striding Thrivikraman. The Sookshmarthams of this avathAram enchanted Swamy Nammazhwar and he celebrated that avathAram at a few places in ThiruvAsiriyam.

In the first Paasuram, where Swamy Nammazhwar enjoys the Lord resting at the Milky Ocean, the memory of Thrivikraman propels him to address the Lord as: "**Tanip Peru Naayaka, Moovulahu aLantha sEvadiyOyE**" (Oh matchless SarvEsvara with broad feet to measure the three worlds).

In the second paasuram of ThiruvAsiriyam, Swamy Nammazhwar celebrates that heroic valor (MaayA peru ViRal) and enjoys Him as "**anbhilinn thERal amudha VeLLam**" (the delectable BhOgyam of the nectarine flood for those, who approach Him with SnEham/friendship and preethi/love).

In the fifth paasuram, Swamy Nammazhwar salutes magnificently the happenings during ThrivikramAvathAram on the Earth and Brahma IOkam and beyond.

In the sixth paasuram, Swamy Nammazhwar refers again to the measurement of the Earth and Sky with two steps and salutes Sriman NaarAyaNan as "**Mudhal Peru KadavuL**" (Primordial Great Lord).

CELEBRATION OF THRIVIKRAMAVATHARAM IN YAJUR VEDAM

Many indeed are the Yajur Veda Mathrams that salute ThrivikramAvathAram for its esoteric references to establish Him as Adhi dhaivam and as SarvEsvaran's avathAram. Yajur manthram (Book II.25) celebrates Sriman NaarAyaNA's pervasion (VyApthi) of the sky, air and earth, nay throughout His Universe as Thrivikraman (**Dhivi VishNur vyagumstha—antharikshE VishNur vyakthragumstha--pruthivyAm VishNur vyakthragumstha GaayathRENa ChandasA --**).

Yajur Vadam: Book V.15 and 18: "**Idham VishNur vichakramE trEdhA nidhadhE padham and --VishNOR nukam veeryANi pra vOcham--vichakramANas-thrEdhOrugAyO VishNavE thvA**". Here the pervasion of the earth, air and sky in gross and subtle form as Thrivikraman and His valor in doing so is saluted as reasons for offering AarAdhanam to Him and Him alone.

Yajur Vedam X.19 refers to His Visvaroopam as "**dhyAvA pruthvee VisvarUpE**". Yajur Vedam Book XXXIV.43 salutes the protective and blessing power of the most merciful Lord through His three steps to establish His laws :

"ThrINi padhA vi chakramE VishNurgOpthA adhAbhya:, athO dharmANi dhArayan".

The Saanthi paatam (Yajur Vedam: XXXVI.9) invokes the valor of Thrivikraman at the end of the manthram:



Sam nO mithra: Sam VaruNa: Sam nO BhavathvaryaM sam na IndhrO Bruhaspathi: Sam nO VISHNURURUKRAMA:

In one Yajur Veda Mantharam of Book XXXIII, the revelation is made: "I (Jeevan) also am in these three steps of VishNu-Thrivikraman, where with this universe is permeated".

Sri K.C.Varadachari Comments further: "The AlwAr wonders at the greatest exploit of VishNu, which makes Him ALL-PERVADING SOVERIGN OF ALL THINGS, SOULS AND GODS; all the powers of other gods are subordinated to this Ruler ship principle of Vishnu-Thrivikraman".

ThiruvAsiriyam of Swamy NammAzhwAr salutes this powerful truism of SarvEsvarathvam of Sriman NaarAyaNan and performs upadEsam for us not to go astray from that fundamental doctrine.

THIRUVASIRIYAM AND YAJUR VEDAM :STRUCTURE OF POETRY

It is generally considered that Swamy NammAzhwAr (Swamy Nammazhwar) has focused on the themes covered by Yajur Vedam in his ThiruvAsiriyam (ThiruvAsiriyam). This prabhandham is set in the style of Aasiriya Paa(AP), which belongs to the general division of VeNN Paa in Tamil poetry. AP has a gadhyam like structure (Vachana Nadai/prosody) and has no "paadha Vyavasthai" or restrictions on metre and length. Yajur vedam also is not set in metres like Rg Veda manthrams and it has no restrictions on the length of the manthrams as well. This relationship between Yajur Vedam and the ThiruvAsiriyam set in AP is at the architectonic level.

THIRUVASIRIYAM AND YAJUR VEDAM:THEMATIC SIMILARITIES

At a more substantive level of content, both ThiruvAsiriyam and Yajur Vedam have one very important aspect in common. Yajur Vedam is devoted to sacrifices (Yaagams) and sacred rites associated with the performance of such Yaagams. Yaagam is a Veda karma. This rite is known in Aagamaas as CharyA or KriyA and they have the Vedic sanctions as well.

There are a lot of prayers in a yaagam and it has been accepted that every prayer has a rite incorporated in it. Among all the sacred rites, Bhagavath AarAdhanam is the most important one. Between the EmperumAn worshipped through His AarAdhanam and the one performing that AarAdhanam, there is a relationship that is similar to that described in ThiruvAsiriyam/ Yajur Vedam.

Sri K.C.Varadachari's observation is quite valuable in this context to understand the purpose of the Yaagam: "Sacrifice considered from the mystic stand point is not anything other than the proper self-offering for work, transformation, indwelling and possession and finally elevation to the Lord's Infinite Mansion (Parama Padham).

The Yajur Veda is devoted to the sacrifice; the Sukla Yajur Veda (VaajasnEya SamhithA) concludes with the IsAvAsyOpanishad, which declares that Karma must be done as long as one lives and one should desire to do this (Saathvik) karma of self-offering to the Divine Being throughout life and that performance of right karma does not entail any sin or limitation.



There are three kinds of karmas:

- (1) Karma (action)
- (2) Akarma (non-action) and
- (3) Vikarma, a transcendental variety of Karma, which the VaishNavAs describe as Kaimkaryam (Bhagavath/ BhAgavatha/AchArya Kaimkaryam) to secure freedom from the cycles of births and deaths".

ThiruvAsiriyam develops the above themes of Yajur Vedam in its seven paasurams ThiruvAsiriyam points out that the AarAdhya Devan for the rites prescribed by the adhvaryu priests in the case of Yajur Vedam is Sriman NaarAyaNan alone. ThiruvAsiriyam is hence considered as the elaboration of the "NaarAyaNAya" portion of the Moola Manthram (AshtAksharam).

THE PLACE OF THIRUVASIRIYAM AMONG SWAMY NAMMAZHWAR'S FOUR PRABHANDHAMS

UtthamUr Swamy points out that the four Prabhandhams of Swamy Nammazhwar progress from Para Bhakthi (Thiruviruttham) to Para JnAnam (ThiruvAsiriyam) to Parama Bhakthi (Periya ThiruvandhAathi) to Bhagavath prApthi (ThiruvAimozhi). In Thiruviruttham, Swamy Nammazhwar experienced Para Bhakthi state and conversed with the Lord, who was visible to him through Jn~Ana KaNN (Dhivya Chakshus) and pleaded for the severance of the dEha sambhandham that interfered with the perfect enjoyment of the Lord.

The Lord was concerned and He came up with a clever way to satisfy Swamy Nammazhwar, while making sure that the Prabhandhams for the benefit of the samsAris would be completed by Swamy Nammazhwar as a part of his avathAra kaaryam. Our Lord blessed Swamy Nammazhwar to enjoy His svaroopam, Roopam, GuNam and dhivya leelAs so that Swamy Nammazhwar could enjoy them and be persuaded to cast Moksham aside for a while and stay a little longer in this earth (LeelA VibhUthi) to complete the composition of the remaining three prabhandhams.

Thus arose ThiruvAsiriyam as a result of the direct vision (Prathyaksha Darsanam) of the Lord by Swamy Nammazhwar as KshIrAbdhi Naathan resting as a baby in the lap of his Mother (AadhisEshan) at the milky ocean. That vision led Swamy Nammazhwar to celebrate the uniqueness of Sriman NaarAyaNan as the uncontested Supreme Being, who alone can grant the Jeevans Moksham and rejected all other gods created by Him and subservient to Him in every way for worship to gain that MahA Siddhi.

Srimath Azhagiya Singar ThiruvadigaLE SaraNam,
Nammaazhwar Thiruvadigale Saranam,

Daasan, Oppiliappan Koil V.Sadagopan