



RAMANUJA DARSHANAM

(Philosophy of Ramanuja)

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः



Sri Ramanuja in Sri Rangam

A VEDICS JOURNAL
Volume 1 Issue 3: Jul - Sep 2003

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

Table of Contents

Editorial	1
The soothing words of the consort	2
Great Saints and teachers	3
Divine Places - Kanchipuram	13
Thiruppavai Jeeyar	16
Q&A: Azhvans and their contributions	17
Ramanuja in Thiruppavai	20
In Focus - Thiru-k-kUdalUr	25
Swami Vedanta Desika's Goda Stuthi	27
VEDICS Activities	33
Calendar (July 03 - Sep 03)	34
Website in Focus	35
Vedics Quiz	36
Celebrating Thiru-Adi-p-pUram	38

Ramanuja Darshanam

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Subscription:

Each Issue: \$2

Annual: \$8

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About the Cover image

The cover of this issue presents the image of Ramanuja at SriRangam. This image is believed by many people, to be the embalmed body of Sri Ramanuja when he left this earth and went to Vaikuntam. If one goes to this shrine today, the priest in charge of the shrine may show the fingers on the left hand, and point out that this is the body of Sri Ramanuja in an embalmed state. Many others believe that the body of Sri Ramanuja was buried under the current shrine to Ramanuja at Sri Rangam, and that this image was installed directly above the resting place of Ramanuja's body. In any case, this image of Sri Ramanuja is one of the holiest and most revered images of any person anywhere (So please do not copy this image without permission from Vedics). Every year, a new coating of embalming material (a mixture that includes a lot of saffron and camphor) is applied to this image. Every morning, it is at Ramanuja's shrine where the daily chanting of the sacred verses of the Azhvans takes place. At this shrine, on the walls, there are beautiful paintings that depict incidents that happened when Ramanuja was on this earth.

EDITORIAL

One of the many unique qualities of Vedic culture is its recognition of the sacredness of human relationships, relationships which we in the West at times tend to take for granted. We can probably all understand the importance that is placed on honoring our parents and spouses. But, what many unfamiliar with Vedic thought may find unusual is the sacred bond that is seen to exist between siblings, particularly brothers and sisters.

Examples can be found in rituals and stories everywhere in India about how a brother, especially an older brother, serves as the protector and confidante to his younger sister, a guide to her in finding a suitable spouse for herself, and a life-long friend and supporter to her and her husband. In weddings in Southern India, for example, it is the brother who steps in as the mediator for his sister and family during the ritual of *kAshiyAtra*, a step in the marriage ceremony in which the bridegroom, "decides" to forsake the world and go to the holy city of *KAshi* to live the life of a monk. The brother, on behalf of the family offers the "disillusioned" young man his sister to nurture and care for, as well as his dutiful support of the marriage that will take place between the two of them. It is this same brother who provides the grains for the bride and groom's first religious ceremonies immediately following the wedding ceremony.

Another example can be seen in Northern parts of India in the annual celebration of *raksha bandhan* (which falls this year on August 11), in which the sister ties a decorative amulet around the wrists of her brothers, and the men for whom she feels brotherly affection, with prayers for their protection and long life, seeking in return only their continuing love and support for her, her husband, and the family.

In this special issue of *Ramanuja Darshanam*, we honor this unique sister-brother bond by examining the life of the young woman to whom Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja is recognized to be an "older brother", ANdAL, an incarnation of *BhudEvi* Herself, and the only woman among the "10 + 2" *AzhvArs* (please note that the term "10 + 2" is used here because Andal and Madhura Kavi are recognized to occupy very special positions in the *sampradAyam*). In this issue, we will examine Andal's experience of the Divine, her unique position among the followers of Ramanuja, and see how her enchanting set of *pAsurams* (divine verses), *Thiru-p-pAvai* and *naachchiyaar Thirumozhi*, has effected the culture of South India as a whole. We will also study how, even though she lived centuries before

him, Sri Ramanuja's devotion to her and his commitment to the set of 30 *pAsurams* in Thiruppaavai made him experience her as his sister.

In addition, we will look at the life of Andal's foster father, PeriyAzhvAr, and also look at the traditional chants, food, and celebration that take place for Andal's *Thirunakshattiram*, *Thiru-Adi-p-pUram*.

This issue also presents an unique article that examines how *Thiru-p-pAvai* should be understood as not only describing Andal's devotion for Her Chosen Beloved, *Sriman Narayana*, but can also be applied to describe the great qualities of her "older brother", Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja.

As always, we welcome your questions and valuable comments. Please send these to vedics@yahoo.com

THE SOOTHING WORDS OF THE CONSORT

Embar Rangachari Swami

The Upanishads bring forth that ladies can also be as wise as gentlemen. YagnavalkyA's wife is an example. *ItihAsas* (history) and *puraNAs* (epics) also make the same projections. For instance, Sabari is termed as *dharma-nipuNa* (an expert in the means; means, in this case refers to the way to salvation). The equally ancient Tamil tradition too highlights the wisdom in ladies. Avvai is one such renowned name amongst wise ladies. *KODhai* (another name for Andal) whose works are included in the sacred Naalaayira Divyaprabhandham, is, however treated in Vaishnavite lore as a lady of both wisdom and emotion, in Her longing for union with the Supreme Lord Krishna. She is described as the one who first decorated Herself with the garlands of flowers intended for the Lord before they were offered to Him. Sri ParASara Bhattar describes this phenomenon as "*SvOchishTAYAm sraji nigaLitam yA balAtkritiya bhunkte*", (i.e. as Kodhai catching the Lord within the garland discarded by her and enjoying Him by force). It is on this account that she got the name Andal or the governess of the Lord. In Tamil, Kodhai means garland and the very same word was sanskritized into "*gOda*" by Swami Parasara Bhattar and later Acharyas (as distinguished from "*gODha*" meaning a fighting ring).

The Azhvars adhere to the Tamil literary tradition of taking on a female role for themselves and singing His praise in the garb of expressing their own pangs of separation. Andal did not need to put on such an artificial role. Whether it is her Thiruppaavai or her Naachiyaar Thirumozhi, it is

the work of a lady longing for union with the Lord in flesh and blood in this world with no special attachment to His permanent abode of Sri Vaikunta. Both these works end with pleasant notes of achievement - in Thiruppaavai, it is endless servitude to Him and possession by Him (without minding rebirths); in Naachiyaar Thirumozhi, it is seeing Krishna roaming the streets of *Vrndaavanam* (Brindavan). Naachiyaar Thirumozhi consists of 143 songs (14 decads). All of them but four is on the theme of separation from the Lord. The other four decads are (i) on *gOpi vastrApaharaNam* (Krishna's taking away the clothes of the bathing Gopikas), (ii) on Krishna's demolishing the toy houses of sand built by the Gopikas, (iii) requesting to be dropped in places connected to Krishna's life and (iv) seeing Krishna in Brindavan.

In the context of the theme of separation from the Lord, the Azhvars, occasionally, express a small amount of bitterness towards the Lord's indifference. Andal's emotional outburst in this context, however, shows a sharp bitterness - e.g. as mentioned in the paasuram "*kommaI mulaigaL...*" (naachiyaar thirumozhi 13-8). This expression could not be expected of a lady, normally. This fact led the late C. Rajagopalachari (affectionately known as Rajaji) to propose that PeriyAzhvAr himself assumed the feminine pseudonym of Andal and wrote the works ascribed to her. This conclusion, however, is inconsistent with the verse "*nalla venthozhI*" (naachiyaar thirumozhi 10-10) in which Andal says that she would see the Lord of Her father Vishnuchittha if the latter could make Him come over. Clearly, Sri Manavala Mamuni meant this quality exhibited by Andal when he, in upadEsa rattinamAlai said "*AzhvArhaL tam seyalaI vinji nirkum thanmayaLai*" (the one who has the nature of excelling the qualities exhibited by the Azhvars).

But there is yet another point which makes Andal excel the Azhvars. Thirumazhisai Azhvar (in nanmugan thiruvandAdhi, 71) indicates the Gita-Charamasloka (18-66) followed by Nammazhvar in Thiruvaimozhi (7-5-10), confirming the assertion of Poigai Azhvar (in mudhal thiruvandhAdhi, 4) that the Lord is both the goal and means for salvation. Andal too indicates this charama Sloka as "*meimai peruvArthai*" (the truly great word), in her verse "*Semmaiyudaiya*" (nachiyar thirumozhi 11-10). But she excels the others in not only praising the charama slokam uttered by Krishna, but also in confirming the goal-means nature of the Lord in previous avatars. In the earlier Rama avatara, the Lord gave us this following sloka, which we consider as the Rama charama sloka -

SakṛdEva prapannAya tavAsmIti cha yAchatE |
abhayam sarvabhUtEbhyO dadami Etat vratam mama | |

(It is My vow that to any object which considers Me for once as the goal and means and begs that it is Mine, I give fearlessness.) .

In the context of deliverance, the fear is that of rebirth. The begging that the soul is His is nothing but the removal of the ego of the soul by Him so that the word '*prapanna*' indicates the soul which considers the Lord as *upAya* (the means) and *upEya* (the goal) after removal of egotism ." sarvabhUtEbhya : " and "vratam" indicate that all objects without discrimination deserve His blessings for deliverance. It is Andal who indicates a knowledge of this Sloka in her verse "*mullaippirAtti*" (naachichiyaar thirumozhi 10-4) referring to it as "*kollai arakkaiyai mUkkarindhitta kumaranAr Sol*" (the saying of the young person who chopped off the nose of the fearful demoness) .Without going into the complete interpretation of the verse, Andal, who is reminded of the smile of the Lord by the blossoming of the *mullai* (jasmine!) flower and so pained by her separation from Him, chides the flower , that the above assertion of Rama (referred to as kumaranAr in that verse) is as true as her birth in this world. She also makes a point that His smile (reminded by that of the jasmine) meaning His kindness enshrined in His statement is her solace (*adaikkalam*).

In a much earlier avatara of the Lord, viz. the Varaha avatara, we have the utterance of the Lord:

SthitE manasi susvasthe SarIrE sati yO nara:
dhatusAmyE sthitE smarta viSvarUpam cha man ajam |
tata: tam mriyamaNam tu kashtapashANa sannibham
aham smarAmi madbhaktam nayAmi paramAm gatim | |

(I remember My devotee who dies like dead-wood and stone, who had thought about me in the form of the cosmos and as One having no birth when his mind was in natural state in his body and his pulses were balanced, and lead him (his soul) to the greatest way).

People, who are ignorant of the Lord's qualities, think that uttering the name of the Lord on listening to His name, taking His thIrtha-prasAdam (holy water) or His devotee's srIpAda tIrtham (holy water used to wash the devotees feet) gets the dying soul to Sri Vaikuntam. That there is no expectation on His part and there needs to be confidence on the part of people, dying or alive, that He will certainly take them to His abode was what was highlighted by the Azhvars. For instance, Thirumangai Azhvar says "*enjAvennaragatthu azhundhi nadunguginrerku anjelenu adiyEnai AtkollavallAnai*" (Periya thirumozhi 8-9-6; the Lord who says "Don't Fear" to those who are mortally afraid of the hell that is the endless cycle

of births and deaths, and makes me His devotee/servant). This fact was highlighted in Thirukkachinambi's "*antimasmytivarjanam*" among his six aphorisms conveyed to Ramanuja. This, among other things, is conveyed by the Sloka quoted above and now famous as Varahacharama Sloka.

The Lord through the above Sloka shows His concern for an individual, who, when fit, thinks about two of His qualities viz. His visvarUpa, better described by the Thiruvaimozhi (9-6-4) phrase "*tannuL anaithulahum nirka nerimaiyal tAnum avatruL nirkum pirAN*" (all the cosmos rests in Him and as a controller and means He rests within each object of the cosmos), and His not born, unlike other objects are, by creation or by the effect of their actions (according to the theory of karma). Both these requirements have important significance. The first one of *visvarUpagnAna* implies *achitvatpAratanrya*-complete dependence, similar to a lifeless object, on the Lord. The second implies *karmavaSyarAhitya*, the independence of the Lord on actions by Himself or by others. On independence on actions by Himself, the Lord says in the GIta: *na mAm karmANi limpanti na mE karma pale sprhA*-actions do not linger on to me and I don't have greed in the effects of My action. As regards the actions of individuals other than Himself, what matters for them is His ignoring their bad acts and showering His blessings which is the case (as presented above through Thirumangai Azhvar's statement). As Nammazhvar says (in Thiruviruttam, 1) this *aja* (the never born) is born to lift the nasty soul in unthinkable forms in His avatars. The Lord suggests to the soul to have this confidence in His varaha charama sloka. Thus, this sloka also conveys the Lord alone as the goal and means.

Andal refers to this Varaha charama Sloka in her Naachiyar thirumozhi (11-8):

pAsitUrtthuk kidandha pArmahadku pandorunAl
mASudambil nIrvAra mAnamilAp panriyAm
tESudaiya tevar thiruvarangacchelvanAr
pEsiyiruppanahaL pErkkavum pErAvE.

(The words uttered by the splendorous and rich Lord in the form of a boar with water dripping from its dirty body, to His worldly consort who was lying disfigured in the algae cannot be thrown out even if one wants to).

The common man takes the *HayagrIva*(the horse-headed) form of the Lord as signifying knowledge. The Azhvars do mention this form as having delivered the Vedas when they were lost. They do not, however, call this form as signifying knowledge. NammazhvAr(Thiruviruttam,99), and Thirumangai Azhvar (Periya thirumozhi 2-6-3) following him, name

the Varaha form as "*gnAnappirAn*"-the Lord of knowledge. The soul is not helped by identifying Him as knowing everything (sarvagna) or conveying all knowledge. It is helped if only it gets confidence in getting salvation. The Varaha form of the Lord was the first and foremost to make available to the soul an assertion of confidence in attaining salvation as is revealed by the relevant charama Sloka. It is thus varaha who is the real *gnAnaprada* (giver of knowledge) and hence the name *gnAnappirAn* or *gnAtthinoLiyuru*.

Thus, it is Andal who conveyed the serious message of the avatars earlier to Krishna's in-spite of being described as emotive. The Acharyas could identify the relevant Slokas containing the message (The commentary of PeriyavacchAnpiLLai does not, however, mention the Varaha charama Sloka) and highlighted these Slokas later.



Andal, Sri Villipputhur (Courtesy: Sri Villip-puthur website)

GREAT SAINTS AND TEACHERS

TA Varadhan

PeriAzhvAr

If God were to come in front of us, to this earth, and appear before us, what will we do? What will we think? Most of us probably will ask Him for something – good mind, good health, release from the endless cycle of birth and death, wealth etc. Will someone not ask for anything, but just enjoy His presence with wonder? Maybe a few people will. But, will someone go a step beyond that?

There is a great teacher and soul, who, when the Lord appeared in front of Him, who neither asked for anything nor even felt joy. On the contrary, this great soul was actually extremely concerned, because he felt that there could be so many dangers that could befall on the Lord from this limited and complex world! This teacher was so concerned that he, on seeing the Lord, expressed “May You live long! May You live long!” Who is this teacher? He is periyAzhvAr (The Great AzhvAr).

Periazhvar was born in a town in South India called srI-villi-puththUr. The name given to him by his parents was “VishNuchitta”. He was born in the priestly class and at an early age started doing service at the temple of the Lord of Sri Villiputhur – The Great Lord of the Large Big temple in the north (vada-perum-kOvil-udaiyAn), who is called srI rAjamannAr (the Chief among Kings). He spent all of his time in doing service to the Lord in the temple by growing flowering plants, making garlands of these flowers and offering them to the Lord with extreme devotion. Everyone in the area respected him as the most loving devotee of the Lord. One day, the Lord appeared in Vishnuchitta’s dreams and said “Oh Vishnuchitta, the king of the land is convening a great assembly of learned people to determine the truth. You should go to the palace at Madurai, and establish the Truth that I am the way and the means of salvation for all living beings”. Vishnuchitta was shocked. He asked the Lord “Oh Lord! I am not a very learned person! How can I go and debate with all the great scholars and establish the Truth?”, to which the Lord replied “Do not worry my loving devotee! I will give you the unblemished knowledge”. When VishNuchitta woke up in the morning, he reflected on the dream and decided to go to the city of Madurai to take part in the debate. He went to the temple, worshipped the Lord telling Him “Oh Lord! I am undertaking your command. I do not know anything, but I am sure that You will show the way”.

At Madurai, in the debate, Vishnuchitta defeated all arguments, and established the truth. The Lord, as promised, had given Vishnuchitta all the knowledge in the world, which Vishnuchitta used in the debate. The King and all the scholars were very happy to know the truth, and wanted to celebrate the occasion. In their joy, they conducted a grand procession with Vishnuchitta on an elephant going through the city with great fanfare and joy.

The Lord was so pleased to see His Devotee being given such honors and immediately mounted His Divine vehicle – Garuda (the Giant Eagle), and came in the skies above Madurai. Vishnuchitta saw the Lord approaching Him, and immediately became extremely concerned. He thought to himself, “What is the Lord doing here? This earth is so full of bad things and people. All the scriptures say that the Lord is completely pure and extremely beautiful and soft. Some danger may befall on Him here”. Vishnuchitta immediately broke out with the chant “*pallANdu!* *pallANdu!*” (“May You live long! May you live long!”), in an effort to ward off any evil that should befall the Lord. The Lord on seeing this smiled and showed His powerful shoulders to the Vishnuchitta. Now, Vishnuchitta became really concerned! He thought “The Lord is behaving like a small child. He does not know how dangerous it is here, and like a small child who goes to fight without knowing the relative strength of opponents, the Lord is coming here without fear”. VishNuchitta exclaimed “May You live long! May our eternal relationship be forever! May Your consort live long! May your divine conch live long! May your divine discus live long!”. Such was his concern for the Lord. To this day, these verses, known as Thiru-pallANdu - are recited at the beginning of the daily benedictory praises to the Lord.

Vishnuchitta became to be known as periyAzhvAr because of his concern for the Lord. He composed and gave us more than 400 divine songs, laden with great love for Sriman Narayana, particularly in His avatara as Sri Krishna. Those songs treat the Lord as a child, and take us through all the stages in a child’s life – bathing the child with sweet songs, dressing the child up, feeding the child, making the child go to sleep and so on. Periyazhvar’s daughter is Andal.

Periyazhvars birth anniversary falls in the month of “ANi”, in the star “svAthi”. This year, it falls on July 8th.



Periazhvar – Sri Villiputhur

Swami Alavandar

In the last issue, we enjoyed the glory of Sri Naathamuni. In this issue, we will enjoy the glory of his grandson – Sri *yAmunAchArya*, or Sri *Alavandar*.

If one makes a very small list of teachers without whom our religious tradition would not exist, Sri *yAmunAchArya* (or Sri *Alavandar*) would be listed among the top. In fact, he is the teacher who was instrumental in (a) blending the Sanskrit Vedanta with all the Azhvars' divine

outpourings, and perhaps more importantly (b) identifying Sri Ramanuja as the leader of the religion and anointing five teachers to teach Ramanuja the key principles and scriptures of our religion.

Sri Yamunacharya was born to Sri Isvaramuni, the son of Sri Nathamuni. He was named "yamunai-th-thuraivan", after the Lord on the banks of the river Yamuna (Krishna). Early in his life, he was taught the due scriptures by his father. He was also married, and lived his life as prescribed by the scriptures.

Soon after the departure of Sri Isvaramuni from this world, Yamunacharya was learning Vedanta under a learned person called Sri mahAbhAshya Bhattar. At this time, there was an arrogant scholar and expert in debate named AkkiyAzhvAn, who was challenging all learned people in the area to challenge him on his skills. AkkiyAzhvAn sent a letter for Sri mahAbhAshya Bhattar, challenging him to a debate. But, mahAbhAshya Bhattar did not want to debate him, and did not respond to the invitation. Upon hearing this, AkkiyAzhvAn sarcastically made fun of mahAbhAshya Bhattar, for which the young yamunai-th-thuraivan sent an equally sarcastic and wise reply. The King, on hearing about this, asked yamunai-th-thuraivar to debate AkkiyAzhvAn at the royal palace. Yamunai-th-thuraivar went there to debate. Along with the local king and the queen, there were a great many number of neutral learned observers to decide the winner. Upon seeing the prodigious young man, the queen was convinced that that Sri yamunai-th-thuraivar would not lose. So she playfully challenged the king to a bet, saying she would do whatever the king says if AkkiyAzhvAn won. The king, a strong support of AkkiyAzhvAn took the bet, promising the queen that he would give half of the kingdom to yamunai-th-thuraivar if he won.

With a great display of intellect, Sri yamunai-th-thuraivar won the debate, and accordingly he was given half the kingdom by the king. The queen, remarked, "emmai ALa vandheerO?" (Did you come to rule all of us?), and from that time onwards yamunai-th-thuraivar got the name "ALavandar".

Alavandar ruled over his half of the kingdom with great justice and even-handedness. The years rolled by, and Sri Alavandar came to be perfectly comfortable with his position as a respected leader of his people. But, the journey was just beginning for this great soul.

A great teacher Sri maNakkAl nambi (Sri rAma miSra), a disciple of Sri puNdarIkAksha (Sri uyya-k-koNdAr) (one of the great disciples of Sri nAthamuni), decided that he should pass on the wealth of true

knowledge to Alavandar. He made many attempts to meet Sri Alavandar, but the palace guards did not allow him. However, Sri Ramamisra soon found out that Alavandar liked a specific kind of green (thUthuLAI), and started bringing that kind of a green to the royal cook everyday. The cook was only too pleased to prepare the greens for his king every day. Months passed by, but Sri Ramamisra did not get a chance to meet Sri Alavandar. Becoming very sad at this, he stopped bringing the greens for a few days. Alavandar, on seeing that the greens were not there for the meals, inquired about why his favorite dish was no longer being served, and was told that the religious person who was bringing it regularly discontinued bringing it. Sri Alavandar ordered his palace employees to bring the religious person to him personally the next time he visited the palace. After a few days, Sri Ramamisra, in one last effort to see Alavandar, went with the greens to the palace, and the palace employees immediately brought him to Sri Alavandar. Sri Alavandar asked Sri Ramamisra what he wanted, to which Sri Ramamisra replied "I have great ancestral wealth which is yours, and would like to pass it on to you". Sri Alavandar inquired what it was, and Sri Ramamisra explained that it was the Sri Bhagavad Gita. He taught Bhagavad Gita everyday for months at the palace to Sri Alavandar, and took him to a great disciple of Sri Nathamuni - Sri kurugai kAvalappar. Sri kurugai kAvalappar instructed Sri Alavandar to become the leader of the religion, and provided him with 20 disciples.

Sri Alavandar renounced his kingdom, took initiation as a sanyasi (monk), and started living in Sri Rangam. He taught his disciples, and instructed five of them to teach a specific thing each to whoever he was going to identify as the leader of the religion. At Kanchipuram, he saw Ramanuja from a distance, and established him as the next religious leader. Sri Alavandar departed this earth at Sri Rangam, after having identified Sri Ramanuja.

Sri Alavandar (or Sri yAmunAchArya) was one of the earliest teachers to blend the Azhvar outpourings with the vedanta traditions. Sri Alavandar composed a masterful work, called Stotra Ratna, "the gem among verses", which contained the essence of the Azhvar's devotional outpourings in Sanskrit. It is a wonderful work, and is the primary sanskrit stotra that a Ramanuja follower learns and recites every day. Some of the stotras are direct translations of Azhvar paasurams. Sri Alavandar also gave us a very concise work on the meaning of Sri Bhagavad Gita - gItArtha sangraha. He also wrote a Vedanta work known as sidhdhi-thrayam, and a work that established the superiority and relevance of pAncarAtra Agama.

His birth anniversary is in the month of Ani, the star of uttirAdam. It falls on August 10th this year



Swami Alavandar (Courtesy: srimatham.com)

DIVINE PLACES – KANCHIPURAM

NC Nappinnai

Presiding Deity:

Sri varadarAja perumAL, also known as *pEraruLALan*, *dEvAdirAjan*, *attiyUrAn*, *pranathArthihara* - is in a standing posture facing towards the West. *perundEvi-t-tAyAr* (Mahadevi) is the Divine Consort who has a separate temple within the complex.

Temple Legend:

The legend has it that Brahma worshipped Vishnu in *Krta* yuga, Gajendra in *Treta* yuga, Brhaspati in *Dwapara* yuga and Ananta in *Kali* yuga. Varadaraja Perumal temple is also known as *Hastigiri*; it was originally known as *attiyUrAn*. The name *Hastigiri* is applied in the connotation of Gajendra moksham and from the legend that Indra's elephant *airAvatam* - in the form of a hill bears the image of Vishnu. The name *attiyUrar* emerges from the tradition, that the original image of Varadaraja Perumal here was made from *attimaram*(Fig Tree). This ancient wooden image is worshipped for 10 days, once in 40 years.

Salient Aspects:

vimAnam(name of the tower above the presiding sanctum): *puNyakOTi*
tlrtham(the name of the holy tank whose water is used for various purposes in the temple): *vEgavati*, *anantasaras*

Kancipuram, also known as *Hastigiri*, *Thirukkachchi*, is called *tyAga maNdapam*, as Lord Varadaraja sacrificed and sent Sri Ramanuja, who was involved in *tlrtha* kaimkaryam at this temple, to Sri Rangam to re-establish *Sri VaiNavam* (vaishnavism).

Among the 108 divya desams, this temple stands third. Just as temple refers only to Sri Rangam, hills refer to Thirumala, so does the Lord refer only to this Lord and hence the temple is called as Perumal Koil. He is called Varada as He bestows whatever boons people ask Him for. The first prakAram is *sEnaiyarkOn vIdhi*, third prakAram is named as *Alavandar*, fourth is known as *Azhvar vIdhi* and the fifth prakAram is *mAda vIdhi*. In this prakAram only, *Sri Yamunacharya* saw *Sri Ramanuja* for the first time and uttered "*Am mudhalvan ivan*".

Divine Outpourings on the Lord:

Thirukkachchi is the third holy place, sung by three Azhvars namely Bhuta, Pey and Thirumangai Azhvars. Although Nammazhvar had not sung explicitly on this Lord, his very first thiruvAimozhi "*ayarovaRu amarargaL adhipati*" refers only to this Lord and Nammazhvar, in this

temple, is in a posture with his right hand in his heart referring to his own words "*tuyaraRu sudar adi tozhudu ezhu en mananE*". Sri Kanchipurna (Thirukkachchi nambi) composed *dEvarAja aShTakam*. Sri Kuresha, who gave up his eyesight to protect his Acharya Sri Ramanuja, as per Sri Ramanuja's wish, composed Srivaradaraja stavam and was offered his sight back by the Lord. Swami Desika composed *Varadaraja pancAsat* and Sri Manavala Mamuni composed *dEvaraja mangalam*.

Great Teachers and Saints:

Thirukkachchi is the birth place of Sri Thirukkachchi Nambi who used to perform the service of fanning the Lord. The Lord used to converse with Nambi everyday. Sri Ramanuja considered Thirukkachchi Nambi as one of his Acharyas and got cleared of his six doubts about *Sri Vaishnavam* (1. *aham Eva paratavam*; 2. *darshanam bhEda Eva ca*; 3. *upAyEsh prapatti syAt*; 4. *antima smrti varjanam*; 5. *dEhAvasAnE mukti syAt*; 6. *pUrNachAryam samAshrayA*) from Lord Himself through the mediation of Thirukkachchi Nambi. Sri Ramanuja performed tirtha kaimkaryam at this temple. *Periya Nambi* (Mahapurna) pleaded the Lord to send Sri Ramanuja to Sri Rangam and the Lord accepted Periya Nambi's request and expressed his approval through Thirukkachchi Nambi. This Lord shared a special bond with Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja, Sri Thirukkachchi Nambi, Sri Periya Nambi, Swami Vedanta Desika, and Sri Manavala Mamuni. Some important shrines and statues are listed below:

- (i) Varadaraja Perumal
- (ii) Perundevi Thayar
- (iii) Varaha Perumal
- (iv) Andal
- (v) Kariyamanikka Perumal
- (vi) Rama
- (vii) Nammazhvar and other azhvars and acharyas
- (viii) Sri Ramanuja, Sri Anantazhvan, Swami Desika and Sri Manavala Mamuni
- (ix) Raja Thodarmal

Other Important Facts:

- (i) Sri Manavala Mamuni appointed Azhagiya Manavala Jeeyar thereby establishing Azhagiya Manavala Jeeyar Mutt. As per temple documents, *Koil Kalvijeeayar* was responsible for the structural works of the temple.
- (ii) The annual *brahmOtsavam* is celebrated on a grand scale in the month of *vaikAsi* and *adhyayanOtsavam* in the month of *dhanur* (*mArgazhi*). The *Garuda Seva* and *Chariot* festival during

brahmOtsavam are a great feast to the eyes and it attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over India.

- (iii) During Muslim invasion in ACE 1688, the Utsava Murthy of this temple was taken to Udaiya Palayam, Trichy and in ACE 1710, it was brought back to Kanchi by Attaan Jeeyar with the help of his sishya King Thodarmal. The details are in stone inscriptions and seen in front of Thayar (Goddess) sannidhi.
- (iv) The magnitude of work and service to Sri Vaishnavism rendered by Jagadacarya Simhasanadipati Maha Vidwan P.B. Annagarachariar Swami is immeasurable.
- (v) Sri Ramanuja spent his childhood life here only and it is this Lord who showed Sri Ramanuja the path to re-establish Sri Vaishnavism. The relation between this Lord and Sri Thirukkachchi Nambi and Sri Ramanuja is beautiful and the story itself invigorates the mind and heart. *ThirumALigai (maNdapam)*, where Sri Ramanuja spent his time, is called *Udaiyavar ThirumALigai* and this is situated in the road opposite to the East Entrance of the temple.



Deva Perumal, Kanchipuram

THIRU-P-PAVAI JEEYAR

Rama Priya Ramanuja Dasyai

In accordance with the sastras, a sanyasi must obtain food only by taking *blksha* (charity, alms) from married couples. As a true example of Vedic culture, Sri Ramanuja upheld this principle by daily walking through the streets that surround the Great Temple of Sri Ranganam, requesting alms in the form of rice, grains, and vegetables from his disciples. During his walks, Swami EmperumAnAr and his close disciples enjoyed chanting *Thiru-p-pAvai*, the poetic 30 verses of Andal that all Sri Vaishnavas include in their recitations in home and temples. Sri Ramanuja had particular fondness for these 30 verses, and his disciples would find that he was in a mood of devotional ecstasy every time he walked through these streets, seeking out alms and singing the sweet melodious poetry. Once, just at the time that he was singing the 18th pAsuram of *Thiru-p-pAvai*, "*undhu madakalitrana*", the small group of devotees happened to arrive at the door of one of his five great Acharyas, Swami Periya Nambi.

The eighteenth verse of *Thiru-p-pAvai* is intended to awaken *nappinnai*, the consort of Krishna, who is beseeched by the other *gOpis* (cowherd girls) to open the door to Sri Krishna's room such that they can offer their adorations to Her Handsome Groom. The Goddess *Nappinnai* is described as a beautiful young woman who has many bangles on her wrists that jingle together as she moves her arms and hands, and who is playing with a beautiful ball of flowers in her right hand.

To Sri Ramanuja's elation, just as these words were being chanted, he and the close disciples that were with him heard the sound of bangles jingling together from the other side of the *Periya Nambi's* door as it was being unlatched. And as the door opened, a lovely young girl emerged, holding in her hand a small ball of flowers that were to be part of a garland that she was making. Although the disciples recognized the girl to be *Periya Nambi's* daughter, *aththuzhAi*, in Sri Ramanuja's ecstasy, he saw the Goddess *Nappinnai* herself. Ramanuja's eyes filled with tears of joy and devotion as he felt faint and fell to the ground.

Frightened by what may have happened to the Great Soul, the girl ran back inside the home and called for help from her father. Sri *Periya Nambi* raced to the door. Just outside the entrance to his home, he found his disciple Ramanuja laying on the bare ground, his face flushed, his eyes filled with tears, with his close disciples hunched over him, trying to bring him back to consciousness.

Looking back at his daughter, Sri Periya Nambi understood what happened. He came and sat next to Sri Ramanuja, gently patted him on the shoulder to both comfort and awaken him, and said with in an understanding and affectionate tone, "You are fully enjoying *undhu madakalitrAn*, aren't you?...*Thiru-p-pAvai Jeeyar*" (the scholarly teacher of Thiru-p-pAvai. The disciples were delighted at this new name for their beloved teacher, and ever since then, one of the titles for Sri Ramanuja has been *Thiru-p-pAvai Jeeyar*.

[Editor's note: this incident from the life of Ramanuja is part of many that are referenced by a great devotee, *Thiru-allikEni ammAl*, in her *vArtai* (sayings), which extols the virtues of our Azhvans and Acharyas by contrasting their mystical experience with her (and our) mundane one. This particular story is referenced in her asking the question "Did I experience Him with my own eyes?". Watch for more wonderful stories in future issues].

Q & A: AZHVARS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Mukundan Pattangi

Question: Who are the Azhvans and why are they important to us?

Answer: *Azhvan* in tamil means "One who is immersed" in GOD and His qualities. As per tradition, there are 10 Azhvans. Two more saints - Andal and Madhurakavi Azhvan are also considered as Azhvans. They took birth in all walks, communities, castes and strata of society. They are important to us, because they are the ones through whom Lord Sriman Narayana has given us the divine message in the form of the divine 4000 songs. They illustrate the irrelevance of birth, caste, wealth etc. when it comes to the LOVE of God.

Question: What is their tangible contribution for humanity?

Answer: They have been chosen by the Lord as the instruments for delivering the pure message of how to reach the Lord. The 4000 divine verses (*nAlAyira divya prabhandham*) is the collection of hymns of the Azhvans, and are laden with bhakti and passion for the Lord and with guidelines on how to lead productive lives. These 4000 divine songs are the Tamil Vedas (i.e the Veda, in the Tamil form). The Azhvans exhort us to place complete faith in the Lord for our salvation, and spend our time productively by serving His devotees and enjoying His infinite auspicious qualities.

Question: There is already a Veda in Sanskrit, which you said has been there forever, why is GOD giving us another version - drAvida Veda or Tamil Veda?

Answer: The Sanskrit Veda is a compendium of knowledge. It contains rituals (yAgAs) for any material goal (like money, prosperity, going to a higher world after death etc). It also contains the ultimate truth (the relationship between the soul and the Lord, and how to attain salvation). The ultimate truth is hard to find, because it is present along with everything else. To learn the sanskrit veda, one has to be a twice born, and undergo rigorous training for a number of years. It is commonly said that one lifetime is not enough to learn the Vedas by heart, let alone understand it completely. Once the Vedas are learnt by heart, they need to be interpreted and understood and that is a very difficult proposition. The Tamil Veda is, on the other hand, a very precise body of knowledge. It contains only information pertinent to our salvation, and does not need any qualifications to learn. Anyone with an interest in learning can learn the Tamil Veda, and understand the meanings through a learned teacher.

Question: What are the qualifications to learn the Tamil Veda? And what are the fruits of learning them?

Answer: There are no restrictions on learning, chanting and understanding the Tamil Veda. Love of GOD and interest to learn are the only things we need. The fruits of being immersed in the Tamil Veda are - understanding of the eternal relationship between the soul and God, more Love of God, and development of a liking for service to God and His devotees. One has to experience the feeling to understand. This is one fruit that is understood to be only those who have tasted it.

Question: So how can the Tamil Veda be useful to me in today's life? (making money, being popular etc.)

Answer: That depends on what you want to do today. If you are interested in spiritual progress, then the Tamil Veda will help you. The Tamil Veda will help change your heart and help in bringing you back to the right path. In fact one who is immersed in the Dravida Veda will surrender to the will of GOD and will never go against HIS way (as the will is surrendered to GOD). There is nothing wrong in making money, as long as a portion of this is to serve God and His devotees.

Lets get back to the main topic today: **Azhvars**

Question: When were they born and where did they live?

Answer: Svami Manavala Mamuni lists in his work, Upadesa Rattina Malai, the birth stars and months of the Azhvars. According to philosophical history, they were in this world prior to, and during the kali yuga. That is starting about more than 6,000 years ago. Modern scholars, using western dating methods, say that the Azhvars lived and walked on this earth between the third and eighth century A.D. According to traditional belief, some Azhvars were before kaliyuga. NammazhvAr and later Azhvars (kulasEkara, periyAzhvAr, thoNdar adippodi AzhvAr, thiru-p-pAN AzhvAr, kaliyan) were all in the kaliyuga.

It is also believed by many people that the beautiful sanskrit work - Mukunda Mala, on Lord Krishna, was composed by one of the Azhvars - KulasEkhara Azhvar.

Question: What is in all the 4000? Can you list them in brief?

Answer: The 4000 songs are organized in sets of verses. They are as follows

1. poigai AzhvAr - 1st ThiruvandhAdhi
2. bhUdhaththu AzhvAr - 2nd ThiruvandhAdhi
3. pEyAzhvAr - 3rd ThiruvandAdi
4. Thirumazhisai AzhvAr - thiru-ch-chanda viruttam, nAnmugan thiruvandAdi
5. nammAzhvAr - thiru-viruttam, thiruvAsiriyam, thiruvAimozhi, periya thiruvandAdi
6. kulasEkhara AzhvAr - perumAL thirumozhi
7. periyAzhvAr - thiru-p-pallANdu, periyAzhvAr thirumozhi
8. thoNdar-adi-p-podi AzhvAr - thiru-p-paLLi-yezhuchchi, thirumAlai
9. thiru-p-pAN AzhvAr - amalanAdipirAn
10. thirumangai AzhvAr - thiru-k-kuRundhAndakam, thirunedundhANdakam, thiruvezhu-kURRirukkai, siriya thirumadal, periya thirumadal and periya thirumozhi
11. AndAL - thiru-p-pAvai, nAchchiAr thirumozhi
12. madhurakavi AzhvAr - kaNNinun ciRuttAmbu

The divine work on Sri Ramanuja, by thiru-arangattu amudhanAr, called rAmAnuja nURRandhAdhi, is also considered to be part of the sacred 4000 verses.

RAMANUJA IN THIRU-P-PAVAI

Sri V P S Varadan Swami

The classic Tamil poem *Thiru-p-pAvai* of Sri *GOda Devi*, or *Andal* as she is called in Tamil, is the most well-known among the 4000 hymns of the Azhvars. It is recited in homes and temples by followers of Sri Ramanuja throughout the world, every day. And once a year, during the month of *mArgazhi* (*dhanUrmAsa*, mid-December through mid-January), it becomes the central focus for the month-long celebration leading up to *pongal* (*sankrAnthi*, the Festival of the Winter Harvest).

Throughout the centuries, our Acharyas have provided us with several authentic interpretations on the inner meaning of these beautiful thirty verses. One unique interpretation is from the perspective of *AchAryaparam* (The Greatness of the Teacher), in which it understood that each of Sri Andal's stanzas praised the glory and qualities of the Acharya and the benefits which will accrue to jivas due to his grace. It is also clear that since all Acharyas of the Sri Vaishnava faith (after Ramanuja) regard themselves only to be servants to the Lotus Feet of Sri Ramanuja, the noble word 'Acharya' can be taken to refer to Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja himself.

It should be noted that although the time that Andal lived on earth was several centuries before Sri Ramanuja, her experience of the Divine was such that it not only conveyed her love and devotion to the Lord, but also the expectation that He would one day bless the earth with such a Great Soul.

The renowned scholar and *vidwAn* (Maestro) of Kanchipuram, *Sri PrativAdi Bhayankaram aNNangarAchariar Swami*, has interpreted the entire Thiruppavai from this perspective of praising the glory of Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja. In this brief write up, only one stanza of Thiruppavai, verse No 16 '*Nayakanai ninRa*', has been chosen as an example of how each and every word can be used to refer to Sri Ramanuja. It is hoped that this small example will encourage readers to seek out similar explanations of other stanzas, as well.

For convenience the words or group of words from the 16th verse of Thiruppavai are taken one by one. The literal meaning is provided first, followed by the esoteric meaning.

nAyakanai ninRa: Outstanding Leader

Sri Ramanuja occupies the central position in the garland of our Acharya lineage (Editor's note: See volume I, Issue I for more details). The lineage

begins with Sriman Narayana and *Sri peria pirAttiiAr* (The Supreme Queen, Sri Mahalakshmi), and goes through a series of teachers that precede and follow Sri Ramanuja:

Srimathe Vishvaksena
Srimathe Satakopa (NammazhvAr)
Sriman Nathamuni
Sri Pundareekaksha
Sri Rama Misra
Srimad Yamuna Muni
Sri Mahapoorna (Peria Nambigal)

Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja

Sri EmbAr
Sri Parasara Bhattar
Sri Nanjeeyar
Sri Nampillai
Sri Vadakku-thiruveedhi-pillai
Sri Pillai Lokachariar
Sri Thiruvaimozhi Pillai
Sri Manavala Mamunigal

It is not merely his central position, but also his noble *AchAryAtvam* (nature of being a true teacher) that compelled Sri Ramanuja to surrender to Sriman Narayana through the intercession of *Sri Mahalakshmi* such that all souls could be redeemed. It is this paradigmatic quality of Sri Ramanuja that inspired Sri Andal to address him as '*nAyakanAi ninRa*'. By providing *thirumudi sambandam* (connection through his head, or connection through his service to them) to all earlier Acharyas and *thiruvadi sambandam* (connection via his feet, or through their service to him) to all the later Acharyas, Sri Ramanuja served as the Connection to the Supreme Lord to all of the Acharyas of the lineage. And, it is in our connection to these Acharyas through our immediate Acharya that we become connected to Ramanuja, and find our Redemption.

nandagOpan: Sri Krishna's father, Nanda

Just as Nandagopa had Lord Krishna as his son, Sri Emperumanar had Sampathkumar (the Darling Son, the Lord in His iconographic form at the temple in Melkote, Karnataka) as his son and called him as '*selvappillai*' (Cherished Son).

Udaya: Possessor.

This directly refers to one of the noted names of Sri Emperumanar, *Udayavar* (Owner). Our Acharyas teach us that Lord Ranganatha (The Lord of the Stage, the name of the Lord at the temple in Sri Rangam, TamilNadu) handed over the management of *BhUOkam* (the material world) and *Paramapadam* (The Highest Abode) to Sri Ramanuja, endowing him with the title *Udayavar*, meaning *nirvAhakar* (the conductor) of *ubhaya vibhUthi* (the two glories of the Lord, the earth and heaven).

kOyil kAp-p-AnE: Guardian of the Temple

The word '*koyil*' simply means Sri Rangam, i.e. Sri Ranganatha's Temple, referring to the most revered of the 108 divya desams. However, if the general meaning is taken, it then refers to all temples, divya desams and *abhimAna sthalangaL* (places of reverence). Sri Emperumanar introduced the necessary reforms in the temple administration of Sri Rangam in particular and in all temples in general.

kodi thOnRum thOraNa vAsal kA-p-pAnE:

Kodi: Flag; *thOnRum*: Appear; *thOraNa*: Festoon, decoration; *vAsal*: Entrance; *kA-p-pAnE*: Guard (Gatekeeper)
Gatekeeper of the flag and festoon laden Entrance

'*kodi*' and '*thOraNam*' are adorning the entrance gate to the Highest Abode, Paramapadam. The Gate-keeper of the doors to Paramapadam is Swami Emperumanar. Without the grace of Sri Ramanuja, salvation from *samsAra* and attaining Moksha is not possible.

maNik kadavam thAL thiravAi:

maNi: Gems; *kadavam*: Doors; *thAL*: Latch; *thiravAi*: Open
Open the doors adorned with gems.

The followers of Vedic culture recognize that there are nine gems, known as the *navarathnas* in Sanskrit, that are more sacred and more precious than all the other treasures in this world. Similarly, Sri Ramanuja provided all of us with nine precious works that lucidly bring the Eternal Truths of the Vedas to all of us. These nine works are: *Sri BhAshyam*, *VedAnthA Deepam*, *VedAnthA SArAm*, *VedArthA Sangrahan*, *Geetha BhAshyam*, *SaranAgathi Gadyam*, *Sri Ranga Gadyam*, *Sri Vaikunta Gadyam* and *Sri Nithya Grantham*. We seek the blessings of Sri Ramanuja to opening our hearts and minds such that we can learn and understand the meanings of all these nine works.

Ayar siRumiyarOmukku thAL thiravAi:

Ayar siRumiyar: Cow Herd girls, the residents of Vrindavan, where Sri Krishna spent his childhood; *thAL thiravAi:* Open the latches of the door.

The cowherd girls of Vrindavan are simple and innocent. Those of us bound to this world are also just as innocent and ignorant when it comes to proper spiritual understanding. So, Sri Ramanuja's help is sought to get enlightenment.

mAyan maNi vaNNan nenneE vAi nErnthAn:

mAyan: Person of astonishing acts; *maNi:* Valuable gems; *vaNNan:* Similar to; *nenneE:* Already (past tense); *vAi nErnthAn:* narrated. It has been already predicted by the Lord.

The valuable Gem who performs astonishing acts is none other than the Supreme Lord Himself. *NenneE* refers to *sAstras*, *Vedas*, *itihAsas*, *purAnas*, etc., that are part of parcel of the Lord's Nature and are therefore, are already known to Him. *vai nErnthAn* refers to how the sacred scriptures foretold of the birth and glory of Sri Ramanuja. In the Puranas, the expected avatharam of Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja is mentioned as, '*Kalou Ramanuja smratha ha:*' (in the age of *kali* (ignorance) Sri Ramanuja will be born), '*Kalou kaschit bhavishyathi*' (This will certainly happen sometime in the age of *kali*) Sri Andal points out the references about the prediction of Bhagvat Ramanuja's birth in the ancient Puranas.

thooyOmaai vandOm:

thooyOmaai: With pure heart; *vandOm:* We came; We have come here with a pure heart.

Our hearts become pure when we realize that the Acharya is the Means to realizing God, and as such, should be given a level of importance that is greater than even that given to God. That is our purity of mind. Andal implies that with such purity, we are here.

thuyil ezha paaduvaan:

thuyil: Sleep; *ezha:* to awaken; *paaduvaan:* sing; We woke up from sleep by our own singing.

We wish to get rid of our sleep of ignorance or *mAya*. We sing our acharyan's praises and get realization (we wake up).

vAyAl munna munnam mathAthE amma:

vAyAl: By mouth; *munna munnam:* In the first place; *mathAthE amma:* Do not refuse;

Oh Acharya, you should not forsake us and you should accept us as your disciples and bestow your grace upon us.

nee nEsa nilai kadavam neekEl:

nee: You (Acharya); *nEsa:* Dear; *nilai:* Main; *kadavam:* Doors; *neekEl:* Open (Remove)

An entrance to a mansion or palace is generally made up two doors that are used to cover one entrance. Similarly our *rahasya mantras* (esoteric teachings) the mantras that the Acharya graces upon us as part of the sacrament of *panchasamskaram* (initiation) are all in two parts. The request is to teach the *rahasyas* which are twin in nature.

kadavam neekkudal:

kadavam: Doors; *neekkudal:* Open;

'*Kadavam neekkudal*' means unfold the meanings of the *rahasya mantras* which are in two parts.

In summary, Sri Andal directly addresses Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja on our behalf by praising him that he is the chieftain of all Acharyas, controller of both the worlds, reformer of temples, and recognizing that without his permission entering the gate of Sri Vaikuntam is not possible. She also reminds all of us that his glorious birth has been foretold in the epics.

She then beseeches him on behalf of all of us to grant the opportunity to learn his works which are nine in number, and to explain the inner meanings of all the three *rahasya mantras*. This plea is based on our understanding and our experience that the acharya is regarded to be greater than the Lord Himself. It is with this pure heart that we praise the acharya and humbly request him. Therefore, acharya should grant our prayers and should not reject us.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

In the last issue, we had mentioned about Sri Ramanuja decked in white robes (as against the saffron robes for an ascetic) during one of the days of His annual grand festival at Sri PerumbUdUr. This day's festivities are a re-enactment of the incident in Sri Ramanuja's life when the local king's soldiers came to take Ramanuja to the king who wanted to trouble Him. Sri kUrattAzhvAn wore the saffron robes and fooled the king's soldiers, while Sri Ramanuja wore the white robes of a non-ascetic and escaped to Thiru-nArAyaNa-puram.

IN FOCUS

TA Varadhan

This issue's "In Focus" is about a miracle of the present day. This is about a divine place called "Thiru-k-kUdalUr", which is one of the 108 holiest shrines that followers of Sri Ramanuja extoll as Divya Desams.

The Lord of this place is known as "jagad-rakshaka-perumAL" or "vayyam kAththa perumAL", the Lord who is the savior and protector of the Universe!. The Lord here reveals Himself to us in an extremely captivating four-armed form, with His two Eternal Consorts standing next to Him. An image of the Lord enshrined in this temple is included in this issue.

Such a beautiful Lord's temple has been in a dilapidated state for a while, with the temple being open only for an hour or so every day. The walls were crumbling and weeds/plants grew all around the abode of the Lord, even on top of the sanctum sanctorum.

All the devotees who went to see this Lord returned with a very heavy heart - How can we allow the Lord who is the savior of the Universe to be in such a crumbling abode? To add to this, the dome above the sanctum of the Lord's consort crumbled, and our Mother, Lakshmi, had to be moved to the main sanctum (which was also in a bad state) to be next to the Lord.

About 18 months ago, many devotees started going to this temple regularly. A plan was set up by which monthly expenses for the temple (salary for priest; money for making, offering and distributing prasadam etc.) could be funded by interested devotees in the USA and India. The temple was kept open for a longer time, and more and more devotees started to go to the temple. Simultaneously, srI Thiru-k-kOshthiyUr mAdhavan Swami, an ardent devotee and organizer of temple renovation projects, started a large scale project to renovate the temple. As word spread about efforts to renovate this ancient temple, more and more devotees came to provide financial support for this worthwhile cause.

Our teachers and elders teach us that, in our religion, the Lord is there for us. He comes gladly to places where His devotees are in love with Him and where they come to see Him joyously. As more and more people started going here, we could see the changes and effects with our own eyes. All of a sudden, while some work was being done, a

formation in the form of the divine conch appeared on a tree in the temple. This attracted thousands and thousands of local people and the interest in the temple increased significantly.

After months of effort, the temple renovation was completed in early June, and a grand samprOkshaNam was conducted under the auspices of the respected Sri Tridandi Sriman Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami. The project for monthly support continues, and the temple is in a good state now.

This is such a miracle for everyone who observed this. For more than 10 years, no one could even go to this temple with a guarantee of worshipping the Lord. Very few people used to go there. All of a sudden, once His devotees showed some interest, the Lord made things happen, and now hundreds of devotees go to this temple everyday.



Jagath rakshaka perumal - Thiruk kUdalUr
(Courtesy - saranam.com)

SWAMI VEDANTA DESIKA'S GODA STUTI

Sri P B Rajahamsam Svami

“KarkatE pUrva phalguNyAm thulasi kAnanOdvhavAm
pANdyE visvambharAm gOdAm, vandE srI rangAnAyakIm”

I worship Sri Ranganatha's consort (Andal), born in a Tulasi grove in the month of AshAda (Tamil month-Aadi) in the Pandya desam. This Andal is the manifestation of BhudEvi (Supporter of the universe).

The VAzhi ThirunAmam (laudatory verses, traditionally recited at the end of ordained worship everyday) for Andal says

“Thiru-ppAvai muppadhum seppinAL vAzhie!
oru nURRu nArpaththu mUnRu uraiththAL vAzhie!”

Long live the one who spoke out the thirty verses of Thiru-p-pAvai.
Long live the one who spoke the 143 songs of Naachiyar Thirumozhi

Andal has composed one hundred and seventy three incomparable verses in praise of the Supreme Lord - Sriman Narayana. These pasurams immerse the devotees in the nectarine ocean of love. The pasurams of Andal are regarded as a precious treasure by all devotees. In fact Andal is even known for excelling other Azhvars - Sri Manavala Mamuni says “*AzhvArgaL tham seyalai vinji nirkum thanmayaLai*” (Andal, who surpasses the qualities of other Azhvars). Her 30 verses of Thiru -p-pAvai are regarded as the seed of the Vedas - “*vEdam anaithukkum viththAgum*” (the Thiru-p-pAvai is the seed for all the vedas).

Thus, Andal's glory is immeasurable and beyond word and thought. Swami Vedanta Desika has composed 29 verses on gOda, in his stotra known as gOda sthuthi. The 29th verse, as is customary, speaks about the fruits that one can gain by reciting the gOda Sthuthi.

The words used by Swami Desika in the gOda Sthuthi and the poetic touch in them, is remarkable.

To enjoy the greatness of this gOda Sthuthi one has to understand the ideas of Swami Desika. The essence of gOda Sthuthi may thus be divided into ten sections

1. Following the footsteps of pUrvAchAryAs (great teachers).
2. Origin of Goda Sthuthi - the genesis of this sthuthi.

3. Poetic Excellence of Swami Desika.
4. Swami Desika's in-depth knowledge in Vedas can be gleaned from his sthuthi.
5. Andal's greatness / uniqueness when compared to the other Azhvars.
6. Greatness of Andal's “*thirukuzhal*” (kuzhal - hair)
7. Desika's poetic genius - especially the usage of a poetic metaphor known as “*ninda sthuthi*” - which appears to criticize gOda, but actually compliments her.
8. *uthprEkshai* - usage of apt & beautiful examples to show the greatness of Andal.
9. Sastras described in different / unique angle.
10. Melody & the sweetness of this sthuthi.

We will consider the above 10 points in some detail now.

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF PURVACHARYAS

Swamy Desika has composed this stuthi based on the works of our purvacharyas. In this Sthuthi, Sri Desika describes gOda by the following verse

“srI vishNuchitta kula nandana kalpavallIm”

In the above verse Swami has described Andal as Karpagavruksha, the divine tree that is the bestower of all virtues. The same idea is conveyed about the Divine Consort of the Lord, Sri Ranganayaki, by Sri Parasara Bhattar in his Sri Guna Ratna kOsha, which sings the glory of Sri Ranganayaki. Therefore, it is clear that Sri Ranganayaki is none other than the GOda Herself. This description of the divine consort, as karpaga tree, is inferred from the 3rd verse of srI Guna Ratna kOSha “*anukaltanukanda*”.

Swami Desika has followed Sri Bhattar, while singing on the glory of gOda. Just as the karpaga vruksha is the bestower of all auspicious things, Andal and her divine outpourings are the bestowers of all auspicious things. The Karpaga kodi, which is a creeper, requires a pole for its survival; likewise, gOda possesses the Lord Himself as her supporter!

In the salutatory verse for Thiru-p-pAvai, Andal is described as “*anna vayal puduvai AndAL arangar-k-ku, pannu Thiru-p-pAvai pal padhiyam, innisaiyAl pAdi-k-koduththAL naR paa maalai, poomaalai soodi-k-koduththALaich chollu*”

The 5th verse of gOda Sthuthi is based on the above verse. In the 5th sloka (*asmad ruchAmpkruthou chira dhIkshItAnAm*), Swami addresses gODa, that we the jIvAs, have committed innumerable sins from beginningless time, but even to a sinner like me (here, Swami Desika refers to himself as the sinner!), the Lord showers His grace. That is only because of your poomAlai (the garland made of flowers), and pAmAlai (the garland of verses). Since the Lord wears the garland worn by you, and it is you who have pleased Him with your sweet words, out of overwhelming joy, the Lord ignored all our misdeeds and has showered His bliss on us. Thus, it is you, gOda, who is the cause of His grace.

ORIGIN OF GODA STHUTHI - BIRTH OF THIS STHUTHI

The genesis of gOda Sthuthi can be inferred from the second sloka of gOda sthuthi - "*mounArduhE mukarayanthi guNa: tvadIyah*". The gOda Sthuthi was composed by Swami Desika during his stay at srI-villi-puthUr. It was day in which Swami was observing a silent fast. On that day, there was a thiruveedhi-p-puRappAdu (ceremonial procession). Due to some inconvenience, the procession was diverted to a different route, and had to pass through the street where Swami Desika was residing. Swami had a chance to have a glimpse of the beautiful image of Andal, and he broke his silence by composing the masterpiece that is gOda Sthuthi - "*sAhasaiva gOdhe mounrduhE mukhayanthi guNastvadIyah*"

POETIC EXCELLENCE OF SWAMY DESIKA

Swami Vedanta Desika's poetic excellence can be perceived from the gOda Sthuthi. His poetic excellence is incomparable and is remarkable. Examples of the excellence are in the 6th and the 16th verses - "*shOnAdharE api, kuchyOrapi thungabadhrA*" and "*tvannmouLidAmni*".

In the 16th verse Swami Desika gives a vivid list of rivers and compares it with the leela (activities) of gOda. The proficiency in the language and the repetition of the words adds beauty to the verse. Then in the verse "*tvannmouLidAmni...vibhOshIraasa gruhithE*", Swami gives a description of gracious music, the very words also used to depict pleasantness and indicates bliss and happiness.

SWAMY'S IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE VEDAS

The seventh verse "*vAlmIkshasravaNath*" depicts Swami's in-depth knowledge of the Vedas. In taittirIya yajur brAhmaNa, there is a rk (verse) that is

"*shrOthram hyEtath prutivoyAh.....yath vAlmIkaha*". This rk conveys that the ant hills that are found on the earth are considered to be the ears of bhUmAdEvi. As Andal is considered as the manifestation of bhUmAdEvi, we can consider that the ant hill found in the earth is Andal's ear. Thus, it can be said that Sri Valmiki Maharishi, who was born in an anthill, had his birth through Andal's ear.

The great epic Sri Ramayana is known for the poetic excellence. Valmiki, the author of Sri Ramayana had come out of Andals ear. When a person who has come out of Sri Andal's ear can compose such a divine epic, no one can refute the Sri Suktis that came out of Andal's mouth for their excellence/sweetness.

This is the message conveyed by Swami Desika in the seventh sloka. He concludes that, Andal's srI sUkthis, melts not only the heart of her Consort Lord Narayana but also melts the heart of his vassals and is even superior to Valmiki's Sri Ramayana. GODa is renowned for her sweet words, and conferred with a title in tamil called as "*kiLi mozhiyAL*" (The one whose words are as sweet as those of a parrot).

ANDAL'S GREATNESS / UNIQUENESS WHEN COMPARED TO THE OTHER AZHVARS

In the 8th sloka, "*bhOkthum tava priyathAm bhavathIva gOdhe*", Swami Desika conveys that Andal is the pathfinder and the leader for all the Azhvars in expressing love towards the Lord. Swami Manavala Mamuni says the same in upadEsa rattinamAlai "*AzhvArgaL tham seyalai vinji niRkum thanmayaLaay*". The Lord (Purusha) can be enjoyed better by a Stri (Female) than any Azhvar (male). Andal's anubhavam (feeling) for Lord holds good when compared with Azhvar's experience. In order to attain the maximum enjoyment Andal had, other Azhvars have pretended to have become the nAyaki (Queen) of the nAyakan (Supreme Lord) and sung in praise of Him.

The verse "*kUravasthavdIya*" suggests that the Azhvars have regarded Andal as their daughter. Sri Manavala Mamuni in Upadesa Rattina Malai supports this statement by his verse "*anjukudikoru sandhadhiyai*" (The one who is the descendant of the group of five!)

This verse has two definitions. Let us look at the first definition.

If we start counting the groups or family from Poigai Azhvar to Peri azhvar, we can see five groups. Mudalazhvars (PoigaiAzhvar, BoodathAzhvar and Peyazhvar) belong to one group. Thirumazhisai

Azhvar, Nammazhvar, Kulasekarazhvar and Periyazhvar will form a separate group each, totaling to five groups. Hence Andal is regarded as the descendents of the five groups.

The next definition for the "anjukudi" follows.

"Anju" in Tamil means fear. Azhvans out of their overwhelming devotion had a fear that, nothing should happen to the Supreme Lord. Hence we can group the entire set of Azhvans as Anju Kudi and Andal as their daughter.

GREATNESS OF ANDAL'S "THIRUKUZHAL"

Though the greatness of Andal's beautiful hair which had the privilege of having the flowers meant for Lord is described in many places in this sthuthi, the 10th verse is appealing and is worth quoting here:

"*tathasthu tE madhumidhaha*" is the sloka. Here, Swami Desika conveys the bliss enjoyed by Periazhvar for having offered the garland worn by Andal to Emperuman. Since this act caused happiness to Lord, the Lord blessed the Azhvar with the title of Periyazhvar, the Great Azhvar. Thus, Andal's foster father, Vishnuchitta, has gained a unique place when compared to the other Azhvans. It is not for his age or for the number of songs sung by him in Praise of Lord that he received this title, but because he had offered the flower worn by Goda to Lord.

DESIKA'S POETIC GENIUS IN SHOWING THE VIRODHAPASAM

Virodhapasam is a Sanskrit term which suggests that even if something conveys a negative connotation in one context, it should be understood in its inner meaning such that it can be conveyed in a way that it is not objectionable to the reader.

Swami has used this style in the 11th sloka "*dhik dakshiNApi*". Srivilliputhur, the birth place of Andal is in the southern direction, which would otherwise be considered be inauspicious to those unaware of its sanctity. Swami describes it as though it is in the northern side by use of the word called "Uttara" (North). Here is the usage of the Virodhapasam; the Sanskrit meaning for the north i.e. uttarE, conveys two ideas, its literal meaning as North, and the another implying "best".

Swami thus describes the birth place of Andal - Srivilliputhur as the best. He substantiates his statement, that Lord Ranganatha, to see his beloved GOda who resides in the southern direction, looks towards the South.

This feeling of Swami is different from the stories conveyed in the puranas, where it is said that the Lord faces towards south to shower his grace on Vibhishana.

The different view conveyed by Swami Desika is out of his deep devotion towards the birth place of GOda.

UTHPREKSHAI - USAGE OF APT & BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLES TO SHOW THE GREATNESS OF ANDAL

The 12th sloka "*PRAYENA DEVI BAVATHIBYAPDESHAYOGATH...*" Swami describes GOda's greatness by quoting instances from Itihasa Puranas.

All the rivers are holy; Yamuna is renowned as holy as it paved way to Vasudeva, the Supreme Lord. Godavari had lost its holiness, since it has failed to inform Lord Rama about the abduction of Sita by Ravana. History says that Godavari did a penance to regain her holiness. Swami Desika conveys that Godavari regained her holiness not because of her penance, but because a part of her name viz. GODA became the name of Bhudevi when she descended to the earth. The name of the Bhudevi-"GODA" thus purified the river Godavari, and made it to regain its holiness.

SASTRAS DESCRIBED IN DIFFERENT /UNIQUE ANGLE

In this Stuthi, Swami has conveyed the sastraartham (the meanings of sAstrAs) in a distinct manner. This can be inferred from the 21st sloka. In this verse, description is made about the marriage ceremony where in people from both the sides comment upon the bride and the bride groom. It is quite common during marriage ceremony for the people to comment the bride inferior to the groom and vice versa. Likewise here Desika describes the comments of the people about Andal & Lord, where in one sect speaks Lord's greatness when compared to Goda; and the other sect vice versa; and yet another sect regards Lord & his consort equally. Purvacharyas have composed their sukthis covering these three aspects. The words "THRILOKI VACHALYANTHI" speaks about the three sects of people who comment upon the couple.

The Sastras describe the divine couple in the following manner- Lord is described as *seshabhUthan* (the Lord) and Piratti is described as *sEshi* (His Beloved Possession). Lord is described as all powerful and supreme entity. Though Sastras shows the discrimination that exists between Lord and his Consort, Swami Desika has shown a distinct

aspect i.e. inspite of differences there is *Dvanda* or *Mituna* (Combined concept of God-head) in perfect harmony, the divine couple constitute a single principle.

MELODY AND THE SWEETNESS OF THIS STHUTHI

The Goda stuthi is filled with mellifluous words and are very dear to the ears, the sweetness of these verses melts the heart of all the vassals. All the slokas are nectar filled and dear to the ears especially the sloka which begins is full of sweet words and enchants the ears of the listeners.

"shatamaka maNi neeLA chArukhlahArahastha... vilastu hrudi gOda vishNuchittAtmajAnah.."

Swami Desika's deep love towards Goda has melted and flowed as the sweetness of these verses.

VEDICS ACTIVITIES

Vedics is continuing its nithya aradhanam support of divyadesams in need at Thirunangur, Thirukkoodalur, Kanchipuram and other places. Vedics is in the process of starting monthly support of the Andal Trust in Srivilliputthur and also the Ramanuja Mutt in Azhvar Thirunagari.

In April 2003, Vedics organized a pledge drive to gather funds for the Thirukkoodalur Samprokshanam. Funds of approximately \$2300 were gathered from devotees. Vedics added additional funds to bring this amount to \$2500. A noble devotee matched this amount and a total of \$5000 was submitted to Sri Thirukkoshtiyur Madhavan Swami for the samprokshanam. Vedics also donated \$1000 which was matched by a devotee for a total of \$2000, which was submitted to the renovation of Ramanujar's thiru-th-thEr in Sri Perumbudur.

Devotees have come forth from many places to support these noble causes and Vedics is happy to note that more and more devotees are coming forward. Through their generous donations, Vedics is able to assist in a small way in many kankaryams. Please check the Vedics website <http://www.vedics.net> for details on these services and how to support them.

If anyone wishes additional information or is interested in donating to this service, please contact the Vedics Board at emberumanar@yahoo.com.

CALENDAR - THIRD QUARTER 2003

July 2003

Date	Lunar Calendar	Star	Event
07/08/03	Ani 24	Svathi	Periyazhvar Thirunakshathram
07/09/03	Ani 25	Visakhm	
07/10/03	Ani 26	Anusham	Nathamunigal Thirunakshathram, Sarva Ekadasi
07/17/03	Adi 1	Sadhayam	Dakshinayana Punyakalam
07/25/03	Adi 9	Rohini	Sarva Ekadasi
07/27/03	Adi 11	Thiruvadhirai	
07/28/03	Adi 12	Punarvasu	Amavasai

August 2003

Date	Lunar Calendar	Star	Event
08/01/03	Adi 16	Puram	Andal Thirunakshathram
08/03/03	Adi 18	Hastham	Adi Perukku
08/06/03	Adi 21	Visakhm	
08/08/03	Adi 23	Kettai, Mulam	Varalakshmi Vratam, Sarva Ekadasi
08/10/03	Adi 25	Utthradam	Alavandar Thirunakshathram
08/11/03	Adi 26	Thiruvonam	Yajur Upakarma, Gajendra Moksham
08/12/03	Adi 27	Avittam	Gayatri Japam, Rk Upakarma
08/18/03	Avani 1	Ashvini	
08/19/03	Avani 2	Bharani	SriVaikhanasa Sri Jayanthi
08/20/03	Avani 3	Karthikai	Gokulashtami, Madam Munithraya Sri Jayanthi
08/21/03	Avani 4	Rohini	SriPancharatra Sri Jayanthi
08/23/03	Avani 6	Thiruvadhirai	Sarva Ekadasi
08/27/03	Avani 10	Magam	Amavasai
08/30/03	Avani 13	Hastham	Sama Upakarma

September 2003

Date	Lunar Calendar	Star	Event
09/06/03	Avani 20	Puradam	Sarva Ekadasi
09/17/03	Avani 31	Rohini	Periyavaccan Pillai Thirunakshathram
09/18/03	Purattasi 1	Ashtami, Mrugasirsham	
09/20/03	Purattasi 3	Thiruvadhirai	
09/22/03	Purattasi 5	Pusam	Sarva Ekadasi
09/25/03	Purattasi 8	Puram	Mahalaya Amavasai
09/26/03	Purattasi 9	Utthram	Navarathri Starts
09/27/03	Purattasi 10	Hastham	Thirumalai Brahmotsavam Starts
09/29/03	Purattasi 12	Visakham	

NOTE

The festivals listed are based on the calendar that is followed in Thiruvallikkeni (Triplicane, Tamil Nadu). Festivals are shown based on the time in India, and as a result, may not necessarily represent the date the festival falls in the US and other countries. Please contact your Acharya or a temple priest to determine the exact date and time of a specific festival.

WEBSITE IN FOCUS

The Sri Vaishnava site in focus for this issue is <http://www.sriVaishnava.org> SriVaishnava.org, true to its name hosts a plethora of information and more importantly presents links to various sources of information. This site is maintained by Sri Venkatesh Elayavalli

The highlight of this site is its online collection of rare books. The author has scanned copies of some rare books and has made them available for download. These books are present in their original text (Tamil with grantham characters or sanskrit). Sri Periyavaachan Pillai's commentary of Sri Madhurakavi azhvar's kaNNinum ciRuthAmbu (the divine outpouring of Madhurakavi azhvar), stOtramala (garland of stotRas),

granthamaalai (collection of important works of great teachers) are a few to name. Along similar lines is the sloka section which has a collection of tamil and sanskrit slokas in their original text.

There are a lot of small articles providing a good overview of different subjects. Some of them include articles on SriVaishnava Acharyas/scholars and their works, articles on the Vedas and Upanishads.

There are links to various internet resources such as discussion lists, websites and different monasteries (mutts) which will be useful for an interested person. In summary sriVaishnava.org is a great site with a lot of relevant information.

VEDICS QUIZ

Mukundan Pattangi

1. Sri Andal was born in the month Aadi, star pUram. Hymns sung by Andal are: (Circle all the correct ones)

- (a) Thiruppavai (b) Naachiyaar Thirumozhi,
(c) Thiru Pallandu (d) Thiruvaimozhi
(e) All of the Above

2. What is the important message in Thiruppavai?

- (a) "Narayanane Namakke Parai Tharuvan"
(b) "Nayakanai Ninra Nadagopan"
(c) "Sitrum SirukalE"
(d) "Azhi Mazhai Kanna"

3. What is unique in Thiruppavai? (Circle all the correct answers)

- (a) Directs us to Lord's feet
(b) Try out garlands before offering to lord
(c) Teaches us to do Sanhdyavandana Daily \

4. Which is a sacred day?

- (a) The day we go to GOD (b) The day we get to Chant
(c) When realization about God comes (d) Every day

5. Who are Polla Arakkan/Nalla Arakkan

- (a) GoodGuys/ BadGuys (b) Balarama/ Krishna
(c) Raavana/ Vibheeshana (d) Andal/ All of us in USA

6. Who are the Gatekeepers at Lord Krishna's Place.

- (a) KoilKappan (b) Nandagopan
(c) Nayakan (d) Andal

7. Who is Daughter-in-law of Nandagopalan?

- (a) Andal (b) Nappinnai
(c) Radha (d) Rukmini

8. There is talk of taking a bath (Neerattam).How many times is a pond, or bathing in water mentioned.

1 2 3 4 5 6 30 0

9. How many times the word Lion: Singam come in Thiruppavai?

1 2 3 4 5 6 30 0

10. What is the benefit of "Paavai Nonbu"?

- (a) "Mummari" for ever (b) Good prasadam to eat
(c) Good marital life (d) Physical Fitness

11. Who are fit to get "Bhagavad Anubhavam"?

- (a) All those interested (b) Educated Pundits
(c) Women only (d) Men only

Answers to last issue's Vedics Quiz:

1-d; 2-d; 3-b; 4-c; 5-d; 6-a; 7-a; 8-a; 9-b; 10-d

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

It is traditional at the temple of Lord Sundara rAja, near Madurai, to prepare and offer 100 vessels full of sweet rice (akkAra adisil) to the Lord. There is a connection to Andal and Ramanuja and this practice. What is that connection? We will present more details in the next issue.

CELEBRATING THIRU-ADI-P-POORAM

TA Varadhan

Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja's Vision of life centered around service to God and humanity, can truly be experienced in all its lavishness and joy through the recognition of the holy days in its calendar. While some of these holy days celebrate the appearance day of the Lord in one of His myriad forms known as *avatArAs*, most others are dedicated to the birth of the great souls who realized Him, and shared His qualities of Unconditional Love and Goodness with all of us.

Among the holy days that are taking place during this quarter, *Thiru-Adi-p-pUram*, the ascent of the star *pUroa palguni* in the Tamil month of *Adi* is one of the most important celebrations for us, as it marks the birthday of Andal. It falls this year on August 1, but the actual traditional celebrations begin 10 days before, on July 21. This article presents a brief synopsis of how one can celebrate this grand occasion.

For each of these 10 days, it is traditional to recite the 4000 divine *pAsurams* of the *AzhvArs*. If one has time, he/she can recite 400 *pAsurams* a day, thereby completing the divya prabhandham in 10 days. Given our limited time in this modern world, the following may be adopted as a substitute for the complete recital (this is just a suggested recital sequence):

Day 1: *Thiru-p-pallAndu*; the following verses from Periyazhvar Thirumozhi - *vaNNa mAdangaL soozh, neerAttam, poochchoottal, kAppidal, senniyOngu*; and the following verses of Andal, Thiru-p-panAzhvar and Madhuri Kavi: *Thiru-p-pAvai, amalanAdhi pirAn, kaNNi-nun-siruththAmbu*

Day 2: *Naachiyaar Thirumozhi*

Day 3: *ThirumAlai*, and as a few verses from Periya Thirumozhi

Day 4: 5 more decads from Periya Thirumozhi (the verses from this *Thirumozhi* are up to whatever the chanter enjoys)

Day 5: *kOvil thiruvAimozhi*

Day 6: more decads from *ThiruvAimozhi* (whatever the chanter enjoys)(

Day 7: *irAmAnusa nURRandhAdhi*

Day 8: *upadEsa rattina mAlai*

Day 9: *Thiru-vAi-mozhi nURRandhAdhi*

On Day 10, the actual Thiru-Adi-p-pUram day, the following is suggested to make the celebration complete:

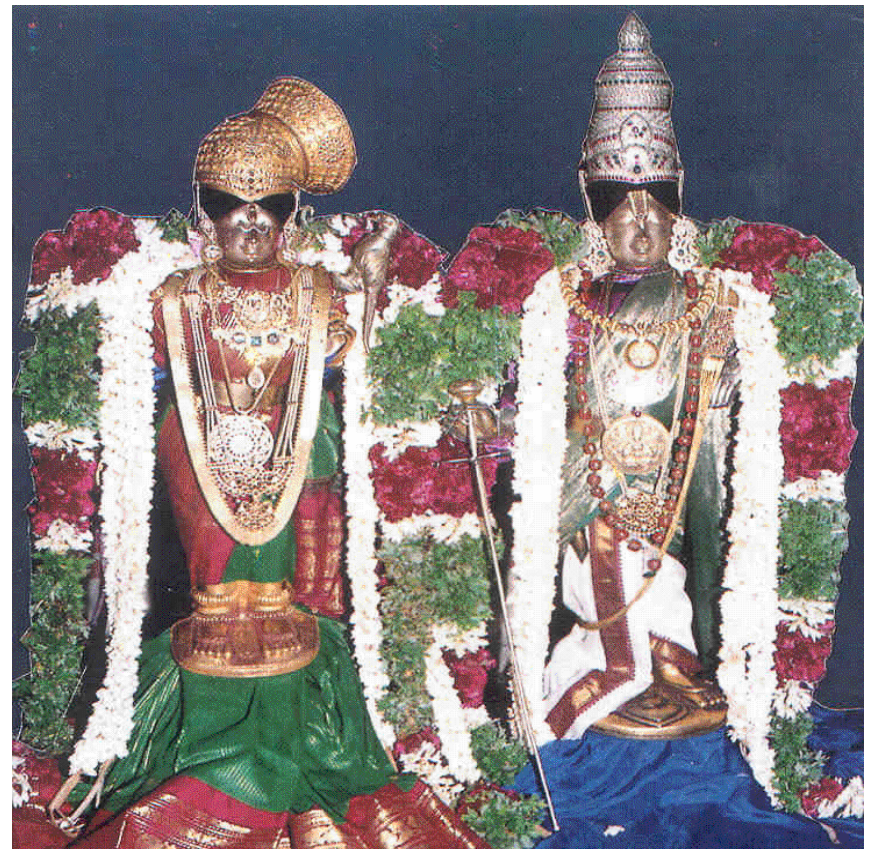
- (i) Wake up early in the morning, perform the daily morning rituals.
 - (ii) Render *thiru-ArAdhanam* to the Lord If you have a photo, or an idol of Andal, do *thiru-ArAdhanam* to the Lord and Andal together.
 - (iii) Recite Naachiyaar Thirumozhi and Thiruppaavai
 - (iv) Keep some flowers that the Lord has adorned during *thiruArAdhanam*; after *thiruArAdhanam* is completed, place those flowers on Andal.
 - (v) For prasAdam, make atleast one sweet - *akkAra adisil* is recommended
1. During *sARrumurai*, recite the *vAzhi thirunAmam* of Andal
 2. Think about the greatness of the Lord and Andal continuously during the day.

All celebrations in the Ramanuja Tradition are times for friendship and community fellowship. So, if there are devotees or a temple in your area, it is best to celebrate together as a group to enjoy the sweet verses from the Sacred 4000.

Those not having had exposure or training in recitation of these 4000 hymns can utilize the 10 days as a time of extra meditation on Andal and Her unique mood of bridal love for Sriman Narayana, as well as a time to serve and interact with those devotees who are involved in service to Her and Her Lord.



Andal, Rangamannar & Periazhvar (www.srivilliputtur.com)



Andal Rangamannar (Courtesy - Sri Villiputhur website)





Live discourses on the Tele-bridge

Wednesdays 9:30PM CST (8:30pm after 1/15): Bhagavad Gita - English
HH. Tridandi Srimannarayana Chinna Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami

1st & last Sunday 7:45pm CST: Sri Vachana Bhooshanam - Tamil
HH Vanamamalai Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami

1st Sunday 10AM CST: Srimad Bhagavatam - Telugu
Sri U.Ve. Satuluri Gopala Krishnamacharyulu

3rd Saturday: 9AM CST: Acharya Hrudayam- Tamil
Sri U.Ve Elayavilli S Bhoovarahan Swami

3rd Sunday 10 AM CST: Srimad Bhagavatam - Telugu
Sri U.Ve. Satuluri Gopala Krishnamacharyulu

Last Saturday 10AM CST: Purpose of Life- Telugu
HH. Srimannarayana Chinna Ramanuja Jeeyar

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



FALL IN LOVE WITH GOD

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

RESTRICT FOOD CONSUMPTION

Eat anything only after offering it to God.

MEDITATION

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

RESPECT FOR ALL THAT IS HIS

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

MONEY

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

CHARITY

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

CONTENTMENT

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

ABSOLUTE FAITH

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

SELF - CONTROL

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

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

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