

SRI NAMMAZHWAR

The Vedas and the Upanishads are the ultimate source of all our spiritual and philosophical knowledge. They describe in great detail the nature of the Parabrahma, the Jeevatma, the relationship between the Jeeva and the Parabrahma, and the ultimate goal of human life that is to attain the lotus feet of the Lord. But reading and absorbing the tatva of the Upanishads is given only to great scholars. The Brahmasutras and Bhagavad Geetha attempt to present the Upanishads in a nutshell. Sri Bhashyam and Geetha Bhashyam of Sri Ramanuja simplify the Brahma Sutras and the Geetha. But even these works are beyond the capacity of ordinary mortals like us who do not have scholarship in Sanskrit.

The Nalayira Divya Prabandham of the Azhwars present the jnana of all these hallowed works of our tradition in Tamil in a melodious, inspired and easy to assimilate form. They are the combined works of the twelve Azhwars, but tradition has it that all these works were brought back to us through Nammazhwar who appeared before Nathamuni to recite all the Nalayiram for him to compile. Hence he is hailed as "வேதம் தமிழ் செய்த மாறன் சடகோபன் " meaning "he who presented the substance of the Vedas in Tamil" and "நாதனுக்கு நாலாயிரம் உரைத்த பிரான் " meaning "he who sang the 4000 Divya Prabhandams in praise of the Lord".

Nammazhwar was born in Thirukurugur immediately after the birth of kaliyuga. Historically he is placed at 8th century A.D. Thirukurugur is called as "Azhwar Thiru Nagari" to mark his Avathara there. It is said that Lord Krishna promised to send great mahatmas to the world to spread the name of the Lord and to propagate bhakthi in the kaliyuga, referring to the avathara of the Azhwars. Nammazhwar is believed to be the amsa of Visvaksena (the Commander-in-Chief of the Lord's army).

His birth took place on the very auspicious poornima day of the Tamil Vaikasi month in Visakha Nakshatram. His parents were great bhakthas (Kari and Udaya Nangai) who were childless for a long time. They had gone on a pilgrimage of temples in North India and on their way back they prayed to the Lord of Thirukurungudi to bless them with a child. The Azhwar was born soon after by the divine grace of Thirukurungudi Nambi and was named "Maran" by his parents. The Azhwar proudly proclaims all these details of his parentage, his native village etc. in all his verses.

Right at birth, the parents noticed that the child was unusual in many ways. He refused to take milk, did not respond to the people around but continued to live without any sustenance. The parents, concerned to see this, took the child to the temple and left him in a cradle under a tamarind tree and watched with great astonishment, the divine child growing and thriving in the same place. He continued to sit there in padmasana, in divine contemplation for sixteen years. His presence enfolded the whole village in a state of divine bliss.

The Azhwar gives details about his life in various verses. He mentions that Lord Krishna was food and water and everything necessary to him.

"உண்ணுஞ்சோறு பருகு நீர் தின்னும் வெற்றிலை எல்லாம் கண்ணன் " (Thiruvaimozhi 6-7-1)

He goes on to say that he played with Lord, meditated at His holy feet, he had no interest in pleasures of the senses and he could not tolerate mundane life and that is why he kept his eyes closed.

"கண்டு கேட்டுற்று மோந்துண்குழலும் ஐங்கருவி
கண்டவிற்பம் தெரிவரிய அளவில்லாச் சிற்றிற்பம்
ஒண்டொடியாள் திருமகளும் நீயுமே உலாநிற்ப
கண்ட சதிர் கண்டொழிந்தேன் அடைந்தேன் உன் திருவடியை " (Thiruvaimozhi 4-9-10)

His mind dwelt on the Lord all the time.

"ஒழிவில் காலமெல்லாம் உடனாய் மன்னி " (Thiruvaimozhi 3-3-1)

He was a staunch Srivaishnavite who could not bear to think of other Devas.

"உன்னித்து மற்றொரு தெய்வம் தொழால் அவனையல்லால் " (Thiruvaimozhi 4-6-10)

He saw Sriman Narayana in everything and in all people around him.

"திருவுடை மன்னரைக் காணில் திருமாலை கண்டேனே என்றும்
உருவுடை வண்ணங்கள் காணில் உலகளந்தானே என்று துள்ளும்
கருவுடை தேவில்கள் எல்லாம் கடல் வண்ணன் கோவிலே என்றும் "(Thiruvaimozhi 4-4-8)

He mentions that his jnana and bhakti were not the result of any sadhana. They came naturally to him with the grace of the Lord.

"மயற்வற மதிநலம் அருளினன் " (Thiruvaimozhi 1-1-1)

"எனக்கே அருள்கள் செய்ய விதி சூழ்ந்ததால் எனக்கேலம்மான் " (Thiruvaimozhi 2-7-6)

"அறியாக் காலத்துள்ளே அடிமைக்கண் அன்பு செய்வித்து " (Thiruvaimozhi 2-3-3)

Around this time, there lived another great mahatma called "Madhurakavi" who had gone on a pilgrimage to Ayodhya and other places in North India. He noticed a great flame shining constantly down south for two to three nights and was drawn towards it. Following the flame, he reached the Thirukurugur temple and saw the Azhwar seated there. To test him, he threw a small pebble before him and the divine boy woke up out of his trance for the first time. Madurakavi posed a philosophical question to the boy who answered it effortlessly. The question runs like

this- "செத்தது வயிற்றில் சிறியது பிறந்தால் எத்தை தின்று எங்கே கிடக்கும்?" This means that if the Jeeva (life which is eternal) is born into the body, which is lifeless, what will it experience and where will it live? The young saint answered "அத்தை தின்று அங்கே கிடக்கும் ". This means that if the Jeeva is a realized soul, it will contemplate on the Paramatma and will live in this divine consciousness. If not, it will endure the fruits of good and bad Karma that results from its actions born out of sensory perceptions and will remain caught in the cycle of births and deaths. On hearing this short, yet precise answer to his intricate question, Madhurakavi recognized the mahatma before him and took refuge at his feet. Once Nammazhwar woke up from his trance, he started singing his verses on the Lord. Madhurakavi recorded all the Azhwar's songs. It is believed that the Azhwar lived on the earth in the same place for 32 years.

Madhurakavi composed the very beautiful "கண்ணிருன் சிறுத்தாம்பு (Kanninun Chiru Thambu)" in praise of Nammazhwar. The verses are extolled by all for their beauty, melody and guru bhakthi. The works of Nammazhwar, which form part of Nalayira Divya Prabhandham, are "திருவிருத்தம் (Thiruviruttam - 100 verses)", "திருவாசிரியம் (Thiruvasiriyam - 7 verses), "பெரிய திருவந்தாதி (Periya Thiruvandhadhi - 87 verses) and "திருவாய்மொழி (Thiruvaimozhi - 1102 verses)". They are believed to be the substance of the four Vedas in that order.

In Thiruvirutham, the Azhwar maintains that he finds mundane life in this world unbearable. In Thiruvasiriyam, he describes and enjoys the beauty of the Lord. In Periya Thiruvandhadhi, he cries out to the Lord to take him in his fold. In Thiruvaimozhi, he enjoys the Lord, tells us the way towards Him and concludes with his "Moksha Anubhavam".

The Azhwar mentions in the first Thiruvaimozhi that he needs a full thousand verses to sing the glory of the Lord.

"பரனடி மேல் குருகூர்ச் சடகோபன் சொல்

நிரனிறை ஆயிரத்து இவை பத்தும் வீடே" (Thiruvaimozhi 1-1-11)

The Lord decided to fulfill this desire. When the Azhwar performed saranagati to the Lord and beseeched Him, the Lord did not appear before him and waited for the Azhwar to complete the 1000 verses that he mentioned in the first verse. The Azhwar mentions that he is merely an instrument in the hands of the Lord and that the Lord sang His own glory through him.

"என்னைத்தன்னாக்கி என்னால் தன்னை இன் தமிழ் பாடிய ஈசனை" (Thiruvaimozhi 7-9-1)

"தன்சொல்லால் தான் தன்னைக்கீர்த்தித்த மாயன்" (Thiruvaimozhi 7-9-2)

"தம்மைக் கொண்டு தன்னைப் பாடினான்"

It is said that Nammazhwar never stirred out of his place in Thirukurugur and the Lords of all the divya deshas appeared before him in all glory to hear him sing in praise of them. Others say that the Azhwar saw all the divya deshas with his Divya Dhrishti. He paints beautiful

portraits of the temples and their surroundings. His verses on Thiruvenkata Mamalai, Srirangam, Thirukurungudi, Thirukudandhai are some of the exceptional ones. When he sang the pasuram,

"திருமாலிருஞ்சோலை மலை யென்றேன் என்ன

திருமால் வந்து என்னெஞ்சு நிறையப் புகுந்தான் " (Thiruvaimozhi 10-8-1)

The Lord appeared before him on His Garuda Vahanam to take him to His abode. Nammazhwar concludes by singing about the way to Sri Vaikunta and the endless bliss he enjoys at the Lord's feet. In most temples, Brahmotsava for the Lord is performed to culminate with Garudaseva on Azhwar Thirunakshatram. Nammazhwar is given a prime place of importance among the Azhwars and acharyas in our tradition. He is referred to as "Adi Guru". Madhurakavi points out that Nammazhwar with his grace leads us towards the Lord. He has all qualities of a great acharya.

"பயனன்றுகிலும் பாங்கிலராகிலும்

செயல் நன்றாக திருத்திப் பணி கொள்வான்

குயில் நின்றால் பொழில் சூழ் குருகூர் நம்பி " (Kanninun Chirutthambu -10)

Swami Desikan says that the way to Lord's feet is by holding on to the feet of the Azhwar. "தந்தையென நின்ற தனித் திருமால் தாளில்

தலை வைத்தோம் சடகோபன் அருளிஞாலே "

The Lord's padukas are called as "Sri Sathari" after the Azhwar as the Lord's Padukas at Srirangam are believed to be the Azhwar himself.

"பூமுகள்கோன் தென்னரங்கர் பூங்கழற்கு பாதுகமாய்

தாம் மகிழும் செல்வச் சடகோபன் " (Malavala Mamunikal)

Nammazhwar is called as "Satakopan" as he conquered the "Satavayu" and senses. He refers to himself as "Maran Satakopan". The term "Nammazhwar" was used by the Lord to address him. Srivaishnavaites continue to use the term as it brings out his special place in the sampradayam. In fact, the term "Azhwar" when used without a prefix refers to Nammazhwar.

After Nammazhwar left this world, Madhurakavi trained groups of devotees to recite his works. The Tamil poets of that time refused to accept Nammazhwar's works as comparable to the other works acclaimed by the Sangham. Madhurakavi placed a small palm leaf on the Sangham board with the verse "கண்ணன் கழலிணை (Kannan Kazhalinai)" (Thiruvaimozhi 10-5-1) written on it. He let the board float on the famous Sangham lotus pond of Madurai along with the works of other poets. The board pushed the works of other poets into the water and floated with Azhwar's verse on it. All the poets accepted the Azhwar's works as truly inspired ones and sang in praise of him.

Kamban later composed "Satakopar Andadhi" which is a beautiful work in praise of Nammazhwar. He also presented his Ramayana to the Sangham with invocatory prayer to Nammazhwar. It became a tradition from that time to offer a prayer to Nammazhwar before singing about the Lord.

Many great acharyas have written commentaries for Thiruvaimozhi (ஆரூயிரப்படி, இருபத்தி நாலாயிரப்படி etc.). But these commentaries are made in a mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil. The Tamil language used is very strange, and unlike what is in vogue today, that most of us need a commentary for the commentaries. At times they succeed in making the text more complicated to a layman than what it is, though they add to its substance by throwing light on its esoteric significance. Translating the substance of Thiruvaimozhi to English would therefore be of great service to our children who can enjoy the beauty of the work (in spite of the lack of scholarship in Tamil).

Thiruvaimozhi of Nammazhwar is a work of high philosophical content. It is the essence of the Srivaishnava sampradayam. The basic tenets of the tradition are spread over the thousand one hundred and two verses. Each one of the tenets is highlighted with great love and care in particular verses.

Thiruvaimozhi is the substance of the Vedas in Tamil (Dravida Veda Sagaram). It is equal to the philosophy of all the Upanishads put together. Swami Desikan says that Thiruvaimozhi makes those parts of the Vedas which are intricate, easier to understand "தெளியாத மறைநிலங்கள் தெளிகின்றோமே". The title Thiruvaimozhi was given by the Lord Himself when he came before Nammazhwar to take him to His abode. Infact the Lord addressed the Azhwar as Nammazhwar showing that he was very special to Him. The whole of it is about the grace of Sriman Narayana who blessed the Azhwar with the jnana to make such a great work. The Azhwar mentions this right at the beginning "மயற்வர மதிநலம் அருளினன் " (Thiruvaimozhi 1-1-1). He goes on to say that the Lord sat in his heart and recited these Tamil verses "என் நெஞ்சத்துள்ளிருந்து தமிழ் நூல் இவை மொழிந்து".

Thiruvaimozhi has been the source of knowledge to all vaishnava acharyas, specially to Sri Ramanuja. The important elements of the Artha Panchakam discussed in the Sri Bhashyam flow directly from Nammazhwar's words. This is brought out in these verses which are in praise of Ramanuja "சடகோபன் மொயம்பால் வளர்த்த இதயத்தாய் இராமாநுசன் , மாறன் துணையடக்கீழ் வாழ்வை உகக்கும் இராமாநுசமுனி".

Acharyas who have made commentaries on Thiruvaimozhi have said that the whole of it is about the greatness of the Lord's Thiruvadi (sacred feet). Nammazhwar himself repeatedly says this in many verses, particularly in this verse

"திருவடியை நாரணனை கேசவனை பரஞ்சுடரை

திருவடி சேர்வது கருதி செழுங்குருகூர்ச் சடகோபன்

திருவடி மேல் உரைத்த தமிழ் ஆயிரத்துள் இப்பத்தும்

திருவடியே அடைவிக்கும் திருவடிசேர்ந்து ஒன்றுமினே" (Thiruvaimozhi 4-9-11)

He says that his verses are in praise of the Lord's Thiruvadi, sung with the objective of attaining the Thiruvadi. To others, understanding it is the means to reach the Lord's Thiruvadi. Infact, one cannot think of the Lord's Thiruvadi without associating it with Nammazhwar and his work. Swami Desikan observes that the lotus feet of Periya Perumal Sri Ranganatha acquired an added splendour when Nammazhwar sang about their grace.

"அணிகுருகை நகர் முனிவர் நாவுக்கு அமைந்தன விடலரிய பெரிய பெருமாள் மெய் ப்புதங்களே".

This close association has been enshrined into the tradition of calling the Lord's feet that is placed on our heads in temples as "Sri Satari" after Nammazhwar. The same sentiment is brought out by the following verse of Manavala Mamunigal.

"பூமகள் கோன் தென்னரங்கர் பூங்கழற்கு பாதுகமாய் தாம் மகிழும் செல்வச் சடகோபன் ".

Right at the outset, Nammazhwar starts with a sankalpa to sing 1000 verses in praise of the Lord's Thiruvadi. "பரனடிமேல் குருகூர் சடகோபன் சொல் நிரனிரை ஆயிரத்து இவை பத்தும் வீடே" (Thiruvaimozhi 1-1-11). Acharyas, in their commentaries of Thiruvaimozhi, have said that the whole work is an exhaustive description of the Artha Panchakam (the five important elements) to be clarified by a philosophical school of thought. It does so in tune with the Srivaishnava sampradayam. This idea that Thiruvaimozhi is about the Artha Panchakam is put into this verse of Bhattar, which is recited as Thiruvaimozhi Taniyan.

"மிக்க இறைநிலையும் மெய்யா உயிர்நிலையும்

தக்க நெறியும் தடையாகி-தொக்கியலும்

ஊழ்வினையும் வாழ்வினையும் ஓதும் குருகையர்கோன்

யாழினிசை வேதத்தியல் ".

In the above verse it is said that Thiruvaimozhi explains the substance of the following:

1. "இறைநிலை " meaning the qualities of the Parabrahma
2. "உயிர்நிலை " meaning the attributes of the Jeeva
3. "தக்கநெறி " meaning the relationship between the Jeevatma and the Paramatma
4. "தடை " meaning the obstacles in the path of realization
5. "வாழ்வினை" meaning the marga for God realization

It does all this in easy, sweet and melodious Tamil verses.

The opening verses are by themselves a grand curtain raiser to the depth of the work to follow. In these verses "உயர்வற உயர்நலம்" (1-1-1 to 11), Nammazhwar describes the Paramatma who has been sung by the Vedas. "சுடர்மிகு சுருதியுள் இவையுண்ட சுரனே" (1-1-7). He is eternal, all pervading and all dimensions of the physical world like space, matter and time are but manifestations of Him. They are His body. He is the Atma or the Soul. "உடல் மிசை உயிரெனக் கரந்தெங்கும் பரந்துளன்" His verses ஒன்றும் தேவும், (Thiruvaimozhi 4-10-1) முடிச்சோதியாய், (Thiruvaimozhi 3-1-1) முனியே நான்முகனே (Thiruvaimozhi 10-10-1) are the three Thiruvaimozhis where Nammazhwar concentrates on establishing Srīman Narayana, the Sriyapathi as the creator and the almighty "நின்ற ஆதிப்பிரான்". All religion and schools of thought lead to Him "நாடிநீர் வணங்கும் தெய்வமும் உம்மையும் முன்படைத்தான் (4-10-2), மாட்டாத பலசமய மதி கொடுத்தாய் " (3-1-4). In his முடிச்சோதியாய் pasuram he describes the Lord as the abode of kalyana gunas and hails him as Sriyapathi "பூவின்மேல் மாதுவாழ் மார்பினா என் சொல்லி யான் வாழ்த்துவனே" (3-1-6). He says that the Lord is guided by the command of Sri Mahalakshmi and the easiest marga to Him is through her grace. Nammazhwar loves to address the Lord as Sriyapathi. There are innumerable references to this in his verses. This is specially observed in his verses where he performs saranagathi."அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று அலர்மேல் மங்கை உறை மார்பா" (Thiruvaimozhi 6-10-1).

Nammazhwar was a great jnani and a mystic. His anubhava is very beautiful and goes through a range of emotions. His mood changes rapidly from one verse to another though all of them are equally moving. He delved deeply into the attributes of the Lord and enjoyed a sense of oneness with him. He sings with wonder that Srīman Narayana is an ocean of mercy, more bountiful than the mythical Kalpavriksha. This Vriksha is said to bless the seeker with anything he asks for. The Lord, according to Nammazhwar, not only granted all his other desires, but also gave Himself away to the Azhwar who was devoted to Him.

"எற்பரன் என்னை யாக்கிக்கொண்டு எனக்கே தன்னைத் தந்த

கற்பகம் என்னமுதம் காற்முகில் போலும் வேங்கடநல் வெற்பன் " (Thiruvaimozhi 2-7-11)

All the leelas of the Lord were according to him a grand conspiracy to charm his heart away from Him.

"எதிர் சூழல் புக்கென்னை தோர்பிறப்பும் எனக்கே யருள்கள் செய்ய

விதி சூழ்ந்ததாலெனக்கேல் அம்மான் திரிவிக்கிரமனையே" (Thiruvaimozhi 2-7-6)

He sings of the various avatharas of the Lord, zeroing in precisely on their specialties encompassing the whole substance of it in a few words. The following verses singing the various avatharas illustrate his anubhava.

"கோல வராஹமொன்றாய் நிலக்கோட்டிடை கொண்ட யென்தாய் " (Thiruvaimozhi 10-10-7)

"கற்பார் இராமபிரானை அல்லால் மற்றும் கற்பரோ" (Thiruvaimozhi 7-5-1)

"பிறந்தவாறும் வளர்ந்த வாறும்" (Thiruvaimozhi 5-10-1)

"அங்கு அப்பொழுதே அவன்வீயத் தோன்றியயென்

சிங்கப்பிரான் பெருமை

யாராயும் சீர்மைத்தே"

He was specially involved in the grace of the Lord's Krishnavathara and lived in Krishna consciousness. As Lord Krishna has said in the Geetha, a mahatma who sees the Lord everywhere is a rarity. Filled with his devotion to the Lord, Nammazhwar swears in many verses that he cannot think of or sing the praise of any other mortal or Devatha.

While explaining the attributes of the Jeeva, the Azhwar maintains that it is dependent on the Lord and goes through endless cycles of births and deaths. It lives engrossed in its Karma. Life goes the way it is predestined. The development of personality is influenced by heredity and environment and these are in turn governed by destiny "அவரவர் விதி வழி அடைய நின்றனரே" (Thiruvaimozhi 1-1-5)

The only way to break free of the shackles of destiny is to hold on to the feet of the Lord who is Karma and the fruits of Karma "கருமமும் கரும பலனுமாகிய காரணன் தன்னை". This is the only purushartha that the Azhwar craves for "ஒன்றுமே தொழ நம்வினை ஓயுமே " (Thiruvaimozhi 3-3-8)

Most of the verses of Nammazhwar flow out of his love and divine consciousness where there is no awareness of the external world. Some of them are directly addressed to the Lord. In some, the Azhwar addresses mankind and gives advice. His concern for mankind is expressed in anguish in these verses.

Life is transient and even when one is alive, beset with innumerable problems like ill health, old age, bereavement and other anxieties. The life span becomes shorter by the day .

"வைத்த நாள் வரை யெல்லை குருகிச் சென்று

ஏய்த்திளைப்பதன் முன்னம் அடைமினோ". (Thiruvaimozhi 3-3-10)

It is therefore important to understand the ultimate goal of life and to constantly pray to the Lord so that when the end comes, the mind dwells on the feet of the Lord, which liberates the soul and grants permanent bliss.

"அவன் துயரறு சுடறடி தொழுதெழன் மனனே" (Thiruvaimozhi 1-1-1)

His verses "ஒரு நாயகமாய் ஓட" (Thiruvaimozhi 4-4-1 to 11) graphically describe the turn of fortune that transform great kings into paupers. He shows that all riches and personal relationships are momentary. We take a lot of things for granted though we constantly see the

ravages of sickness and death all around us. People who are all powerful, mighty and successful today disappear most shockingly like bubbles on the surface of water. The Paramatma is the only force that is all pervading and eternal. His grace and divinity grows over time. One should understand this reality, realize the futility of pursuing the goals, which are illusionary and follow the direction that will lead to Him. This marga is the tradition shown by the Azhwars and the acharyas. Nammazhwar is the foremost among them. To him, it is devotion to the Lord and association with bhagavathas that makes life in the world livable. He brings this out in his verses "இங்கே திரிந்தேற்கு இழுக்குற்றயென் " (Thiruvaimozhi 8-10-4). As long as he can do this, there is nothing wrong with life on earth to him.

The Azhwar was a great jnani who saw the Lord in all things. The dark clouds reminded him of the dark hued form of Krishna and the skies of the Lord's Trivikrama avathara. Yet he places a lot of importance on archavathara and temple worship. As a great acharya, he could realize that it is difficult for most of us to abstract from the properties of things in the world and to see the Lord in all the things. This is possible only for great souls like the Azhwar. He says in the words of Prahlada to his father "எங்கும் உளன் கண்ணன் " meaning that the Lord who is present everywhere must definitely be present in that pillar. But for ordinary people it is easier to see the Lord in the Vighraha form that we see in a temple. It is the Almighty who has comedown in his archavathara to assume a simple form which is within our reach at Thiruvenkata Mamalai, says Nammazhwar in "பரன் சென்று சேர் திருவேங்கடமாமலை" (Thiruvaimozhi 3-3-8).

He points out that these temples and kshetras are hallowed because of the spiritual experiences of great souls who lived there. He sings of Thirukudandhai as the kshetra that has attracted great bhaktas like Thirumazhisai Piran. He sings of the Lord of Thiruk Kannapuram as "வேதநாவர் விரும்பும் திருக்கண்ணபுரத்து ஆதியானை" (Thiruvaimozhi 9-10-9). The anubhava of great souls becomes part and parcel of the greatness of the kshetra.

In His archavathara form, the Lord is easily attainable (Sulabhan). He was definitely so for the Azhwar whose devotion to the Lord was total. This is illustrated by all these verses "திருப்பேர் நகரான்- இன்று வந்து இருப்பேன் என்று நெஞ்சு நிறையப் புகுந்தான்" (Thiruvaimozhi 10-8-6). Through his verses he shows that there existed a very special and intimate relationship between him and the Lord "தீர் இரும்புண்ட நீர்துபோல என் ஆருயிறை ஆரப்பருகி எனக்காராவமுதானாய் " . His bhakti was atmanivedanam and he never stirred out of his place under the tamarind tree at Thirukurugur. He mentions that he never worshipped the Lord with flowers and all that he offered to the Lord was his love and his verses. "பூக்கொள் மாலைக் கொண்டு உன்தன் போதாள் வணங்கேனேலும் உன் பூக்கொள் மாலை நெடு முடிக்கு புணையும் கண்ணி எனதுயிரே" (Thiruvaimozhi 4-3-4). Through these, he captivated the Lord and the archa moorthies of the divya deshas appeared before him and begged him to sing about them. His charitra is a moving portrayal of the power of bhakti and the simplicity of the Lord. In

his verses on Thiruper, he says that the Lord came and sat in his heart "திருமால் வந்து நெஞ்சு நிறையப் புகுந்தான் ". He tells the Lord that he will not let go of him and appeals to Sri Mahalakshmi for her support "இனிநான் போகலொட்டேன் ஒன்றும் மாயம் செய்யேல்லென்னையே" (Thiruvaimozhi 10-10-1).

He invites other poets to come along and sing the grace of the Lord at Thirumaliruncholai. Like Thirumazhisai Piran, he stresses that the Lord is the only satisfying subject for him to sing. He cannot bear to sing of any mortal or Devatha other than the Lord. "வாய்க்கொண்டு மானிடம் பாடவந்த கவியேன் அல்லேன்,(Thiruvaimozhi 3-9-9) உன்னித்து மற்றொறு தெய்வம் தொழாள் உன்னை அல்லால்" (Thiruvaimozhi 4-6-10).

There is a whole range of emotional experiences that the Azhwar portrays. They are rich in aesthetic appeal and fluctuate between boundless joy and deep despair frequently. He sings at times like a jnani full of wisdom that flows out of self realization. In other verses, he is like a devotee craving for a spiritual experience frequently assuming a Nayaki Bhava. In most of his verses he is absorbed in his own thoughts. Once in a while he addresses mankind in the form of an Upadesa. He concludes by giving us a glimpse of the supreme bliss that he enjoys at the feet of the Lord. Throughout this work he reassures us that reading and understanding Thiruvaimozhi is the surest way towards eternal bliss.

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From

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