

**ஸ்ரீ பூதத்தாழ்வார் அருளிச்செய்த
இரண்டாம் திருவந்தாதி**

**Sri Bhutat Azhwar's
Irandam Thiruvandhadhi**
(Text with a Free Translation and Commentary)

by

N.Rajagopalan I.R.A.S. (Rtd.)

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DEDICATION

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE CHERISHED
MEMORY OF MY ELDEST BROTHER SRI.
N.GOPALAKRISHNAN, RETIRED CHIEF FINANCIAL
CONTROLLER, NEYVELI LIGNITE CORPORARION,
NEYVELI, TAMIL NADU.**

FOREWORD

The four thousand hymns in Tamil (நாலாயிர திவ்ய பிரபந்தம்) sung by the Azhwars (saints immersed in the Divine) from the South of India have been a treasure house of gems, which shed light on the philosophic tenets of the Vedas and the Upanishads elusive even to the most learned. Swami Desikan, the great acharya and a renowned scholar of the 13th century A.D, had the following verse in Sri Guruparamparaa Saaram about the garlands of hymns woven by the Azhwars:

பொய்கைமுனி பூதத்தார் பேயாழ்வார் தண்
பொருநல்வருங் குருகேசன் விட்டு சித்தன்
துய்யகுலசேகரன் நம் பாண நாதன்
தொண்டரடிப்பொடி மழிசைவந்த சோதி
வையமெல்லாம் மறைவிளங்க வாள்வேலேந்தும்
மங்கையர்கோன் ஏன்றிவர்கள் மகிழ்ந்து பாடுஞ்
செய்ய தமிழ் மாலைகள் நாம் தெளிய வோதித்
தெளியாத மறைநிலங்கள் தெளிகின்றோமே

They in fact inspired Sri Ramanuja to propound the Visishta Advaita philosophy in later years. The advent of the Azhwars has been referred to in the Srimad Bhagavata Puraanam (Sk XI-5- 39-40). The Azhwars all hailed from the region in Tamil Nadu adjoining the rivers Cauveri, Paalar and Tamrabarani. They were all from different walks of life; different social strata, but not all contemporaries. Yet they were amazingly unified in their vibrant divine experiences and their philosophic views. The causal principle underlying all existence for them was not an impersonal reality but the most Auspicious Person, Sriman Narayana with all the glorious attributes, the most important attribute being His compassion, represented by “Sri”, the divine mother Mahalakshmi, ever resident in His heart. They directly experienced the Divine in the totality of the creation and their love of the Divine flowed in the form of beautiful poetry, enriching the path of devotion or Bhakti. Their

works convey the “Sareera-Sareere-Bhava” implying that the physical world is the body of the Lord and the Lord represents the life and soul of the physical world. The unconditional compassion (“nirhetuka kripa”) the Lord has for His creation, is the means to overcome all bondage resulting from one’s actions. For them, the Lord was not only the way or the means but also the goal.

The first three of these great sages, namely Sri Poikai Muni, Sri Bhutat Azhwar and Sri Pey Azhwar, were called the Mudhal Azhwars for they were the pioneers. They were contemporaries. Sri Thirumazhisai Piran, the fourth in the list, also must have lived around the same time as the Mudhal Azhwars, since there is good internal evidence from the works of the Azhwars for this. The Mudhal Azhwars were from the vicinity of the modern city Chennai. The author has referred to the story of the origin of the Naalayira Divya Prabhandam in the coming together of the Mudhal Azhwars in Thirukkovaaloor, one dark stormy night in a small corridor at the threshold of a house, and how the presiding deity from Thirukkovaaloor temple, Lord Trivikrama, along with Sri Mahalakshmi, eager to mingle with His devotees, appeared amongst them although not revealing His presence. However, the Azhwars felt this indirectly as a sense of pressure in that small space. This led to the spontaneous outpouring of the three sweet and fragrant garlands of verses, each containing one hundred pasurams in the “andadhi” style, each following the other, beginning with Sri Poikai Muni, his poetic arclight beaming on the invisible Lord, in a resplendant cosmic vision then and there. This story is referred to in Sri Poikai Azhwar’s Mudal Thiruvandadhi:

நீயும் திருமகளும் நின்றாயால் .. காமர்பூங்கோவல்
இடைகழியே பற்றி யினி (86)

Irandaam Thiruvandadhi is the work of Sri Bhutat Azhwar. It is a master piece of Tamil poetry; a beautiful garland of one hundred verses. While Sri Poikai Azhwar glorified the cosmic aspects of the Lord by

starting with “வையம் தகளியா”, Sri Bhutat Azhwar starts with “அன்பே தகளியா”, lighting a lamp with devotion as the base, love as the oil, the sweet mind as the wick and the knowing Self as the shining flame offering all of them to the Lord. Sri Bhutat Azhwar had the special grace of the Lord from the early days of his life for he refers to the divine vision even as he was “in-utero”,

— அன்று

கருக்கோட்டியுள் கிடந்து கைதொழுதேன் கண்டேன்
திருக்கோட்டி யெந்தை திறம் (87)

“ஜ்ஞாநாக்3நி ஸர்வகர்மானி ப4ஸ்மாத் குருதே”

“Fire of knowledge burns all actions into ashes” says Sri Krishna in the Geetha (4-37).

While knowledge is essential for liberation, true spiritual knowledge leads naturally to superior devotion (“Bhakti”) which is intense love of the Divine. Perfect ஜ்ஞாநி often at the end becomes a superior ப4க்த். For instance, Sri Aadi Sankara, a great ஜ்ஞாநி also has done several works of pure devotion such as “Bhaja Govindam”, “Sri Ranganathashtakam” and others. This was true of all the Azhwars for their bhakti was based on true and clear spiritual knowledge. Sri Bhutat Azhwar exemplifies this quite clearly. Perhaps for this reason, Sri Bhuta Piran, although second in the list of the twelve Azhwars, is actually mentioned first in a single benedictory verse commonly recited:

பூதம் ஸரஸ் மஹதாஹ்வய- பட்டநாத
ஸ்ரீ பக்திஸார- குலசேகர-யோஹிவாஹாந்
பக்தாங்க்ரிரேணு-பரகால-யதீந்த்ர மிஸ்ராந்
ஸ்ரீமத் பராங்குஸ முநிம் ப்ரணதோஸ்மி நித்யம்

The Azhwar points to the grace of the Lord as the underlying cause of the entire spiritual process.

அருள் புரிந்த சிந்தை அடியார்மேல் வைத்து
பொருள் தெரிந்து காண்குற்ற வப்போது- இருள்திரிந்து
நோக்கினேன் நோக்கி நினைந்தேன் அதுஒண்கமலம்
ஒக்கினேன் ஏன் னையும் அங்கோர்ந்து. (59)

While emphasizing the easy accessibility of the Lord, he points out that no one can fully comprehend this aspect of the Lord.

----- படிநின்ற
நீரோத மேனி நெடுமாலே நின்னடியை
யாரோதவல்லார் அறிந்து. (5)

The Azhwar's devotion to the Lord is a complete offering of "Self" with total involvement,

பணிந்தேன் திருமேனி பைங்கமலம் கையால்
அணிந்தேனுன் சேவடிமேல் அன்பாய்- துணிந்தேன்
புரிந்தேத்தி உன்னைப் புகலிடம் பார்த்து- ஆங்கே
இருந்தேத்தி வாழுமிது (65)

and in his own word the love he has for the Lord is too overflowing for him to bear,

-----ஏன்றன்
அளவன்றால் யானுடைய வன்பு (100)

The Azhwar practices and recommends immensely Naamasankeerthana namely reciting the glorious names of the Lord including the "Sahasranama",

ஆய்ந்துரைப்பன் ஆயிரம் பேர் ஆதிநடுவந்திவாய்
வாய்ந்தமலர் துவிவைகலும்---- (73)

In several verses (2,6,14,20,38,39,44,51,57,64,66,72,73,77,92), he makes reference to the Lord's name. Similar to Sri Thirumazhisai Piran, he also concludes that the Lord's name is the ultimate meaning of all the Vedas and the Upanishads.

ஓத்தின் பொருள்முடிவு மித்தனையே - உத்தமன்பேர்
 ஏத்தும் திறமறிமின் ஏழைகள்----
 ----- மாதவன்பேர்
 சொல்லுவதே ஓத்தின் சுருக்கு (39)

Sri Bheeshma recommends recitation of the Sahasranaama of the Lord as the best Dharma to Yudhistira. Sri Bhudat Azhwar considers this as a penance.

ஊறங்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே----
 ஏத்திப் பணிந்தவன் பேர் ஈரைஞ் ஞூறெப்பொழுதும்
 சாத்தி யுறைத்தல் தவம். (77)

Sri “Poodattazhwar”, or Bhuta Yogi as he was known, was born in Thirukkadal Mallai near modern Mahabalipuram. It was a great harbour city at the time of the great Pallava kings. They had left a rich legacy behind them in the form of the most beautiful sculptures, the relics of which stand even today on the sea shores in Mahabalipuram. Many of the kings in their dynasty were great bhaktas themselves, and it would seem entirely possible that the exemplary Azhwar’s bhakti might have been the stimulus for this.

In order to fully appreciate Azhwars’ works, one will have to read them with the aid of one of the authoritative commentary of the great Acharyas. However, these original commentaries are in the old “manipravaala” style with Tamil admixed with Sanskrit. In addition, the words used will often be unfamiliar even to the ardent modern day students. Sri Bhutat Azhwar’s Irandaam Thiruvandadhi is actually set in beautiful and rich literary Tamil (“செந்தமிழ்”). Thus it will be quite hard for most of us who are not proficient in literary Tamil. Therefore, there is a need for free translations which are based on the authoritative interpretations of the commentators like Sri Periya Vaachaan Pillai. The current free translation of the Irandaam Thiruvandadhi by Sri Rajagopalan is therefore a very welcome addition which will be greatly appreciated by everyone interested in the Azhwars’ works. The

translation is clear and succinct with a fine style of presentation. This follows splendidly his previous elegant book in which he had rendered a similar translation of Mudhal Thiruvandadhi.

May the grace of the Azhwars and the Lord Sri Ranganatha (“தென்னரங்கத் தெந்தை” as lovingly referred to by Sri Bhuta Piran) always shine on my brother Sri Rajagopalan and encourage him to continue in similar endeavours.

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PREFACE

Bhutat Azhwar's Iranda'm Thiruvandhadhi forms part of the 'Iyarpa' portion of the 'Na'la'yira Divya Prabandham', the collective works of the Azhwars of South India. The Azhwars probably lived between the fifth and eighth century A.D. in and around the regions served by rivers like Palar, Cauveri, Vaigai, and Tamrabarani. Drawn from different social backgrounds, they were mystic saints who through their inspired songs first propounded the Sri Vaishnava faith and Visishta'dvaita' philosophy. The Divya Prabandham numbering in all four thousand hymns in Tamil has been termed the Tamil Veda, due to their rich philosophic content and thought harmony with Vedas and Upanishads. By their ecstatic poetry, these saints laid the foundations for the spread of the bhakthi movement in the South, and the enunciation of the Visishta'dvaita' philosophy by Sri Ramanuja who came later. Affirming the status of Narayana as the Supreme Being, (Parama-purusha) as authenticated in the Sruti declarations, they sang of Narayana both as immanent in the universe and transcendent and beyond it. They sang of Him in His diverse 'praka'ra's' or modes, as 'Parava'sudeva' in Vaikuntam, in 'Vyuha' form in 'Kshira'bdhi', in His various 'Vibhava'ta'ra's as Rama, Krishna etc., as 'Antarya'mi' in the hearts of all beings, and in 'Arca' form in the temples erected for Him. To them, God was as real and transcendent in the 'arca' form as He is real and immanent in Vaikuntam. Thus all the five forms represent the one and only Supreme Being. In short, they experienced and articulated their experiences of the Lord in all His glory, both in 'nitya vibhuti' in the transcendent form, and in 'lila' vibhuti' in the material universe. To them, God was not a mere abstraction or intellectual perception, but a living presence. He lived in them, and they lived in Him, or as one of the Azhwars beautifully phrased it, 'உன் னோக்கொண்டென்னுள் வைத்தேன் ஏன்னையும் உன்னிலி ட்டேன்'.

Poigai Azhwar, Bhutat Azhwar and Pei Azhwar were the earliest of the Azhwar galaxy numbering in all twelve, and are referred to as

‘Mudhal Azhwars’. They were born on successive days in the same year and month, Poigai Piran the eldest of the three at Kancheepuram, Bhutat Azhwar the middle one at ‘Thirukkadalmallai’ now known as Mahabalipuram, and Pei Azhwar the last at Mylapore in Madras. They came together for the first time in a place called Thirukkoyalur, in the front passage of a house commonly known in Tamil homes as ‘*செடி*’ one stormy night, while taking shelter from the pelting rain. As they were standing in the narrow passage, there being only that much room for them to stand, sharing their experiences of the deities in various temples they had visited, they felt a strange pressure in the darkness, as if there was a fourth person beside them. There indeed was a fourth person amidst them in that damp, dark passage eager to share the company of the three exalted souls, and listen to their conversation. By virtue of their superconscious vision, the Azhwars intuitively understood the true identity of the fourth person as Sriman Narayana. In the ecstasy of their discovery, and being realised beings, each of them described the effect of that electrifying experience uniquely as he felt it. Poigai Azhwar conjured up a grand mental vision of the divine as the Supreme Master of the phenomenal universe by virtue of His ‘ubhaya-vibhuti’ in his ‘nidhi-dya’sana’ or ‘para-bhakthi’ state. Expressing this in poetic diction, he portrayed the world of matter as a lamp, the seven seas as the ghee, and the bright sun as the flame, all this being the manifest form of the Lord sporting the sparkling Sudarsana’. The second sage Bhutat Azhwar looked within his heart true to the Upanishadic script that the heart is to be understood as the principal shrine of the Supreme Being in the whole universe (‘hrudayam tatvija’neeya’t visvasya’yatanam mahat’ - Narayana-Suktham). His ‘parajna’na’ or spiritual arclight beaming on the effulgent divine presence within, moved him to visualise love as the lamp, his deep yearning as the butteroil, and the mind pining away in divine bliss as the flame. The youngest of them Pei Azhwar actualised that experience, (ma’nasa sa’ksha’tka’ra’) and exulted in the direct vision of Sriman Narayana in the company of His Divine Consort Sri, climbing the very summit of bhakthi, (parama-bhakthi). The Brahman of the Upanishads

had revealed Itself to them, and by their hymns, they restated the truths of the Sruti in the language of the land, viz. Tamil. The Divya Prabandham, which is generally believed to be an exposition of the three Vaishnava mantras-ashta 'kshari, dvaya', and carama sloka was thus born. After describing the cosmic form of the Parama-purusha the Sruti also explores the supersubtle Antarya 'mi state and speaks of its seat as the lotus blossom of the heart situated like a citadel in the centre of a city, tiny, crystal pure, with a canopy even tinier, which is free from any kind of sorrow. The reality within that shrine is the object of all spiritual quest. (Mahanarayana Upanishad- Daharavidya'). Hence it is that the Azhwar who followed the Mudhal Azhwars viz. Thirumazhisai Piran glorified that Paramapurusha as 'அற்புதன் அனந்தசயனன் ஆதிபூதன் மாதவன் நிற்பதும் இருப்பதும் கிடப்பதும் ஏன்நெஞ்சுளே' – (திருச்சந்த-விருத்தம்-65).

Sri Bhutat Azhwar's Iranda 'm Thiruvandhadhi is a garland of mellifluous pasurams surcharged with great spiritual fervour, and soaked in bliss divine, affirming the 'parathvam' of Sriman Narayana, and extolling the concept of 'Antarya 'mi Brahman' as an avata 'ra also. In Azhwar's perception, the heart of a devotee of Narayana is an abode as much as Vaikunta is, and in fact so dear to the Lord that it becomes the His most favourite abode relegating the 'divya-desa's' to the secondary rung in His preference scale. Hence the supplication of the Azhwar to the Lord, not to abandon the divys-desa's.' வெள்ளத்திளங்கோயில் கைவிடேலென்று' (54). As in the case of the rest of the Azhwars, the 'vibhavavata' ra's' figure prominently in Bhutat Azhwar's prabandham, and among them Sri Vamanavata 'ra' for the evident reason of the 'rakshkatva' or protective instinct so conspicuously displayed, and Sri Krishnavata 'ra' for the quality of 'soulabhya '. Among 'divya-desa's' Tirumalai and the Lord that abides there, are mentioned in eleven pasurams. The Azhwar calls it the gift of the Lord to celestial beings like Brahma, Siva etc. who hasten there everyday vying with one another for the Lord's worship. The Azhwar scales the very heights of graphic imagery in portraying the ecology and ambience of the hills

at Tiruvenkatam, such as the one depicted by him in one pasuram, where the primates living in the hill rise at dawn, dip in cool flower-laden ponds, and gather freshly blossomed flowers to offer to Lord Srinivasa, the Jewel of Tiruvenkatam, in worshipful prayer, driving home the point that even animals which habit the hills of Tirumalai, are endowed with intelligence and spiritual fervour to set out to worship the Lord there. Other divya-desa's like Thiruvaramam, Thirumal-irunjolai, Tirukkottiyur etc. are also addressed with great feeling by the Azhwar. The Azhwar affirms the profound truth that the Lord Who is the quintessence of the Vedas, and our only sure-fire passport to liberation from the bondage of samsa'ra' is forever with us in the inner shrine of our hearts, and exhorts us to look within, and hold steadfast to the practice of meditating on His names and glory. Azhwar advises us to take to the sacred Feet of the Lord even when all our faculties are in tact, (பின்னால அருநரகம் சேராமல்முன்னால் வணங்க முயல்மினே-91), and meditate on His names, assuring us that the Lord's names are a safety-net and insurance of protection even in this life, (தாம் வேண்டும் காமமே காட்டும் கடிது -92). He recalls in deep gratitude how he had awakened to the drawing powers of the Lord's sacred Feet, when he was a mere foetus and folded his hands in prayer in the mother's womb-(கருக்கோட்டியுள் கிடந்து கைதொழுதேன் கண்டேன்-87). Deeply immersed in a state of 'sa'dhya bhakthi' thus, Bhutat Azhwar's whole being is engulfed in the effulgence of that beatific state, where only the substratum of love remains, love for the Supreme Being that overflows like the current of a river in spate which has breached its banks.

This book just like the earlier one on 'Sri Poigai Azhwar's Mudhal Thiruvandhadhi' is a humble attempt of the author to reach out the message of the Azhwars to a larger section of the reading public, especially those not sufficiently well-versed in Tamil language, but keen on gaining a knowledge of the philosophical poetry of the Azhwars. The pages that follow contain a free translation of 'Iranda'm Thiruvandha'dhi', and explanatory and anecdotal notes based on the

salient aspects of the commentary of Sri Peravacha'n Pillai the famous 'vya'kya'nakarta' 'who lived between 1167 and 1262 A.D.,(the one and only one of his kind who has the distinction of writing a commentary in maniprava'la' on all the four thousand pasurams) as recapitulated by Sri Krishnaswami Aiangan, Editor 'Vaishnava Sudarsanam'.

I wish to dedicate this work to the memory of my eldest brother Sri N.Gopalakrishnan, (Formerly Chief Financial Controller, Neyveli Lignite Corporation) who was the guiding light of our family , and exemplified in his life, like a true Sri Vaishnava that he was,immense faith in the Lord, a palpable simplicity and humility of spirit,compassionate nature,and deep attachment to, and veneration for,our spiritual tradition and guru parampara.What little I have accomplished in life has been entirely due to Sriman Narayana's grace actng through his doting care and guidance.

I am grateful to my younger brother Dr.N.Ranganathan Toronto, Canada, for his kind Foreword. I also place on record my gratitude to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for their generous financial assiastance enabling the publication of this work. Finally, I am deeply grateful to Sarvasri B.G.Kukillaya, P.S. Vasu and their dedicated band of staff at Universal Print Systems for all their help in the design of the cover and complexion of the book and preparation of the inputs.

16 th January, 2002.

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ஸ்ரீ:

ஸ்ரீமதே ராமானுஜாய நம:
ஆழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்

பூதத்தாழ்வார் அருளிய இரண்டாந்திருவந்தாதி.
தனியன் - Invocation (Single Invocatory Verse)

ஏன்பிறவி தீர விறைஞ்சினே னின்னமுதா
அன்பே தகளி யளித்தானே -- நன்புகழ்சேர்
சீதத்தார் முத்துக்கள் சேரும் கடல்மலைப்
பூதத்தார் பொன்னங் கழல்.

I worshipped the glorious and hallowed feet of Bhutat Azhwar who produced, for our sake, the sweet nectar of mellifluous poetry, beginning 'Anbe thagali', and was born in the famous 'Thirukkadal Mallai' blessed with a profusion of pearls – so my cycle of birth and rebirth may cease.

This 'thanian' was composed by Sri Thirukkurugai Piran Pillai, a disciple of Sri Ramanuja. The greatness of the Azhwar's beautiful feet is that seeking refuge in them will surely cut through the vicious circle of 'samsa'ra'.

The 'thanian' then describes the benevolence bestowed on us by this Azhwar, in gifting us the precious and priceless garland of verses beginning 'Anbe thagali'. The Azhwar himself refers to his work as 'ஞானத்தமிழ்' (1) and 'நன்மலை' (74). In the end, the invocation speaks about the hoary fame of the Azhwar's birth place 'கடல்

மல்ல'. It is referred to as 'நன்புகழ்சேர்'. It is richly endowed with fame, first because of the presence of the presiding deity of the shrine there, who bears the appellation 'தலசயனத்துறைப் பெருமாள்', the Lord Who is reclining on the ground', and second the Azhwar's association with the place. It is also 'சீத்தத்தார் முத்துக்கள் சேரும் கடல்மல்ல' that is a cornucopia of cool pearls and other precious gems, washed ashore by the waves of the ocean. As another Azhwar Sri Thirumangai Mannan describes it, it is 'சங்கு தங்கு தடங் கடல் கடல்மல்லயுள் கிடந்தாய்', (பெரிய திருமொழி -- 3.5.8.). The pearls also refer to the galaxy of devotees of the Lord who are of inestimable value like pearls and diamonds. Refer to Swami Nammazhwar's phrase 'திசைவில் வீசும் செழுமாமணிகள்' சேரும் திருக்குடந்தை' (திருவாய் மொழி - 5.8.9). Later in the work, Bhutat Azhwar takes great pride in calling it 'தமருள்ளும் மாமல்ல', (70). Swami Nammazhwar hails the greatness of such devotees as Bhuta Piran in his work. 'தடங்கடல்பள்ளிப்பெருமான் தன்னுடைப்பூதம்,' (திருவாய் மொழி 5-2-4). Again, ' பாற்கடல் பாம்பணை மேல் பள்ளி கொண்டருளும் சீதனையே தொழுவார் விண்ணுளாரிலும் சீரியரே', (திருவிருத்தம் – 79).

Such devotees are even more exalted than 'nithyasuris'.

It has been averred by scholars that the Mudhal Azhwars represented, in the mystic experiences they articulated in their works, different states of their love of the Divine or 'bhakthi.' Thus Sri Poigai Piran conjured up a mental vision of the Divine as the Supreme Master of the phenomenal universe by virtue of His 'Ubhaya Vibhuthi' in his 'nididhya'sana' or 'parabhakthi' state. This is perfected bhakthi attained after constant upa'sana or meditation enabling intuitive actualisation or 'ma'nasa- sa'ksha'tka'ra.' Sri Bhutat Azhwar, in his Thiruvandha'dhi, internalises that frame and conceptualises his experience in the form of the soul's instinctive yearning for a vision of the Divine as expressed in its various states of love, longing, and anguish. This is the 'parajna'na' marked by glimpses of the divine vision followed with joy during communion with God and anguish during separation from Him. The continued

longing to perpetuate that experience leads to the climax of the spiritual quest which is the state of 'parama-bhakthi', the actualisation in the form of a direct, comprehensive, and eternal communion with the Divine presence. The youngest of the Mudhal Azhwars, Sri Pei Azhwar exemplifies this last state in his experience. Sri Ramanuja has employed these terms for the first time in his Sarana'gathi-gadyam, on the basis of the mystic experiences of the Azhwars, with this prayer, 'Parabhakthi, Parajna'na, Paramabhaktheka-Svabha'vam Ma'm Kurushva '. 'Please make me eternally of the very nature of these three stages of 'bhakthi'. Even in the Land of perpetual Bliss, 'parajna'na' and 'paramabhakthi' have to be prayed for. The experience there is, such that though it may go on for ever, the aspects experienced are but an infinitesimal part of the unexperienced, the Vedantic 'Paripu'ma-Brahma'nubhava'. Hence it is, that Shastra's describe 'para- bhakthi etc. as aids to self-realisation. Sri Krishna says, 'Bhakthya'tu Ananyaya' Sakyō Aham Evamvidha'rjuna' I 'Gya'thum, Drashtum, ca' Tathvena Praveshtum ca' Paranthapa' II, (Bhagavad Gita 11-54). 'Ananyabhakthi' is bhakthi that is totally fixed on the Lord, or as Sri Poigai Piran puts it, 'ஒண் தாமரையான் கேள்வன் ஒருவனையே நோக்கு-முணர்வு', (முதல்-திருவந்தாதி -67) As Vishnu Puranam declares, 'ஸம்ஜ்ஞாயதேயேந, ததஸ்தோஜம் ஸ்ரத்தம் பரம் நிர்மலமேகருடம், ஸந்த்ருஸ்யதே வாஸ்யதி கம்யதே வா, தத் ஜ்ஞாநமதோந்யதுக்தம்.' (6-5-87). 'That by which the 'param' which is flawless, pure, unparalleled, is grasped, perceived and attained is wisdom. Everything else is ignorance.'

In dwelling on 'வையம் தகளியா'! சுடராழியான்', Poigai Piran establishes the truth that Srīman Narayana is the Master non-pareil of the whole universe, the Supreme Intelligence and Power behind its myriad worlds, beings and things. Immersed in his 'parajna'na', Sri Bhutata Azhwar starts his Thiruvandhadhi, with the words, 'அன்பே தகளியா', and ends it on the note 'யானுடைய அன்பு', his heart and thoughts soaked in bliss divine, his mind absorbed in yogic vision of the Lord. Sri Pei Azhwar, opening his Thiruvandhadhi

exultingly, with the words, 'திருக்கண்டேன், பொன்மேனிகண்டேன்', reaches the very acme of actualisation of the 'ஸாக்ஷாத்கார' state.

Sri Desika's Invocation

Swami Desikan, in his Tamil Work 'Prabhanda Sa'ram', has dedicated the following verse to Sri Bhutat Azhwar.

**கடன் மல்லைக்காவலனே! பூதவேந்தே!
காசினிமேலைப்பிசியிலவிட்டநாள் வந்து
இடர் கடியுதண் கோவலிடைகழிச்சென்று
இணையில்லா முவருமாயிசைந்தேநிற்க
நடுவிலிவரொருமென்றறியா வண்ணம்
நள்ளிருளில் மால்நெருக்கநந்தாஞானச்
சுடர் விளக்கேற்றிய அன்பேதகளியான
தொடைநூறுமெனக்கருள்செய்துலங்குநீயே.**

Thou Sentinel of Kadalmallai, thou Royal Highness Bhuta, descended into this world under the star Avittam in Aippasi, Who congenially took shelter, as one of the incomparable trinity, in a corridor on a blustery night in Thirukkovalu'r, when unobtrusively Lord Narayana wedged in amidst thee and thou lighted the ever-shining lamp in a hundred verses starting 'Anbe' thagali'. I pray to thee to bless me with that.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar who was second in line in the Mudhal Azhwar trinity, the others being Sri Poigai Piran who preceded him by a day, and Sri Pei Azhwar who followed him after a day, all born in the same Tamil month of 'Aippasi', is believed to have been an incarnation of Srīman Narayana's mace. In this verse, Swami Desikan refers to the episode of the three Azhwars coming together for the first time in a dark, damp corridor of a house on a stormy night in the town of Thirukkovalur. As they stood there sharing their experiences on their peregrinations to various divya desa's, Srīman Narayana eager to savour their sagely company and experiences, materialised in their midst literally crowding in on them in the confined space. Then the Azhwars curious to find the reason behind

the sudden feeling of pressure amidst them in the narrow passage, realised that the fourth person was none other than Narayana in the company of His Divine Consort Maha'lakshmi. Each of them then spontaneously broke out in song describing their individual experiences. Sri Bhutata Azhwar lit the inner spiritual lamp, visualising his love for the Lord as the flame. In the resultant light of self-awakening, the self melted and dissolved in the Lord. Swami Desikan prays for the Azhwar's blessing in the form of his garland of verses. Swami Desikan has composed a hymn 'Sri Dehaleesa Stuthi' ('dehali' in Samskrit means a narrow corridor), in praise of the presiding Deity of this divya-desa, Lord Trivikrama. The Lord Who, in an earlier age had blessed sage Mrigandu here appearing for him, with His ' Sankha' and ' Chakra' transposed in His right hand and left hand respectively, appears here in this 'dehali' which is the sanctum, among others, in the company of the sage and the three Azhwars. In this hymn, Swami Desikan calls the Mudhal Azhwars, 'ஸ்வாத்யாய யோக நயநாஈ ஸீசய ஈ கவி இந்த்ரா : ', ' the insuperable masters of poetry endowed with pure thoughts who have for their two eyes Vedic learning and yogic vision ', and their poetry, ' ஸ்நேஹ உபநந்த பரிசுத்த குண அர்ப்பிதேந தீப ' - ' light lit with the ghee of pure love and wick of impeccably perfect 'sa'thvik' state.

அன்பே தகளியா ஆர்வமே நெய்யாக
இன்புருகு சிந்தையிடு திரியா -- நன்புருகி
ஞானச் சுடர்விளக் கேற்றினேன் நாரணற்கு
ஞானத் தமிழ்புரிந்த நான் .

1

With love as the lamp, deep yearning as the butter oil, and thoughts soaked in bliss divine as the wick, I lit a sparkling spiritual light --where the self melted and dissolved—for Narayana, and composed this inspired Tamil poem illumined by that light.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar begins his prayer by affirming in this pasuram that the spiritual light that he has ignited is the outcome of his love for the Lord, (the lamp in his imagery) his deep inner yearning for Him, (the butter oil used to light lamps in Tamil homes and temples) and thoughts filled with Him (the wick). Azhwar's metaphor is a beautiful imagery of how the substratum of bhakthi, (the lamp) has evolved in him to a state of 'para-bhakthi', (butter oil)- the 'upa'dha'na" cause of the spiritual chemistry in making. That yearning lubricates the spiritual experience, (the wick)that is suffused with the joy and glory of 'bhagavad vishayam'. The crowning point of the experience is the effulgence of light that engulfs the spirit in a state of 'parajna'nam'. The 'jiva'thma swarupa lakshanam' is the 'jna'nanandhaikagunam'. 'ஜ்ஞாநாநந்த மயஸ்த்வாத்மா சேஷோ ஹி பரமாத்மந: ' declare the Upabrahmanas. As Brahmasutram states, (2-3-29) -தத் குணஸாரத்வாத்து தத் வ்யபதேச:', the 'jiva'thma" is referred to synonymously as ' jna'na', consciousness, since the essence of 'jiva'thma" is that. Azhwar describes this spiritual experience as 'நன்புருகி ' to mean that the 'jiva'thma" melted but the inner consciousness remained, (the state of' parajna'nam') in the bliss of 'bhagavad anubhavam'. It is a state

beyond sense perception described by Swami Nammazhwar, as' காலாமும் நெஞ்சுழியும் கண்குழலும்' (பெரி-திருவ-34). It is a state where the soul described by Sri Krishna as 'அதாஹ்யோ யமக்லேத்யோ', (Gita 2-24) -'that cannot be burnt or wetted ' – melted for the Azhwar. That verily is the extra-ordinary effect of 'bhagavad guna's '. Sri Bhutat Azhwar proudly proclaims his poem as ' ஞானத்தமிழ் '. Not only is it set in mellifluous Tamil, it also imparts true knowledge of Sriman Narayana. The light that the Azhwar ignites in the process dispels the darkness surrounding the self in the shape of ' ajna'nam'.

In a striking parallel, Swami Nammazhwar echoes the same experience in his line, 'அறைகழல் கூட்பூந்தாமரை சூடுதற்கு அவா ஆறுயிர் உருகி உக்க நேரிய காதலன்பு' (திருவாசிரியம்-2).' The yearning to adorn the head with the lotus Feet of the Lord melted my soul into a state of overpowering love'. Sri Nammazhwar also uses the word 'உருகி' to depict the meltdown of his inner self, signifying the concomitant presence of 'parabhakthi, parajna'nam, and parama-bhakthi' anubhava'.

**ஞானத்தால் நன்குணர்ந்து நாரணன்றன் நாமங்கள்
தானத்தால் மற்றவன்பேர் சாற்றினால் — வானத்
தணியமர ராக்குவிக்கு ம .தன்றே நங்கள்
பணியமரர் கோமான் பரிசு.**

2

If only we recite Narayana's names in a state of pure love born out of inner realisation of His 'svarupa'and 'vibhuti', and our relationship to Him, that will surely elevate us to the level of our spritual kinfolk, the celestial beings of Sri Vaikunta eternally blessed to serve the Lord.

நாமங்கள் – Names that uniquely refer to Narayana such as Vishnu, Hari, Rama, Krishna etc. Apart from these, there are names that refer to His manifestations like Brahma, Rudhra, Indra etc. Azhwar says **தானத்தால்**, which is the high ground of abiding love for the Lord. 'அத்யந்த பக்தியுத்தஸ்ய ந சாஸ்த்ரம் நைவ ச க்ரம : '!' There is no shastra' nor order for a person with boundless love for the Lord '. **நங்கள் பணியமரர்** refers to the 'nithyasuris'. 'நித்யாஞ்ஜலிபுடா ஹ்ருஷ்டா : நம இத்யேவ வாதிந : '. 'Always paying obeisance to Narayana, in a state of bliss and repeating namah.' Azhwar says that they are our real kinfolk, not Indra or the devas.

பரிசு நறுமலரால் பாற்கடலான் பாதம்
 புரிவார் புகப்பெறுவர் போலாம் -- புரிவார்கள்
 தொல்லமரர் கேள்வித் துலங்கொளிசேர் தோற்றத்து
 நல்லமரர் கோமான் நகர். 3

They who are devoted to the sacred Feet of the Lord of Milk Ocean with offerings of fragrant flowers will reach His abode of Vaikunta of replendent beauty that is beyond the reach of even the denizens of high heaven.

பரிசு புரிவார் - 'The devotion (sa'dhya bhakthi) of a ' prapanna'. As the Azhwar has, in the previous pasuram mentioned 'நன்குணர்ந்து' to mean 'svarupajna'na', the devotion implied by his term 'பரிசு' here, is that which has for its goal the Lord's feet. Azhwar calls the Lord's abode as 'தொல்லமரர் கேள்வி நகர்', that is 'parama pada ' which is only heard of by the celestials, not seen. 'யந்ந தேவா ந முநயோ ந சாஹம் ந ச ஸங்கர : I ஜாநந்தி பரமேஸ்வர தத் விஷ்ணு : பரமம் பதம் 'II (விபு.1.9.55).' That which the devas, sages, I (Brahma) or Sankara, do not know of, is the abode of Vishnu, the Lord of all beings.' Hence they are not 'sa'dhya devas' for us. The 'sa'dhya devas are 'nithya suris'. ' யத்ர பூர்வே ஸாதுயா: ஸந்தி தேவா :', says Purusha Suktham. It is a great wonder that the 'parama- pada' which is difficult to reach even for those beings in high heaven who have done 'sa'dha'na' ' for the same for a long time, is within the easy grasp of a simple 'prapanna' who looks on the Lord as 'The way'. That is because the celestial beings like the devas lack the knowledge of the 'prapanna' of our ties to the Lord.

நகரிழைத்து நித்திலத்து நாண்மலர்கொண்டு ஆங்கே
 திகழுமணி வயிரம் சேர்த்து -- நிகரில்லாப்
 பைங்கமல மேந்திப் பணிந்தேன் பனிமலரான்
 அங்கம் வலங் கொண்டா னடி . 4

Carving out my heart as a citadel, setting thereon my pearl-like love like a fresh bouquet of flowers, embellished with desire for closeness and togetherness like diamond and sapphire, I offered my devotion as a lotus to the Lord Who carries on His chest Goddess Lakshmi, prostrating to His Feet.

Sri Bhuthat Azhwar visualises his heart as a citadel he has erected for Narayana. Swami Nammazhwar uses the same imagery in his phrase 'நெஞ்சமே நீள்நகர்'. The heart is the well-spring of love which is pure like pearl. In an evolved state, love matures to the tone and timber of an experience of our binding association with the Lord and His countless 'kalya'na guna's', which fill the heart with overflowing desire for His proximity and union. This is like precious stones embedded on a bouquet of fresh flowers. In a further evolution, this love blossoms further and attains the state of 'parajna'nam', which is like an incomparable lotus flower. In that state, shedding all ego and ego-centric desires, our inner self prostrates to the Lord with the Divine Mother in the forefront as the mediatrix, 'purushakara'. This is in keeping with the spirit of the first part of the 'dvaya' mantra, 'Sriman Narayana Charanau Saranam Prapadhye'.

**அடிமுன்றி லிவ்வுலக மன்றளந்தாய் போலும்
அடிமுன் றிரந்தவனி கொண்டாய் -- படிநின்ற
நீரோத மேனி நெடுமாலே நின்னடியை
யாரோத வல்லா ரறிந்து.**

5

Oh Lord with complexion of the blue ocean, aeons ago, You manifested to ask Mahabali for three paces of land. But You scarcely needed those three steps to traverse this universe. Who can comprehend the secret of Your Feet or presume to speak of Them?

In this pasuram, Azhwar hints that there was a deeper significance to the Lord as Sri Vamana' asking for three paces of land from king Mahabali, though he poses the question to the Lord if He really needed those three paces, when in actuality he had covered the length and breath of the whole universe in just two paces. Azhwar knows that the third step of the Lord was intended to plant on Mahabali's head and push him down to the nether world where he belonged, in the grand design of the Lord.

படிநின்ற நீர் refers to the compassion of the Lord underlying His manifestation as Sri Vamana' in order to protect this world from Mahabali's misrule. 'பரோ மாத்ரயா தநுவா வருதாந, ந தே மஹித்வமந்வச் சுவந்தி I உபே தே வித்ம ரஜஸீப்ருதிவ்யா : விஷ்ணோ தேவத்வம் பரமஸ்ய வித்ஸே' — II Vishnu Suktham.

'Oh Vishnu, Exalted as Thou art, Thou grew in unbelievable proportions. Then no one was there who could gauge or experience Thy greatness. We only know about the two steps that Thou took on the land and in space above. Beyond this the third step, only Thou knowest. Even the Vedha-Purusha remained silent on that mighty third step.'

**அறிந்தைந் துமுள்ளடக்கி ஆய்மலர்கொண்டு ஆர்வம்
செறிந்தமனத்தராய்ச்செவ்வே -- அறிந்தவன்றன்
பேரோதியேத்தும் பெருந்தவத்தோர்காண்பரே
காரோதவண்ணன் கழல்.**

6

They indeed are eminently blessed and will find their niche in the sacred Feet of the Lord with complexion matching the dark blue ocean, who channelising their sense organs inward with true insight about their relationship to Him, constantly recite and meditate on His names with overflowing devotion and thoughtfully gathered floral offerings.

In the previous pasuram, Azhwar posed the question who could comprehend the secret of the Lord's Feet. He knows that the answer to this question cannot be an unqualified negative, for that would render 'bhagavadvishayam', a nonstarter. So in this pasuram, the Azhwar reassures us that they who with overflowing devotion constantly meditate on the Lord's names are blessed and bound to reach Him. This they are able to achieve because they have the discerning wisdom to channelise the pull of their sensory organs inwards where they can delve into 'bhagavadvishayam' having found their identity with the Lord. 'Bhagavadvishayam' is spoken of as 'a'ntha'ra vishayam', (internal) in contrast to the external objects of sense experience which are 'ba'hyavishayam '. Hence Swami Nammazhwar exhorts us with the advisory ' கடையறப் பாசங்கள் விட்ட பின்னையன்றி அவனவை காண்கொடானே' (திருவாய்மொழி 8-2-8.).

செவ்வே அறிந்து - The knowledge illumined by 'sesha-seshi bha'vam '.

பெருந்தவத்தோர் - eminently blessed because they have the wisdom to pursue the path of 'sarana'gathi ' ' ந்யாஸமேஷாம் தபஸாம் அதிரித்தமாஹு : '.

**கழலெருத்து வாய்மடித்துக் கண்கழன்று மாற்றார்
அழலெருத்த சிந்தையரா யஞ்ச -- தழலெருத்த
போராழி யேந்தினான் பொன்மலர்ச் சேவடியே
ஓராழி நெஞ்சே யுகந்து.**

7

Oh my heart deep as the fathomless ocean, Seek with fervour the beautiful flower-like Feet of the Supreme Lord Who sports the fire-spitting battle-eager Sudarsana', the Lord who as Trivikrama strode the worlds on His upraised feet, striking abject fear in the hearts of His adversaries, with His curled up lips and rolling eyes.

This pasuram refers to the episode where Narayana as Trivikrama shook the worlds in two giant strides with lips trembling and eyes rolling in anger driving terror into the minds and hearts of adversaries like Namusi. Refer to Sri Thirumazhisai Piran's lines in his Thiruchanda Virutham.

'இரக்கமண்கொடுத்தவற்கு இரக்கமொன்றியே
பரக்கவைத்தளந்துகொண்ட பற்பபாதனல்லையே.' – (32).

உகந்துன்னை வாங்கி யொளிநிறங்கொள் கொங்கை
அகங்குளிர வுண்ணென்று ளாவி -- உகந்து
முலையுண்பாய் போலே முனிந்துண்டாய் நீயும்
அலைபண்பா லானமையாலன்று .

8

Feigning motherly love, she cradled You in her arms, and snugly entreated You to feed on her surging, radiant breasts. Then, You putting on the child's natural innocence and joy outwardly, but with seething anger inside, pretended to drink milk but sucked her life out.

Azhwar relates demoness Putana's story in this pasuram to illustrate how one would come to grief if he were to approach the Lord with fake devotion. Swami Nammazhwar's note of warning is germane to recall here.

'மெய்யனாகும் விரும்பித்தொழுவார்க்கெல்லாம்
பொய்யனாகும் புறமேதொழுவார்க்கெல்லாம் ' (தி-மொ. 9-10.)

அன்றதுகண் டஞ்சாத வாய்ச்சி யுனக்கிரங்கி
நின்று முலதந்த விந்நீர்மைக்கு -- அன்று
வரன்முறையால் நீயளந்த மாகடல்குழ ஞாலம்
பெருமுறையா லெய்துமோ பேர்த்து.

9

Seeing her drop dead thus, and with overflowing concern, the fearless cow-herd queen Yashoda then and there breast-fed You. In comparison to her melting compassion, is the vast expanse of this universe surrounded by oceans that You once scaled, any bigger?

Azhwar mentions this episode again to underscore mother Yashoda's overpowering concern in behalf of her child Krishna, and how she hastened to breast-feed him as an antidote to the poison ingested by the child from Putana's breast. Narayana scaled the worlds as Sri Vamana out of his overwhelming protective concern for Indra. This was an extra-ordinary act of 'a'sritha va'tsalaya' and 'nirhetuka krupa' of the Lord for all the beings of the worlds. As the Supreme Master, He did not have to ask anything of Mahabali, but still He did because Bali was His devotee too, though an errant one. Even so, in Azhwar's estimation, all this redemptive grace of the Lord, great as it is, falls just short of Yashoda's love which is afterall human.

**பேர்த்தீன மாசகடம் பிள்ளையாய் மண்ணிரந்து
காத்தீன பல்லுயிரும் காவலனே ஏத்திய
நாவுடையேன் பூவுடையேன் நின்னுள்ளி நின்றமையால்
காவடியேன் பட்டகடை.** 10

Oh Protector of everything, as a child You with a mere kick smashed the leviathan rolling cart into smithereens. Accepting the gift of this earth, You, with caressing touch, brought to life this withering universe. Because my thoughts are centred on You, I constantly recite Your name, and my hands gather flowers for You. You must remove the residue of my past impressions.

Azhwar refers to the episode of Sakata'sura' who came to kill child Krishna disguised as a big cart. With a mere push of his leg, the child Krishna smashed the cart into smithereens. Dwelling on his continuing fascination for Va'manavathara', Azhwar reverts to how the Lord desirous of protecting His devotee Indra who had lost his kingdom

to Mahabali, went to Mahabali and asked him for the gift of three paces of land. This He did, because Mahabali was also His devotee, and deserved a milder form of punishment like a reprimand, while being taught a lesson for the breach of trust he had committed in arrogating to himself all that truly and totally belonged to Narayana. The main purpose was 'a'sritha rakshanam'. In saying 'உள்ளி', 'ஏத்தியநா', 'பூஷடையேன்', ('contemplating', 'reciting His name', 'offering flowers', Azhwar underlines the total involvement of his body, mind, and spirit.

**கடைநின் றமரர் கழல் தொழுது நாளும்
இடைநின்ற விற்பத்த ராவர் - புடைநின்ற
நீரோத மேனி நெடுமாலே நின்னடியை
யாரோத வல்லா ரவர்.**

11

They receive mediocre rewards who stand at the portals of lesser gods, day in and day out, falling at their feet for favours. Oh Lord with complexion resembling the far-reaching blue ocean, how many are indeed wise enough to seek Your Feet instead?

Azhwar expresses his anguish and amazement at the irony of the way of the world where the countless many hasten after demigods for evanescent rewards, instead of seeking the lotus feet of Sriman Narayana, as the only worthwhile goal and redeeming grace in the end result, 'the parama- purusha'rtham', the eternal bliss of Sri Vaikunta. They are sadly ignorant of the Sruti declaration, 'Nabrahma Ne'sana'h' merely because the latter are also referred to as 'அமரர்' in a generic sense. And what do these lesser gods do ? They exact a heavy price for lowly favours. Even out of the minority who look upto Sriman Narayana, only a select few are wise enough to understand Him correctly as the 'Upa'ya"and 'Upeya', (the Goal and the Means). Has not the Lord, deliberated this human paradox and predicament, in the Gita? (7.19) 'Va'sudevassarvamiti sa maha'thma' sudurlabah'.' He who understands that Vasudeva is everything is

a mahathma' very difficult to find ', the great soul to whom even the most mundane existential chore is a godly experience. As Swami Nammazhwar puts it, ' உண்ணும் சோறு, பருகு நீர், தின்னும் வெற்றிலையுமெல்லாம் கண்ணன்', (திருவா- மொ 7-1.)

**அவரிவ ரென்றில்ல யரவணையான் பாதம்
அவர்வணங்கி யேத்தாதா ரெண்ணில் – பவரும்
செழுங்கதிரோ னெண்மலரோன் கண்ணுதலோ னன்றே
தொழுந்தகையார் நாளும் தொடர்ந்து.** 12

There is no dividing line among the devotees of the Lord, for the high and low alike worship and prayerfully address the Feet of Him Who rests on A'dishesha'. Does not that illustrious list include the many-splendoured Surya', the lotus-seated Brahma and the third-eyed Rudhra, all of whom seek His presence for their daily worship?

Sri Bhutat Azhwar points out in this pasuram that there is no distinction of rank or pecking order in the list of devotees of Narayana. They range from the most exalted of gods from Surya, Brahma, and Siva to the humblest of the humble. These deities are themselves the subject of prayer and worship. They follow Him assiduously and constantly to pay their obeisance. Ithihasa- pura'na's are replete with illustrations of this.

**தொடரெடுத்த மால் யா'ன சூழ்கயம் புக்கஞ்சி
படரெடுத்த பைங்கமலங் கொண்டு அன் - - றிடரருக்க
ஆழியான் பாதம் பணிந்தன்றே வானவர்கோன்
பாழிதா னெய்திற்றுப் பண்டு.** 13

Is it not because once long ago, the care-free tusker supremo, entering the sprawling lake for gathering the blossomed lotus to lay at the Feet of the Lord, came to grief at the jaws of the crocodile, and in dismay thought of those Feet of the Lord, Who sports the Sudarsana', in prayerful surrender, that he attained the exalted position in the Lord's abode?

Azhwar describes the elephant king Gajendra as 'தொடரெடுத்த மால் யானை' - the tusker who is capable of breaking free of any kind of iron leash put on him to rein him in, to indicate his licentious conduct, arising from his 'mast'. But even in his wildly wayward fun and frolic being an ardent Narayana devotee in his previous birth, his 'samska'ra" led him, in his lucid moments, to gather flowers from a lotus pond everyday for offering to Narayana in a nearby shrine. What ensued in one of those moments was a life and death battle of attrition between him and a vicious crocodile that was living in that pond, with Gajendra trying to extricate himself from the jaws of the crocodile, and the latter drawing the elephant deeper into the vortex, 'Gaja a'karshate' teere', gra'ha a'karshate' jale' ', (Vishnu Dharma 69-49). The elephant was dismayed not so much for his life, but that the flowers would wither away before he could offer them to the Lord.

'நாஹம் கலேபரஸ்யாஸ்ய த்ராணூர்த்தம் மதுஸூதந I
கரஸ்த கமலாந்யேவ பாதயோர்ப்பித்தும் தவ ' II

'Oh Madhusudhana, I do not cry out to save this body of mine, but to offer these lotuses at Thy Feet.'

பண்டிப் பெரும்பதியை யாக்கி பழிபாவம்
கொண்டிங்கு வாழ்வாரைக் கூறுதே - எண்டிசையும்
பேர்த்தகர நான்குடையான் பேரோதிப் பேதைகள்
தீர்த்தகர ராமின் திரிந்து. 14

Oh the ignorant ones, rather than wasting time on flattery of the worldly ones, who just live to eat stuffing their bellies like a tinsel town, and committing all kinds of follies, with or without intent, go round reciting the names of Narayana Who as Trivikrama filled the eight directions with His four lofty shoulders, and by your presence sanctify the land.

பண்டிப் பெரும்பதியை யாக்கி - Azhwar refers to all seekers of gross sensual pleasures, who typically gorge on food as if their stomachs were a township by itself to be filled with all kinds of things.

In saying 'ஒதி', Azhwar enjoins recitation of the Lord's name for its own sake instead of as a means.

தீர்த்தகரர் - 'தீர்த்தம் கரோதி இதி' 'தீர்த்தகர: ' - one who purifies others by his presence.

“அதிபாதகயுக்தோபி த்யாயந் நிமிஷமச்யுதம் I
பூயஸ் தபஸ்வி பவதி பங்க்தி பாவபாவந: “II

'Even if a grave sinner, by meditating on Achuta', one becomes a saint, and by his touch purifies a whole line of sinners.”

“ஜ்ஞாநதோஜ்ஞாநதோ வாபி வாஸுதேவஸ்ய கீர்த்தநாத் I
தத் ஸர்வம் விலயம் யாதி தோயஸ்தம் லவணம் யதா “ II

“Reciting the name of Va'sudeva knowingly or otherwise, one's whole load of sins melts away like salt in water.”

**திரிந்தது வெஞ்சமத்துத் தேர்கடவி அன்று
பிரிந்தது சீதையை மான் பின்போய் – புரிந்ததுவும்
கண்பள்ளி கொள்ள வழகியதே நாகத்தின்
தண்பள்ளி கொள்வான் றனக்கு.**

15

He drove the chariot for Arjuna in the fierce battle-field. In an earlier age, He ran after the make-believe deer, only to lose His consort Sita, and lay down on the bare ground. Were these acts becoming of the Exalted One Who rests on the cool, cosy Anantha'?

Azhwar expresses his wonder at how the Lord of all creation wandered on this earth subjecting himself to tasks befitting lesser mortals caught in the web of 'samska'ra", but not the Absolute Master of all creation that He is.

“ ஆத்மாநம் ரதிநம் வித்தி ஸரீரம் ரதமேவ ச I
புத்திம் து ஸாரதிம் வித்தி மந: ப்ரக்ரஹமேவ ச II

இந்த்ரியாணி ஹயாநாஹர் விஜயாம்ஸ்தேஜ் கோசராணி” II
(Kat. Up. 1-3-34)

“Know the a'tman as the rider, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, mind as the reins; the sense organs as the horses and the sensory objects as the path of the chariot.” He is the Lord Who conducts the whole universe, and yet in the Kurukshetra battle-field as Sri Krishna, He allowed Himself to be a compliant charioteer for the warrior Arjuna. Did He atleast have an easier life in His earlier incarnation as Sri Rama? No. As He Himself admitted what privations He did not suffer like,

“ ராஜ்யாத் ப்ரம்ஸோ வநே வாஸ: ஸீதா நஜ்டா ஹதோ த்விஜ: I
ஈத்ருஸீயம் மமாலக்ஷ்மீர் நிர்தஹேதபி பாவகம்” II

“Losing the kingdom, life in the forest, loss of Sita, losing Jatayu, such misfortunes as have befallen me will burn even fire”. As if it was not all enough already, where did He choose to retire to work off the weariness of all His exertions ? On the bare grass in the wild forest under the wide open canopy of the sky. Azhwar is beside himself with sheer astonishment and disbelief at the Lord's style of 'jagad-rakshanam.'

தனக்கடிமை பட்டது தானறியா னேலும்
மனத்தடைய வைப்பதாம் மாலை -வனத்திடரை
ஏரியாம் வண்ண மியற்றுமிது வல்லால்
மாரியார் பெய்கிற்பார் மற்று.

16

Even if the conscious self may not be able to realise its characteristic of dependence, it is but proper to hold on to the thought of His presence in the heart. Just as one can only prepare the ground for a lake to hold rain water falling on a bush-ridden high land, but cannot make it rain.

'ஸ்வத்வமாத்மநி ஸஞ்ஜாதம், ஸ்வாமித்வம் ப்ரஹ்மணி ஸ்திதம்'
'It is jiva'tma's nature to belong, and Parama'tma's nature to own.'
Parama'tma' is the ' 'seshi ' , and the jiva' is the 'sasha'. Azhwar says that it is seldom that one is, in thought and action, alive to this fundamental characteristic. The Lord, on the contrary, is forever eager and keen to hold on to His dear possession because of His 'a'sritha rakshanam'. One can prepare the ground and dig a lake there for storing rain water, but will it serve any purpose except as Varuna and his 'antar ya'mi ' Sriman Narayana grant that it serve the purpose for which it was designed by making rain to come down so as to enable it to fill. Likewise, a devotee has the characteristic of being an appropriate storehouse for the Lord, which, by itself, does not constitute the 'upa'ya' for reaching the Lord. So a learned one intuitively that the Lord is the 'upa'ya'. Then the Lord's grace descends on the devotee when he is thus evolved. In a manner of speaking, even creating the ground by removing the mental block of 'avidya', and 'karmava'sana's' is itself the Lord's handiwork. For as Sri Thirumazhisai Piran asks,

'வித்துமிட வேண்டுங் கொலோ விடையடர்த்த
பத்தி யுழவன் பழம் புனத்து ', (நான்முகன் - திருவந்தாதி- 23)

'The Lord (Who as Sri Krishna quelled the bulls set as wager for the hand of Nappinnai), is the farmer who on his own sows the seed, and nurtures the plant of devotion in the devotee. Do we need to sow the seed by our exertion, in this field of 'samsa'ra"? Swami Nammazhwar also expresses the same thought in the following lines.

' ஊரவர் கவ்வை அருவிட்டு அன்னீனசொல் தீர்மடுத்து
ஈரநெல் வித்தி முளைத்த நெஞ்சப்பெருஞ்செய்யுள்
பேரமர் காதல் கடல்புரைய விளைவித்த
காரமர் மேனி நம் கண்ணன் ' . (திருவாய்-மொ. 5-3-4.).

'This universe is a field which the Lord has been ploughing from time immemorial, sowing the seed, irrigating, adding manure to, and making it yield a rich harvest by His extra-ordinary love towards us.'

மற்று ரியலாவார் வானவர்கோன் மாமலரோன்
சுற்றும் வணங்குந் தொழிலான -- ஒற்றைப்
பிறையிருந்த செஞ்சடையான் பின்சென்று மாலக்
குறையிரந்து தான்முடித்தான் கொண்டு . 17

He is the many-splendored Supreme Controller around Whose proximity the lord of heavenly beings and the lotus-seated Brahma congregate to offer their prayers, and approaching Whom Rudra wearing the crescent on his matted locks, prayed to, for the redressal of his sin. Is there anyone worthy of such supplication other than that Lord?

Sri Bhutat Azhwar says, ' சுற்றும் வணங்கும் தொழிலான ', to drive home the point that the lord of all devas Indra, and Brahma who originated in the lotus flower sprung from the navel of Sriman Narayana assemble round the periphery of Sriman Narayana to offer their worship. As Sri Poigai Piran says, ' கடிக்கமலத்துள்ளிருந்தும் காண்கிலான் கண்ணன் ,
'அடிக்கமலந் தன்னையன்.' (மு.திரு 56) '.

Even he who is seated on the lotus sprung from the navel of Sriman Narayana can hardly comprehend the true measure of the Lotus Feet of the Lord.'

ஒற்றைப்பிறையிருந்த செஞ்சடையான் - refers to Siva who wears on his crimson locks the lustreless crescent moon. The story goes that the moon god who had married all twenty seven of Daksha's daughters, but was specially enamoured of only one of them viz. Rohini, to the neglect of everyone else incurred the wrath of Daksha who cursed him to wane into oblivion, and was saved from total extinction by Siva's boon to wear him on his head. Azhwar in alluding to this, underscores the fact that even that Siva who had been the saviour of some like the moon, could not absolve himself of his own sin of 'brahma-hathi', and had to seek recourse to the Lord of Sri for his redemption.

குறையிருந்து தான் முடித்தான் - ' By imploring Srīman Narayana, he got relief from his sin of ' brahma-hathi'.

**கொண்ட துலகம் குறளுருவாய்க் கோளரியாய்
ஒண்டிறலோன் மார்வத் துகிர் வைத்தது - உண்டதுவும்
தான் கடந்த வேமுலகே தாமரைக்கண் மாலொருநாள்
வான்கடந்தான் செய்த வழக்கு.** 18

**As Sri Vamana' You resumed overlordship of all the worlds.
As Nrsimha of insuperable prowess, You planted Your nails and
tore the chest of the formidable foe Hiranya. Yet another day,
You took all the seven worlds scaled by Thee, for safe-keeping
inside Your stomach. These were then the legitimate deeds of
the lofty lotus-eyed Lord, loftier than the high heavens.**

Azhwar refers to three episodes in this pasuram to underline Narayana's 'nirhethuka-krupa'. First, the Lord took the form of the diminutive Vamana', a form not quite becoming of the Lord of all creation, to seek the gift of three paces of land of Mahabali. Earlier, when He could have destroyed the insufferably iniquitous Hiranya, without lifting a finger, He took the form of the fierce Nrsimha Bhagavan to kill him with His bare Hands honouring the letter and spirit of Brahma's boon. Yet again, when the seven worlds were on the verge of extinction due to 'pralaya", He took them all into His

own stomach for safe-keeping regardless of their short-comings. Behind all these acts, is the lotus eye of the Lord, that radiates His overwhelming compassion and protective instinct, on the one hand, and overlordship over all the worlds on the other. Azhwar concludes that it may be possible to visualise the splendor of the high heavens, but not that of the Lord. Describing these acts of the Lord, Azhwar characterizes them as 'வழக்கு' or 'appropriate'. Though they constitute acts designed for protection of the beings, the Lord considers them His own legitimate and proper act because after all it redounds to the credit of the owner of a property to protect his ownership rights.

Sri Valmiki Bhagavan says in Srimad Ramayanam,

'அபிஷிச்ய ச லங்காயாம் ராக்ஷஸேந்த்ரம் விபீஷணம் I
க்ருதக்ருத்யஸ் ததாராம: விஜீவர: ப்ரமுமோத ஹ' (ரா-பா 1-85).
'After anointing Vibhishana as the king of rakshasas of Lanka, Rama now free from concern exulted in the thought of having accomplished what was to be accomplished.

**வழக்கன்று கண்டாய் வலிசகடம் செற்றாய்
வழக்கென்று நீமதிக்க வேண்டா - குழக்கன்று
தீவிளவின் காய்க்கெறிந்த தீமை திருமாலே
பார்விளங்கச் செய்தாய் பழி.**

19

You kicked the demon disguised as a hurtling juggernaut to his death. That was not what could be considered proper for Your age. So You should not take it that way. Then, Your even more daring act of hurling the demon that came in the garb of a calf at another who lay hidden in a wood-apple tree, killing them both at once, is like trying to hide a beacon light under the bushel.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar takes the thought of the previous pasuram a step further, and reminisces on the two episodes of the Lord's incarnation as Sri Krishna. He recounts how as a small toddler, Krishna kicked the demon Sakata'sura', cartwheeling to his death, belying His age and size. So Azhwar implores the Lord not to look upon this as in

order – வழக்கன்று கண்டாய். or as part of His normal ownership guarding function, (Jagad-rakshanam). Azhwar's plea stems out of his natural human feeling of concern. Even more daring than this act was the ploy Krishna adopted at a later date but still as very much of a fledgling kid, to eliminate the twin cunning demons, Vatsa'sura who mixed in Krishna's cattle herd as an ostensibly innocent calf, and Kapitha'sura who took the form of a wood-apple. Taking the calf by its feet, Krishna hurled it up at the tree killing both the demons instantly. What if both of them had fallen on Krishna. The Azhwar expresses his amazement at this daring act, and poses the same question to the Lord as to how.

He could consider this as just another routine aspect of His role of 'jagad-rakshanam', when all this daring was fraught with such potential danger to His 'safety'- வழக்கென்று நீமதிக்கவேண்டா.

Sri Thirumangai Azhwar also expresses a similar thought on the unequalness of the 'act' and the 'actor', in referring to the earlier Sakata'sura' episode in his line' பிறந்த ஏழுதிங்களில் சேடன் திறுமறு மார்வன் கிடந்து திருவடியால் மலைபோல் ஓடும் சகடத்தை சாடிய ', (பெ - தி, 10-7-9). ' Barely seven years old this diminutive boy on Whose bosom Mother Lakshmi resides, kicked with His sacred Foot the cart hurtling like a mountain'. Quite appropriately, Sri Andal sings benediction to the Lord recalling both these events in her lines from Thiruppa'vai.

'பொன்றச் சகடமுதைத்தாய் புகழ் போற்றி,
கன்று குணிலாயெறிந்தாய் கழல் போற்றி '.....(24).

பழிபாவம் கையகற்றிப் பல்காலும் நின்னை
வழிவாழ்வார் வாழ்வராம் மாதோ! — வழுவின்றி
நாரணன்றன் நாமங்கள் நன்குணர்ந்து நன்கேத்தும்
காரணங்கள் தாமுடையார் தாம். 20

They lead a life of joy and fulfilment who constantly worship You Narayana, in the prescribed way, steering clear of foisted charges and sins of commission, even as they who are set on the course with all favourable factors, in worshipful prayer and with a sense of deep involvement.

Azhwar says in this pasuram that like those who are already blessed with the actualisation of Lord's experience, by leading a life devoid of pitfalls of unsought calumnies and sins wilfully committed, as prescribed in Scriptural texts, and with a sense of joy and fulfilment, are those others blessed who are endowed with all the predisposing factors, but have not started on that path. The first category is, - **பல்காலும் நின்ன வறிவாழ்வார்** - those who find fulfilment by constant pursuit of the ways of ' gna'na' - bhakthi yoga's '. Sri Krishna says in the Gita (9.2.), ' பவித்ரமிதமுத்தமம், ' துஸ்ஸுகம் கர்த்துமஸ்யம் ' of the bhakthi yoga, that 'it is supremely purificatory, blissful to practise, and assures a lasting outcome'. Swami Nammazhwar observes in a similar vein, ' நல்ல மனவாழ்வர் கொண்ட பெண்டிர் மக்களே '. 'They will find bliss here in this life and ever after'. Bhagavadvishayam is an exception to the normal rule of ' ந ஸுகாலஸ்யதே ஸுகம் ' - ' it is not always true that joy begets joy '. So Sri Bhutat Azhwar puts an exclamation mark after the word, ' **மாதே** ', to indicate that this worldly hypothesis does not hold good here. The second category Azhwar speaks of, in this pasuram, comprises people who have all the predisposing factors going in their favour, viz. love born out of bhakthi, deep involvement in reciting Lord's names, the underlying impress in the shape of ' purva janma suhrudam ', and above all the Lord's 'krupa'-kata'ksham', his benevolent look of compassion.' They also lead a life of joy and fulfilment. Does not Sri Krishna say in the Gita? (2-40), ' **நேஹாபிஞ் நாஸோஸ்தி** ' - ' there is no loss to a good beginning in bhagavadvishayam'.

தாமுளரே தம்முள்ள முள்ளுளதே தாமரையின்
பூவுளதே யேத்தும் பொழுதுண்டே - வாமன்
திருமருவு தான்மருவு சென்னியரே செவ்வே
அருநரகம் சேர்வ தரிது.

21

The humans are endowed with a mind that can contemplate the divine. Time is at hand for us to engage the mind in worshipful prayer, and lotuses fit for worship abound in tanks. Sri Vamana's beautiful Feet are ready and to bless our bowed heads. With so much going in our favour, will hell ever haunt us?

This pasuram is evocative of Sri Poigai Piran's pasuram in Mudhal Thiruvandhadhi (95),

'நாவாயிலுண்டே நமோநாரணுவென்று
ஒவாதுரைக்கு முரையுண்டே - மூவாத
மாக்கதிக்கண் செல்லும் வகையுண்டே அன்னொருவர்
தீக்கதிக்கண் செல்லும் திறம் .'

'பூர்வமேவ க்ருதா ப்ரஹ்மந் ஹஸ்தபாதாதி ஸம்யுதா I
விசித்ரா தேஹஸம்பத்திரீஸ்வராய நிவேதிகும் II விஷ்ணு தத்வம்- 6.

' This unique wealth called human organism endowed with limbs like the hands and feet, has been created since the beginning of time as an instrument of service to the Master of the universe.'

தாமரையின் பூ - lotus flowers fit for worship. Sri Krishna mentions 'பத்ரம் புஷ்பம்' in the Gita, (9.26). Any flower is acceptable to the Lord when offered with true devotion. The Shastra's only preclude, 'கண்டகாரிகா புஷ்பம்', wild flower with thorn. Bhattar says that even that is precluded out of consideration to the devotee lest it should hurt his fingers.

திருமருவு தான் - Lord's Feet beautifully soft to the touch.'
வடிவினையில்லா மலர்மகள் மற்றை நிலமகள் பிடிக்கும் மெல்லடி '

- 'Feet that are gently caressed by the Divine Mother Sri and Bhu Devi.' The word ' Thiru ' indicates that the 'purushakara ' agency the Mother is also near at hand. It can also be taken to mean the 'ubhaya-vibhuti' wealth of the Paramapurusha. Swami Alavandar, describes the Feet of Trivikrama thus, ' ஸங்க ரதாங்க கல்பகத்
வஜாரவிந்தாங்குஸ வஜரலாஞ்சநம் த்ரிவிக்ரம
த்வச்சரணம்புஜித்வயம்' - (Stotra-Ratnam - 31). “ Oh Trivikrama,
Your Lotus Feet which have the tell-tale identifying marks of sankha,
chakra, kalpaka-creeper, lotus, ankusha and vajra.'

' நாராயணேதி ஸப்தோஸ்தி வாகஸ்தி வஸவர்த்திநீ I ததாபி நரகே
கோரே பதந்தீயேதத்பதம் ' II ' The sound Narayana is there, the
faculty of recitation is in us. Notwithstanding this, it is astonishing that
people should fall into the clutches of hell.'

**அரிய தெளிதாசு மாற்றலால் மாற்றி
பெருக முயல்வாரைப் பெற்றால் – கரியதோர்
வெண்கோட்டு மாலயாஈன் வென்றி முடித்தன்றே
தண்கோட்டு மாமலரால் தாழ்ந்து.**

22

**The path to liberation is blessed with the grace of the Lord
Who is forever ready to remove whatever hurdles beset the
path. Was not the dark –skinned Gajendra with pearly-white
tusks, blessed with His grace in overcoming the onslaught of
his adversary, for his devout service of offering a lotus from
the cool pond to the Lord?**

Azhwar makes the point that those who have steadfast faith in the Lord and entrust their burden to Him, looking upto Him as their only recourse, will have their way cleared of any stumbling blocks, howsoever formidable or daunting, by His grace and prowess. The biggest impediment to spiritual progress is the mindset that one can achieve it by dint of one's own effort. That is removed by entrusting oneself into the Lord's hands. ' பகவத் ப்ரவ்ருதி விரோதி

ஸ்வப்ரவ்ருத்தி நிவ்ருத்தி ப்ரபத்தி ' . ' Extrication from one's own effort which goes against the grain of Lord's will, is “ prapatti “ or total surrender.' 'Prapatti nishtai ' slips away the moment one thinks that his self-effort can, by itself,take him to his goal. Azhwar says in this pasuram that ridding oneself of that self-delusion is not only essential, but what is more important,must also be accomplished for us by the Lord's will and grace. Has not Sri Krishna confirmed this in His Charamasloka in the Gita, “ ஸர்வ தர்மாந்” bidding us only that we put ourselves at His Feet, and assuring us that He will make the effort for us ? Our task is rendered easy, and even the- difficult-to- attain liberation becomes easy enough to achieve. This is illustrated in the episode related by the Azhwar in this pasuram, of Gajendra who was a devotee of Sriman Narayana and who used to take a lotus from the pond which he used to frequent for bath for his daily offering to the Lord. Was he not blessed with the Lord's grace in his hour of desperation and distress call to the Lord, from the deathly clutches of the vicious crocodile?, queries the Azhwar.

“ பரமாபதமாபந்ந: மநஸா சிந்தயத் ஹரிம் I

ஸ து நாகவர: ஸ்ரீமாந் நாராயண:” II (வி.தர் - 68)

' In the face of a grave danger, and looking upto Sriman Narayana as the supreme recourse, Gajendra thought of Hari.' Sri Poigai Piran also recounts this episode in his Mudhal Thiruvandhadhi pasuram, “பிடிசேர் களிரளித்த பேராளா உன்றன் அடிசேர்ந் தருள்பெற்றானன்றே ”, (97). ' Oh Lord of great compassion, was not Gajendra engrossed in sensual pursuit in the company of his mate, blessed by Thy grace, by worship at Thy Feet? '

**தாழ்ந்து வரங்கொண்டு தக்க வகைகளால்
வாழ்ந்து கழிவாரை வாழ்விக்கும் -- தாழ்ந்த
விளங்கனிக்குக் கன்றெறிந்து வேற்றுருவாய் ஞாலம்
அளந்தடிக்கீழ்க் கொண்ட வவன்.**

23

The Lord Who hurled the demon-calf at the fruit-laden wood apple tree scattering away its fruits, and Who, in an earlier incarnation, had taken another form to encompass this earth under His Foot, blesses all beings who bow at His feet in keeping with their goals.

Bhutat Azhwar makes the point that those who turn to Him for His grace by adopting whatever means they choose to adopt consistent with their capacity like bhakthi, prapatti etc. as envisaged in the Scriptures, get their wishes fulfilled by His grace as appropriate to their means and merit in the form of aishvarya', kaivalya', moksha' etc. for He is the Dispenser of rewards. Has He not said so Himself in the Bhagavad Gita (9.24), 'அஹம் ஹி ஸர்வயஜ்ஞாநாம் போக்தா ச ப்ரபுரேவ ச ', - 'I am the Enjoyer of all the offerings at sacrifices and the Dispenser of fruits of action '.

**அவன் கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே யாரருளும் கேடும்
அவன் கண்டா யைம்புலனாய் நின்ருன் -- அவன் கண்டாய்
காற்றுத்தீ நீர்வான் கருவரைமண் காரோதச்
சீற்றத்தீ யாவானும் சென்று.** 24

Oh my good heart, don't you see that He is the Dispenser of the ultimate grace of liberation as also the binding cycle of 'samsa'ra'? Don't you see that He is the inner Controller of the sense organs and the five elements of air, fire, water, ether, and earth? He is also the manifest universe, the rising mountains, and at the time of dissolution the unleasher of blazing fires capable of turning the dark oceans dry. Don't you see?

Azhwar addresses his heart as the good heart since it exults at the recounting of the Lord's names in a world replete with sinners who cannot bear to hear of His name. By 'ஆரருளும் கேடும் ', Azhwar means that the fruits of one's actions are dispensed by Sriman Narayana. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita, (7.14), ' மாமேவ யே

ப்ரபத்யந்தே மாயாமேதாம் தரந்தி தே '. ' Those that surrender unto Me traverse the deceptive samsara'. Not only that. He is also the Controller of the sense organs. ' மந ஏவ மநுஷ்யாணாம் காரணம் பந்த மோக்ஷயோ: ' (வி.பு 6.7.28). ' The mind is the cause of the human condition leading to the bondage of samsara' and liberation therefrom.'. The sense organs are under the influence of the mind. The Lord thus is the inner Controller of the mind and the sense organs.

“ஹ்ருஷீகாணீந்த்ரியாண் யாஹூஸ், தேஷாமீஸோ யதோ பவான் ! ஹ்ருஷீகேஸஸ் ததோ விஷ்ணு: க்யாதோ தேவேஷு கேஸவ : ”. II

“The indriya's are referred to as ' hrushikangal'. As the Lord of them, Thou only, Who art known as Kesava' and Vishnu among deva's, are famed as Hrushikesa.” When that Lord is the cause of the whole manifest universe of the elements that make up the universe, and its dissolution at the time of 'pralaya', it is no wonder that He protects and fulfils the desires of those that look upto Him.

**சென்ற திலங்கைமேல் செவ்வேதன் சீற்றத்தால்
கொன்ற திராவணனைக் கூறுங்கால் - - நின்றதுவும்
வேயோங்கு தண்சாரல் வேங்கடமே விண்ணவர்தம்
வாயோங்கு தொல்புகழான் வந்து.**

25

The Lord Who rose in anger against Lanka, and put an end to Ravana, is also the One of abiding and exalted qualities worshipped by the heavenly beings. In a manner of speaking, He is the same One Who has come to abide in Venkatam of cool ranges where bamboos rise high.

The Lord could have, if He had so desired, destroyed Ravana by His mere will. But He chose to descend from His exalted abode of Sri Vaikunta, to launch His onslaught on Lanka and Ravana as a human being under the sway of human anger.

' கோபஸ்ய வஸமேயிவான் ', - (ரா. யு. 59.136.). ' சென்று கொன்று வென்று கொண்ட வீரம் '. (திருச்சந்த விரு. - 56).

வந்தித் தவீன வழிநின்ற வைம்பூதம்
ஐந்து மகத்தடக்கி யார்வமாய் - - உந்திப்
படியமரர் வேலையான் பண்டமரர்க் கீந்த
படியமரர் வாழும் பதி.

26

Thiruvencatam where ' Srivaishnava's ' reside, and to which the denizens of heaven hasten vying with one another for the worship of the Lord, is the gift of the Lord Who rests on the Milk ocean, to the celestial beings of Sri Vaikuntam, who have controlled the body made up of the five elements and the five senses which are a stumbling block to spiritual progress.

Having referred to Thiruvencatam in the previous pasuram, Sri Bhutata Azhwar is drawn by its unique greatness and proceeds to describe it.

உந்திப்படியமரர் - Azhwar says that devas from Brahma downwards jostle with one another to be in the forefront to get to Thiruvencatam to offer their prayers to the Lord there.

பண்டமரர்க்கீந்த - gifted to the ' nithyasuris'. ' யத்ர பூர்வே ஸாத்யா: ஸந்தி தேவா: ' where (the paramapadha), the nithyasuris or eternal beings like Visveksena', PeriaThiruvadi etc reside. Since in paramapadha there is no scope for them to experience ' soulabhya, sowseelya, va'salya, ka'runya'dhi ' 'kalya'na guna's' of Srīman Narayana, they embark on a daily pilgrimage to Thiruvencatam where they can enjoy the display of these qualities to the hilt. The Lord had, in His great compassion, ceded this abode to them so that they could come down here from their celestial world to savour this unique experience, not available there. The same thought is expressed by other Azhwars.

' மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கட மாமலை, வானவர்கள் சந்தி செய்ய நின்றான் ' - - (அமலனாதிபிரான் - 3).

' தண்ணருவி வேங்கடமே வானேர்க்கும் மண்ணேர்க்கும் வைப்பு -
-(நான்முகன் - திரு - 45).

' கண்ணாவான் அன்றும் மண்ணேர் விண்ணேர்க்குத் தண்ணேர்
வேங்கட விண்ணேர் வெற்பனே ' - - (திருவாய்- மொ - 1-8-3.).

பதியமைந்து நாடிப் பருத்தெழுந்த சிந்தை
மதியுரிஞ்சி வான்முகடு நோக்கி -- கதிமிசுத்தங்
கோல்தேடி யோடும் கொழுந்ததே போன்றதே
மால்தேடி யோடும் மனம்.

27

Having rested on Thirumalai, my racing, seeking mind,
impelled by an upsurge of desire, rushed past the moon
exploring the high heavens in search of the Lord in Sri
Vaikuntam, like a creeper seeking a support staff to hug and
spread around.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar savoured the sight of the Lord in a standing posture
in Thirumalai in the previous pasuram. But that experience only seems
to have whetted his appetite for more. So in this pasuram, Azhwar
craves for the experience of the Lord in 'paramapadha' itself. The
craving of his mind, seems to the Azhwar like the natural propensity
of a creeper to seek the support of a staff to spread around in order
to grow. 'மாக வைகுந்தம் காண்பதற்கு அன் மனம் ஏகமெண்ணும்
இராப்பகல் இன்றியே. ' - (திருவாய்- மொழி 9.3.7.).

மனத்துள்ளான் வேங்கடத்தான் மாகடலான் மற்றும்
நினைப்பரிய நீளரங்கத் துள்ளான் - எனைப்பலரும்
தேவாதி தேவனைப்படுவான் முன்னொருநாள்
மாவாய் பிளந்த மகன்.

28

Hailed as the 'Deva' among deva's by countless beings, resting on the Milk Ocean, my Lord Who once had, as tiny Krishna, torn asunder the face of the demon Kesi, now abides in Thiruvencatam and in the ineffably beautiful shrine at Srirangam, and also with me in my mind.

Azhwar describes all the five 'praka'ra's' or modes of Srīman Narayana in this pasuram. He is the Lord of all beings and is resplendently present at 'paramapadha' for the 'nithyasuris', or celestial beings. 'யோ தேவேய்ய ஆதபதி, யோ தேவாநாம் புரோஹித: ' (Purusha- Suktham) Who is glorious among the deva's who bask in His glory, and Who is their Patron-guide.' 'ஸதா பஸ்யந்தி ஸ ரய : ' (Vishnu-Suktham) ' Nithyasuris behold constantly.' 'அயர்வறும் அமரர்கள் அதிபதியவனவன்', (திருவாய்-மொ 1.1.1.). 'த்ரிபாதூர்தவ உதைத் புருஷ : பாதோஸ்யேஹா பவாத் புந : ' (Purusha-Suktham). 'Paramapurusha of three-fold Vyūha form is far above and beyond. Only a part of Him appears again and again in this universe. 'அம்பஸ்யபாரே 'யமந்தஸ்யமுத்ரே கவயோவயந்தி ', 'ஸமுத்ரேந்தம் விஸ்வஸம்பு வம் '. (Thaittriya Narayanavalli). 'He that rests on the ocean for the perpetuation of this universe.' Then Azhwar refers to the Kesi episode from Krishnavatha'ra' to illustrate the Vibhava'tha'ra' which the Lord took for the sake of all living beings. 'ததோ விஜ்வங் வ்யக்ராமத் ஸாஸநாநஸநே அபி ' (Purusha-Suktham). Not stopping with this. He is forever with us in stationary archa' form in divya-desa's like Venkatam, Srirangam etc. 'மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கடமாமீல வானவர்கள் சந்தி செய்ய நின்றான் ', (அமல -3). 'கானமும் வானமும் வேடுமுடை வேங்கடம் ' - (நான் - திருவ -47). As the Lord is in a standing state in the shrine at Thiruvencatam, lest that should project the impression of any hurry on the part of the Lord, Azhwar refers to His relaxed state at Srirangam by the phrase 'நினைப்பரிய நீளரங்கம் ', 'charming beyond what thought can convey '. It is charming because it is situated in a setting of lush, picturesque gardens, 'வண்டினமுரலும் சோலை, மயிலினமாலும்

சோலை, கொண்டல் மீதணவும் சோலை, குயிலினம் கூவும் சோலை ' – (திருமலை – 6). But the most charming to the dear Lord, of all this, is the heart of the devotee which He covets more than anything else. 'மனத்துள்ளான்'. Hence the Azhwar describes the other states as 'இளங்கோயில்', 'bha'la'layam' or 'smaller shrine' “ உளங்கோயில் உள்ளம் வைத்துள்ளினேன் வெள்ளத்து, இளங்கோயில் கைவிடேல் அன்று “ – 54. Other Azhwars also speak of this in similar exalted terms.

'அனந்தன்பாலும் கருடன் பாலும் ஐது நொய்தாக வைத்தென் மனந்தன்னுள்ளே வந்து வைகி வாழச்செய்தாய் அம்பிரான் '. ' பனிக்கடலில் பள்ளிகோளப்பழகவிட்டு ஒடி வந்தென்,

மனக்கடலில் வாழவல்ல மாயமனாள் நம்பீ ...'.

' வடதடமும் வைகுந்தமும் மதிள் துவராபதியும்,

இடவகைகள் இகழ்ந்திட்டு அன்பால் இடவகை கொண்டனையே '.

(பெரியாழ்வார் – திருமொழி 5.4.8, 5.4.9.5.4.10.).

' கல்லும் கனகடலும் வைகுந்த வாளுமும்

புல்லென்றெழிந்தன கொல் ஏபாவம் – வெல்ல

நெடியான் நிறம் கரியான் உள்புகுந்து நீங்கான்

அடியேனது உள்ளத்தகம் '. (பெரிய - திருவந்தாதி – 68).

மகனாகக் கொண்டெடுத்தாள் மாண்பாய் கொங்கை

அகனா வுண்பனென் றுண்டு - - மகனத்தாய்

தேருத வண்ணம் திருத்தினாய் தென்னிலங்கை

நீருக வெய்தழித்தாய் நீ.

29

You - Who, in an earlier age, had reduced the beautiful Lanka to ashes with your arrows - let demoness Putana take you up in her arms, telling yourself, ' let me drink from her beautiful bosom to the brim of my stomach ', sucking her life out along with the milk. In so doing, you made your mother unsure of what to make of you.

Touching on Krishnavata'ra' in the previous pasuram, sets the Azhwar's thoughts wander further along the same trail.

அகன் ஆற உண்பன் அன்று உண்டு - Putana came as if she was dying to suckle the child Krishna. As if warming up to her motherly warmth and entreaty in equal measure, Krishna appeared to be eager to drink to the brim from her bosom. **அகன்** - stomach.

தேருத வண்ணம் - Since killing of Putana by Krishna was an act beyond his age and size, it made mother Yashoda unsure of Krishna.

நீயன் றுலகளந்தாய் நீண்ட திருமாலே
நீயன் றுலகிடந்தா யென்பரால் -- நீயன்று
காரோத முன்கடைந்து பின்னடைத்தாய் மாகடலை
பேரோத மேனிப் பிரான் . 30

Oh, Lord of Sri, with body resembling the big blue ocean, once upon a time You as Trivikrama' measured the world. Another time you brought forth the submerged world from the depths of the ocean floor. Yet another time you churned the ocean, and in a yet different age, built a bridge across it. So say the sages of yore.

நீயன்றுலகளந்தாய் நீண்டதிருமாலே - Azhwar speaks about Sri Vamanavata'ra' in which the Lord of Mahalakshmi of indescribably immense wealth and greatness, displayed His extra-ordinary simplicity and 'soulbhya' by assuming the diminutive brahmin mendicant role for the sake of Indra, and asked for and accepted the gift of three paces of land from the asura' king Maha'bali.

நீ யன் றுலகிடந்தாய் - Similarly, when the world got submerged in the ocean floor, you assumed the form of the grime-laden boar and retrieved this earth forking it up from the depths of the ocean floor with your front tooth, and placed it in its proper position.

காரோதம் முன் கடைந்து - refers to the churning of the oceans to restore the wealth and status of Indra and the devas.

பின்னடைத்தாய் மாகடீல - refers to the building of the bridge across the ocean as Sri Rama.

**பிரானென்று நாளும் பெரும்புலரி யென்றும்
குராநற் செழும்போது கொண்டு - வராகத்
தணியுருவன் பாதம் பணியுமவர் கண்டிர்
மணியுருவம் காண்பர் மகிழ்ந்து.**

31

It is they who hail the Lord as the great Benefactor each passing day saying, 'Today dawned well', and worship the Feet of Sri Vara'ha' with fragrant flowers from the Kura' tree, that will experience the joy of His beautiful Form.

பிரான் அன்றும் - Azhwar hails the Lord as The Great Benefactor.
பெரும் புலரி - 'The day dawned well'. Every day that is spent in Lord's memory and worship is a day well spent. So says the Azhwar.
குரா போது கொண்டு- flowers of the wild kura' tree. This is cited to illustrate that the Lord accepts any kind of flowers offered lovingly.
வராகத்து அணி உருவன் பாதம் பணி யுமவர் மணி உருவம் மகிழ்ந்து காண்பர் - They who prostrate to the Feet of Sri Vara'ha' Peruma'n Who is beauty personified, will verily experience the joy of beholding His beautiful Form. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita, 'ஸஸகம் கர்த்துமவ்யயம்', 'it is imperishable and exceedingly easy to accomplish. Both the means and fruit thereof are equally felicitous.

**மகிழ்ந்தது சிந்தை திருமாலே மற்றும்
மகிழ்ந்ததுன் பாதமே போற்றி - மகிழ்ந்த
தழலாழி சங்க மவைபாடி யாரும்
தொழிலாகம் சூழ்ந்து துணிந்து.**

32

Oh Lord of Sri, My mind steadfast in thoughts focused on You, was ecstatic. Next my tongue forever praising your sacred feet rejoiced. My whole frame engaged in the act of singing and swaying to the glory of your blazing disc, conch and other armament, rejoiced in that experience.

திருமாலே - Sri Bhutat Azhwar extols the union of Mahalakshmi and Sriman Narayana, and as such addresses Him as '**திருமால்**'. Hence ensues the joy of contemplating that union.

As per the Vedic statement, 'மந: பூர்வோ வாசுத்தர :', the mind orchestrates the tongue and other sense organs.

துணிந்தது சிந்தை துழாயலங்கள் அங்கம்
அணிந்தவன் பேருள்ளத்துப் பல்கால் -- பணிந்ததுவும்
வேய்பிறங்கு சாரல் விறல்வேங் கடவனையே
வாய்திறங்கள் சொல்லும் வகை. 33

My thoughts have settled dwelling constantly on the sacred names of the Lord wearing the cool 'tulasi' garland. My body always bows in reverence toward the Lord abiding in the bamboo-laden Venkata hill. My tongue too engages itself in the constant refrain of reciting His great qualities.

வகையா லவனி யிரந்தளந்தாய் பாதம்
புகையால் நறுமலரால் முன்னே -- மிகவாய்ந்த
அன்பாக்கி யேத்தி யடிமைப்பட்டே னுனக்கு
என்பாக்கி யத்தா லினி. 34

I have become Your eternal servant through the special grace showered on me at all times, worshipping, with fragrant flowers and incense, and in a spirit of overflowing love, Your sacred feet that once upon a time scaled this universe under a ruse as a gift of three footsteps of land.

Though Mahabali was a fit subject for destruction like Hiranya and Ravana, Narayana spared his life since he also had the saving grace of a generous heart, and devotion to the Lord, unlike the others. At the same time, he had to be taught a lesson for his arrogance and overweening ambition. So the Lord of Sri decided to ask of Mahabali three steps of land since Mahabali in his vanity presumed that all the the worlds belonged to him, and in so doing, had dared to dispossess even Indra who was a friend of the Lord.

Azhwar acknowledges in this pasuram that the 'nirhetukakrupa` of the Lord towards him has made him the Lord's devotee for ever desirous of service at His Feet.

**இனிதென்பர் காம மதனிலு மாற்ற
இனிதென்பர் தண்ணீரு மெந்தாய் -- இனிதென்று
காமநீர் வேளாது நின் பெருமை வேட்பரேல்
சேமநீ ராகும் சிறிது.**

35

Oh, Master, the ignorant look upon sensual pleasures as sustaining. Some would say that water is life - sustaining rather than sensory perception. Instead of being preoccupied with either, if only men would crave for even a little bit of your experience, that would indeed redound to their well-being under all conditions.

This pasuram contains some essential truths worth pondering. Azhwar dissociates himself from the common worldly perception of sensual enjoyment as life-sustaining. Even those who are capable of a sense of detachment from such sensory preoccupation, do not, however, seem to be free from other mundane concerns of existence, valid as they may seem, prima facie. This is echoed in the Vedic statement, 'ஆப ஏ வஹி ஸ்மநஸ : '. Azhwar dissociates himself from both world views. To him, the Lord's thought is the real sustaining force in life; to paraphrase Swami Nammazhwar, 'உண்ணும் சோறு பருகு நீர்

தின்னும் வெற்றிலை'. Has not Sri Krishna underscored how difficult it is for the rank and file of humanity, engaged as they are, in either maximising their material existential aspects, or in the day-to-day hard realities of eking out a bare sustenance, by his epigrammatic pronouncement, ' வாஸுதேவஸ் ஸர்வமிதி ஸ மஹாத்மா ஸ்தூர்ஸப : ', (Gita 7.19). ' He who looks upon Vasudeva as life-giving and sustaining, is the rare- to - find Maha'thma'.

There is no intrinsic merit of joy or life-sustaining quality in sensual pursuit. “ ததேவ ப்ரீதயே பூத்வா புநர் து : .க்ஷாய ஜாயதே' I ததேவ கோபாய யத: ப்ரஸாதாய ச ஜாயதே II தஸ்மாத்துக்காத்மகம் நாஸ்தி நச கிஞ்சித் ஸுகாத்மகம் II” The same subject matter may at first be a source of pleasure, but later could cause pain. The same thing may first be a source of displeasure, and at some point later, be gratifying. Therefore, in nature there is nothing inherently painful or pleasurable. So say the Sha'stra's.' ஆத்மநஸ்து காமாய ஸர்வம் ப்ரியம் பவதி ', (Brih. Upanishad 6.5.6.). By divine design, everything seems desirable immensely. In essence, its nature is transient, and unstable. The real reason for the delusion of a being in this is his predisposition stemming from the impressions of his past karma'. So Sri Bhutath Azhwar underlines the wisdom of devoting even a tiny fraction of one's inexhaustible capacity for desire in thoughts about the Lord. ' யா ப்ரீதிரவிவேகாநாம் விஜயேஷ் வநபாயிநீ I த்வாமநுஸ்மரத : ஸா மே ஹ்ருதயாந் மாபஸர்ப்பது II ' (வி. . பு. 1.20.19.). ' In the same measure of the ignorant for sensual pleasures, my heart should be filled with desire for thoughts about You, Oh Lord. '. Thus prays Prahlada' to Srīman Nara'yana'. Azhwar says that even if we cannot all be like Prahlada', a little effort and interest in that direction would be richly rewarding in assuring us of the bliss of the Lord's experience. Hasn't the Lord Himself assured this as Sri Rama, in His declaration, 'மித்ரபாவேந ஸம்ப்ராப்தம் ந த்யஜேயம் கதஞ்சந, (ரா. யு . 18-3). ' I will not give up any one even if he approaches me in the ostensible guise of a friend.' That is the true measure of the Lord 's 'nirhetuka krupa' 'for all his creation.

சிறியார் பெருமை சிறிதின் க ணைய்தும்
 அறியாரும் தாமறியா ராவர் -- அறியாமை
 மண்கொண்டு மண்ணுண்டு மண்ணுமிழ்ந்த மாயனென்று
 எண்கொண்டென் னெஞ்சே யிரு. 36

The vainglory of the gross worldly beings, tends to push them deeper into the morass of worldliness. They that are deluded wallow in ignorance. Oh, my heart, rest meditating on the wondrous Lord Who took this earth from Mahabali unobtrusively, swallowed it for safe-keeping at the time of dissolution, and brought it forth again at the dawn of creation.

Azhwar exhorts his heart to leave others who are after gross worldly pleasures to their fate, and instead engage in joyful contemplation of the Lord's wondrous 'lila'vibhuti'. The vainglorious worldly beings are destined, in the perception of the Azhwar, to sink deeper into degrading depths of desolation deluded by their own sense of self-importance on the lines of Sri Krishna's characterization of their psyche. 'ஈஸ்வரோஹம்மஹம் போகீ ஸித்தோஹம் பலவாநஸகீ I ஆட்யோஸபிஜநவாநஸமி, கோஸந்யோஸஸ்தி ஸத்ருஸோ மயா II ' (Gita 16-14-15). I am the monarch of all I see. I am the enjoyer, achiever, strong, prosperous, wealthy, descended from a patrician background. Who is equal to me ?' This conceited sense of self-importance is self-destructive, and is what makes one caught up in the vicious cycle of 'samsara'. They who pursue other gods are ignorant and continue in their ignorance. Instead of joining their ranks, Sri Bhutat Azhwar entreats his heart, and through that, addresses a larger message to us all, to join the exalted group of people who seek the substance of 'bhagavadvishayam ', and meditate on the supreme Lord. 'மண் கொண்டு மண்ணுண்டு மண்ணுமிழ்ந்த மாயன் '. Those exalted souls are 'பேராளன் பேரோதும் பெரியோர் '. (பெ-திருமொழி 7.4.4.), as Sri Thirumangai Azhwar, deferentially designates them.

இருந்தண் கமலத் திருமலரி னுள்ளே
திருந்து திசைமுகீனத் தந்தாய் -- பொருந்தியநின்
பாதங்க ளேத்திப் பணியாவேல் பல்பிறப்பும்
ஏதங்க ளெல்லா மெமக்கு.

37

Oh Lord, Who gave to the world the wise Brahma from the big, cool lotus sprung from your gracious navel. Our many recurring lives are all futile, if we fail to praise, and our heads do not bow in homage to your sacred Feet.

தண் கமலத்திருமலரினுள்ளே - From the cool lotus flower.
‘‘புஞ்சுரர்ணே ஸடவத்’’, thus describe the Vedas, the origin of Brahma.

Azhwar implicitly stresses that it is the Creator of Brahma, that is worthy of surrendering to. ‘‘யோ ப்ரஹ்மாணம் விததாதி பூர்வம் ... முமுகூர் வை ஸ்ரணமஹம் ப்ரபத்யே’’, (Svetas. Upanishad 6-18). Since the purpose of life is to find its niche at the sacred Feet of Sriman Narayana, when our life is not geared in that direction, our repeated births are useless, observes the Azhwar. Does n't the good Lord give us these repeated lives in the fond hope that we will at some point make an effort to seek His grace?

எமக்கென் றிருநிதிய மேமாந்திராதே
தமக்கென்றும் சார்வ மறிந்து - நமக்கென்றும்
மாதவனே யென்னும் மனம்படைத்து மற்றவன் பேர்
ஒதுவதே நாவினா லோத்து.

38

Instead of gloating over material possessions as ours, understand what is our true wealth with a mind that is forever focused on Madavan as everything to us and recite His name as the gospel of the Vedas, appropriate for the tongue to recite.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar underlines in this pasuram what is ephemeral and as such is to be spurned and discarded, and what is of lasting value and as such is to be cultivated in life.

இருந்தியம் - Material riches are not something to be courted and looked upon as our security. As many wise men have not been tired of stressing again and again, what did we bring with us when we came into this world, to take with us when we depart from here. Yet, during the fleeting hyphenated period that separates these two points, that constitutes our life span in this world of karma, we get so illogically and inextricably attached to material possessions and gloat over them as ' mine, mine' guarding over it like a jealous genii. Swami Nammazhwar rightly calls it a raging fire. ' கொள்ளென்று கிளர்ந்தெழுந்த பெருஞ் செல்வம் நெருப்பு . ' (திருவாய்- மொ 4-9-4). Azhwar advises us to get over this delusion and points out to us what constitutes our only true and eternal security and protection. That is Ma'dhavan, the Lord Who is always in the company of divine Mother, Sri. Reciting His many names, like ' Madhava', Sridhara' ' is the only scripture fit for recitation.

**ஒத்தின் பொருள்முடிவு மித்தனையே உத்தமன்பேர்
ஏத்துந் திறமறிமி னேழைகாள் -- ஒத்ததனை
வல்லீரேல் நன்றதனை மாட்டிரேல் மாதவன்பேர்
சொல்லுவதே யோத்தின் சுருக்கு.**

39

The worship of the Supreme Being in the form of recitation of His names is the quintessence of the scriptures. If you know the Vedas, you will understand this truth. To those who are bereft of this Vedic knowledge, Let me tell you, the substance of the Vedas is reciting Madhavan's names. It will suffice to understand this.

The essence of the Vedas is the recognition that Sriman Narayana is the 'antarya'mi' of all gods like Brahma, Rudhra, Indra etc. and indeed of the whole universe. ' வேதாக்ஷராணி யாவந்தி படிதாநி த்விஜாதிபி : I தாவந்தி ஹரிநாமாநி கீர்த்திதாநி ந ஸம்ஸய : II '. ' There is no doubt that whatever Vedic utterances are recited by the brahmins, are tantamount to singing the praise of Sri Hari 's names.' It is to drive home this truth that Brahmins start and end their Vedic recitation with the invocation " ஹரி : ஓம் ". As Sri Krishna has

declared in the Gita, (15-15) “ வேதைஸ்ச ஸர்வைரஹ்மேவ
வேத்ய :. “ “

By means of all the Vedas, I alone am to be known. “ Azhwar exhorts
all those who lack such Vedic knowledge, to lead themselves in the
light of the words of the knowledgeable ones and realise that recitation
of His names is the quintessence of the Vedas.

In another interpretation rendered by Sri Appillai, the underlying
meaning of the phrase, ' நாவினால் ஒத்து ' in the previous pasuram,
refers to the method of ' sa'dhana' bhakthi' described in the Vedanta'
encapsulated by the ' Thirumantra' ' and the ' prapathi ma'rga'
encapsulated by the ' Dvaya' mantra" meant for those not capable
of the 'sa'dhana' margā". Sri Pillai Lokachariar in his ' Sri Vachana
Bhushanam', has also echoed this interpretation, about the
bhakthiyoga embodied by ' Ashtakshara japa' as the ultimate essence
of Vedanta sa'ra. (ஒத்தின் பொருள் முடிவும் இத்தினயே). The
phrase ' மாதவன் பேர் சொல்லுவதே ஒத்தின் சுருக்கு ', has
been interpreted to mean the 'prapathi margā' embodied by the 'Dvaya
mantra'. 'Sutra's 41-50 of the same work may be referred to in this
context. ' மா' – 'லக்ஷ்மி ', ' மாதவன் ' – ' லக்ஷ்மிநாதன் '. '
மாதவன் பேர் ' has been taken to refer to ' Srīman Narayana ' at the
beginning of the 'Dvaya mantra' '.

சுருக்காக வாங்கிச் சுலாவிநின்று ஜயார்
நெருக்கமுன் நீர்நினமின் கண்டீர் -- திருப்பொலிந்த
ஆகத்தான் பாதமறிந்தும் அறியாத
போகத்தா லில்ல பொருள். 40

Before phlegmatic and other fluids begin to rack and waste
away the body, think of the Feet of the Lord adorned by Sri
on His chest. Sensual pleasures which delude even cultured
minds conversant with the greatness of His Feet, are without
any substance whatever.

“ப்ராணப்ரயாண ஸமயே கபவாத பித்தை: கண்டாவரோதந விதௌ ஸ்மரணம் குதஸ்தே” -- I (முகுந்தமாலை) ' When the throat is choked by phlegm, gas, and bile, and life itself is ebbing away how would we remember you ? ' asks Sri Kulasekhara Perumal.

திருப்பொலிந்த ஆகத்தான் - ' ஸ்ரத்தயா தேவோ தேவத்வமஸ்நு தே '. ' It is through Sraddha' - Mahalakshmi – that Deva Narayana attains His Supreme status.' ' வடிவாய் நின் வலமார்பினில் வாழ்கின்ற ' - (திருப்பல்லாண்டு). ' திகழ்கின்ற திருமார்பில் திருமங்கை தன்னோடும் திகழ்கின்ற திருமாலார் ', (திருவாய் – 10-6-9).

பொருளா லமருலகம் புக்கியல லாகாது
அருளா னறமருளு மன்றே -- அருளாலே
மாமறையோர்க் கீந்த மணிவண்ணன் பாதமே
நீமறவேல் நெஞ்சே நினை.

41

Paradise cannot be reached by worldly riches. It is the compassionate Lord's grace that can make it happen. Oh my heart, do not forget to meditate on the sacred Feet of the blue-complexioned Lord Who has given Himself to the realised souls.

பொருளால் அமருலகம் புக்கு இயலல் ஆகாது - Azhwar states the well-known, but seldom realised truth, that all our wealth cannot help us in any way beyond the portals of this world and life. In the previous pasuram the Azhwar declared ' போகத்தால் இல்லை பொருள் ', that is sensual desire, or ' ka'ma' is without any substance. In this pasuram, Azhwar observes that even the ' purushartham ' of ' artha', viz., material wealth does not fare much better in that respect.

அமருலகம் – Though in general parlance, this term might be taken to mean heaven, Azhwar obviously does not mean this, but the bliss

of Sri Vaikunta in the august company of nithya suris. What will render this within our reach? Azhwar replies, 'அருளான் அறம் அருளும் அன்றே '. It is the Lord's grace, that will bless us with the fruit of our dharma'. Azhwar's concluding advice to us is, ' அருளாலே மாமறையோர்க்கீந்த மணி வண்ணன் பாதமே நீ மறவேல் நெஞ்சே ' - ' மாமறையோர்- realised souls who yearn only for the bliss of proximity to the sacred Feet of the Lord, like Sri Suka', Va'madeva, Ma'rkandeya', etc.

நினைப்பன் திருமால் நீண்டதோள் காண
நினைப்பார் பிறப்பொன்றும் நேரார் -- மனைப்பால்
பிறந்தார் பிறந்தேய்தும் பேரின் பமெல்லாம்
துறந்தார் தொழுதாரத் தோள்.

42

May my thoughts dwell on the Lord of Sri, with a desire to behold His stately shoulders. They who cherish such a thought will not suffer the travail of repeated births. They who worship His shoulders, will view the lesser pleasures of worldly life with disdain.

திருமால் நினைப்பன் – The word ' திருமால் ', indicates that we should seek the Lord through the mediatrix of grace, the divine Mother.

' நீண்டதோள் காண ' - The stately shoulders of the Lord are the subject of repeated adoration. Thus, “ உத்திருதாஸி வராஹேண க்ருஷ்ணேந ஸதபாஹீநா “, (தை. நா.). “ Thou, (Bhu Devi) were lifted by Sri Varaha Bhagava'n, the repository of eternal bliss of one hundred arms.” “ தடம் பெரும் தோளாரத்தமுவும் பாரென்றும் மடந்தையை மால்”, (திருவாய்-மொ- 2-8-7.). ' Lord Who embraces Bhu Devi with big shoulders tingling in sheer joy. 'ப்ரஹ்ரஹ்யந்தம் மஹிஷீம் மஹாபுஜம் ' – (Stotra –Ratnam – 44). 'He Who hugs the delighted divine Mother with His broad shoulders'.

'மீனப்பால் பிறந்தார் பிறந்தெய்தும் பேரின் பம் ' - ' The pleasures of those who are born in this world.' Though Azhwar refers to these pleasures as 'பேரின் பம் ', it is obviously meant in a sardonic vein, as such pleasures are evanescent - ' சிற்றின் பம்'. They who are blessed with the vision of the beauty of Lord's shoulders, will view the worldly joys, however much commended as ' அத்தீன கோடி இன்பம் ', with scorn, because they fade in comparison to the beauty of His shoulders.' மாற்பால் மனஞ்சூழிய மங்கையர் தோள் கைவிட்டு ' - (முன் - திரு. - 14). The idea is that ' vaira'gya", the bent of mind that turns away from attachment to worldly pleasures is integral to realisation of the divine. As Swami Nammazhwar describes it, “ கடையறப் பாசங்கள் விட்டபின்னையன்றி அவனவை காண்கொடானே “, (திருவாய்-மொ - 8-2-8).

தோளிரண் டெட்டேழும் முன்றும் முடியீனத்தும்
தாளிரண்டும் வீழ்ச் சரந்துரந்தான் -- தாளிரண்டும்
ஆர்தொழுவார் பாத மவைதொழுவ தன்றே என்
சீர்கெழுதோள் செய்யுஞ் சிறப்பு.

43

The greatest good that my blessed shoulders can do me is to bow in reverence to the feet of the devotees who worship the sacred Feet of the Lord, He Who struck with arrows to chop down the twenty shoulders, and all ten heads and two legs of Ravana.

தோள் தொழவேண்டா அத்தோள் தொழுவார்
தாள்தொழுவின் – Azhwar says in this pasuram, that even if one does not directly prostrate to the shoulders of the Lord, if he bows down in reverence to the feet of the devotees of Narayana, he is assured of His blessing. ' Bha'gavatha nishtai ' is emphasized in this pasuram. “ ஸித்திர் பவதி வா நேதி ஸம்ஸயோச்யுத ஸேவிநாம் I ந ஸம்ஸயோஸ்தி தத் பக்த பரிசர்யாரதாத்மநாம்”. 'It is doubtful if devotees of Achyutha' will always attain liberation. But there is no shred of doubt in this as far as the servants of His devotees are concerned.' The same thought is echoed by Sri Thirumazhisai Pira'n,

' வேறுக ஏத்தி இருப்பாரை வெல்லுமே மற்றவரைச் சார்த்தியிருப்பார் தவம் ', (நான்- திருவந்- 18).

சிறந்தார்க் கெழுதுணையாம் செங்கண்மால் நாமம்
மறந்தாரை மானிடமா வையேன் -- அறந்தாங்கும்
மாதவனே யென்னும் மனம்படைத்து மற்றவன்பேர்
ஒதுவதே நாவினா லுள்ளு.

44

I will not look upon those human beings as deserving their birth as such, who have forgotten the name of the Lord with eyes resembling the red lotus, the sure passport to liberation of His savants. With a mind, that is forever fixed on Ma'dhavan, the embodiment of compassion, always think of reciting His names as the purpose of life.

மெதுணை ஆம் - the beacon light that guides us to our ultimate liberation. ' நயாமி பராம் கதிம் ', (வராஹசரமஸ்லோகம்). The Lord assures us in this, ' I will myself lead you on to the higher path '. What is the reason behind this protective concern ? Azhwar suggests that this springs from overwhelming love for us, like the love of the mother cow towards her calf. This is reflected in His eyes, the lotus-red eyes, - செங்கண்மால். ' மால்' – Lord of all beings, as also embodiment of overwhelming love and concern.

நாமம் மறந்தாரை மானிடமா வையேன் – ' I will not consider those who have forgotten His name as human beings '. Similar thought is expressed by Sri Thirumangai Azhwar. “ மானிடவர் அல்லரென்று அன் மனத்தே வைத்தேனே “ (பெரிய – திரு மொ. 11-7-9).

அறம் தாங்கும் மாதவன் – ' ஆந்ருஸம்ஸயம் பரோ தர்ம : ' – (ரா-ஸ 38 – 41). Compassion is the highest dharma. ' Ma'dhava' – Lord of Lakshmi,- indicates the mother's connection.

மற்று அவன் பேர் நாவினால் ஒதுவதே உள்ளு - Azhwar addresses his mind to internalise the constant ' na'ma japa'. 'பேர்'

here refers to the 'dvaya mantra" incorporating the Lord's name in association with divine Mother.

**உளதென் றிறுமாவா ருண்டில்லை யென்று
தளர்த லதனருகும் சாரார் -- அளவரிய
வேதத்தான் வேங்கடத்தான் விண்ணோர் முடிதோயும்
பாதத்தான் பாதம் பயின்று.** 45

They who are wedded to the sacred Feet of the Lord at Venkatam, the subject and substance of the unfathomable Vedas, in Whose sacred Feet the denizens of heaven rest their heads, are not inflated by the vanity of worldly riches, nor are they like others who lose their heart over losing what they had yesterday.

உளது அன்று இறுமாவார் - It is the general worldly trait to become possessive and vain about material riches. But the devotees of the Lord are an exception to this general rule.

உண்டு இல்லை அன்று தளர்தல் அதனருகும் சாரார் - Azhwar underscores the transience of material wealth by the phrase, 'உண்டு இல்லை ', and the misery it causes when it is lost. But the devotees of the Lord are nowhere near such run-of-the mill worldly beings. On the contrary, with minds firmly focused on the Lord's Feet, they are for ever immersed in thoughts about their devotion to the Lord. As Swami Nammazhwar says, 'நீனக்கும் நெஞ்சடையேன் அனக்கு ஆர் நிகர் நீள் நிலத்தே ' - (திருவாய்-மொ. 6-4-7). They only lose their heart when they experience separation from association with the divine. It is that experience that Swami Nammazhwar depicts beautifully in his ' உண்ணுஞ்சோறு ' decad, (திருவாய்-மொ. 6-7.), and ' துவளில் மாமணி ' (திருவாய். மொ. 6-5.). In pasuram 6-5-7 of the latter, Sri Nammazhwar wonders about that experience thus, ' முன்னம் நோற்ற விதி கொலோ முகில் வண்ணன் மாயங்கொலோ ... '. Is it the fruit of my past karma', or the design of the Lord ' (by virtue of His 'nirhetuka krupa").

அளவரிய வேதத்தான் – He Who is the subject and substance of the Vedas which cannot be fathomed by anyone. 'வேதேஸ்ஸஸ்வைரஹமேவ வேத்ய:', (Gita 15-15). ' I am the One Who is known by all the Vedas.

பயின்ற தரங்கம் திருக்கோட்டி பன்னுள்
பயின்றதுவும் வேங்கடமே பன்னுள் -- பயின்ற
தணிதிகழும் சோலை யணிநீர் மலையே
மணிதிகழும் வண்டடக்கை மால்.

46

The Supreme Lord with long, magnificent arms, and resembling the resplendent blue ocean, abides from time immemorial in Thiruvaram and Thirukkottiyur. He also resides for long at Venkatam, and in beautiful Thiruneermalai set amidst lovely gardens.

In the previous pasuram, Sri Bhutat Azhwar described the blessed state of Sriman Narayana's devotees untainted by the temptations and frustrations of material life. In this pasuram, Azhwar describes the unremitting striving that the Lord undertakes for achieving this by His constant presence in all divyadesa's beckoning His devotees, and assuring them of His grace.

பன்னுள் பயின்றது – Unlike the shortlived ' Vibhava'vata'ra's ', the Lord is forever present in these divyadesa's in archa' state for conferring His grace on us. Thiruvaram hailed as Bhulokavaikunta is the shrine where the Lord is in a reclining state, and in Whose praise all Azhwars have sung except Sri Madhurakavi who sang only about his own Master Swami Nammazhwar. Swami Desikan has extolled the undiminishing grace of this abode of Sri Ranganatha, in the words ' ஆராத அருளமுதம் பொதிந்த கோயில் ' In Thirukkottiyur, the Lord can be seen in all three states, viz., in a recumbent, seated, and standing state. Sri Thirumangai Azhwar, in his own ornate style

addresses the Lord here thus, 'குன்றின் முல்லையின் வாசமும் குளிர் மல்லிகை மணமும் அனைந்து, இளந் தென்றல் வந்துலவும் திருக்கோட்டியூரானே' - (பெ-திரு. 9-10-7.). In Thiruneermalai the Lord appears in rare four states, viz., reclining, seated, standing, and strident. 'நின்றுனிருந்தான் கிடந்தான் நடந்தாற்கு இடம் மாமலையாவது நீர்மலையே' - (பெ-திரு. 2-4-1.). In Thiruvengkattam, the Lord appears in a standing posture, exuding beneficent grace, at Whose Feet Swami Nammazhwar exhorts us to seek sarana'gathi, with the assurance of 'moksha prada'na' in the 'phala'sruti' pasuram of "உலகமுண்ட பெருவாயா 'with the words, 'அடக்கீழ்மர்ந்து புகுந்து அடீயீர் வாழ்மின்றருள் கொடுக்கும் படிக்கேழில்லாப்பெருமான்', the Lord Who is of unequalled, incomparable glory, (திருவாய்-மொ. 6-10).

**மாலை யரியுருவன் பாதமல ரணிந்து
காலை தொழுதெழுமின் கைகோலி - - ஞாலம்
அளந்திடந் துண்குமிழ்ந்த வண்ணலை மற்றல்லால்
உளங்கிடந்த வாற்றா லுணர்ந்து.**

47

Arise to worship my Master at dawn, with folded hands and with flowers placed at His Feet, and heart overflowing with fervour for His presence, He Who protected this universe, variously, by scaling, lifting, ingesting and recreating every aeon, and Who in one such incarnation, materialised as Lord Nrsimha.

Azhwar exhorts us to show our gratitude to the Lord for His visible presence and eagerness to confer His grace on us, by worshipping His sacred Feet.

காலை கைகோலி தொழுது - Arise, (and seek your liberation), and worship Him at dawn with folded hands.

ஞாலம் அளந்து - refers to the act of measuring the worlds, in Trivikamavata'ra'.

இடந்து - lifting up of the earth from under the ocean in Sri Varaha'vata'ra'.

உண்புமிழ்ந்த - safe-keeping of the world inside the stomach at pralaya' and regurgitating it after it.

அண்ணலை – Master of the universe, as repeatedly authenticated by these astonishing episodes. As Swami Nammazhwar observes,' உண்டும் உமிழ்ந்தும், கடந்தும், இடந்தும், கிடந்தும், நின்றும், கொண்ட கோலத்தோடு வீற்றிருந்தும், மணங்கூடியும், கண்டவாற்றால் தனதே உலகென நின்றான்'-(திருவாய்-மொ.4-5-10.).

உளங்கிடந்த ஆற்றல் உணர்ந்து தொழுது அழுமின் - Azhwar beseeches us to worship the Lord with all the feeling and fervour that our hearts are capable of, in grateful thought about His melting concern for His devotees as demonstrated by Him in Sri Nrsimha'va'ta'ra'.

உணர்ந்தாய் மறைநான்கு மோதினாய் நீதி

மணந்தாய் மலர்மகள்தோள் மாலே -- மணந்தாய்போய்

வேயிருஞ் சாரல் வியலிரு ஞாலஞ்சூழ்

மாயிருஞ் சோலை மலை.

48

Oh the Compassionate One, You bring the Vedas to light. You set the order and explicate the truths contained in them. You remain in the constant company of the lotus-born Mother. You reside in the enchanting Thirumalirunjolai covered by vast corridors of bamboo, and circumambulated by denizens of this land.

உணர்ந்தாய் மறைநான்கும் -- Azhwar says that the Lord uncovers the eternal Vedas, and brings them to light at every dawn of life on this planet, thus recognising the fact that vedas have no authorship as such, and that even Narayana did not author them but only rediscovered them for our benefit.

ஒதினாய் நீதி – 'நீதி' refers to the 'upabrahmana's', the smṛithi, itihāsa puraṇa's which throw light on the substance and philosophy of the Vedas. These have been authored by sages like Sri Va'lmiki, Veda Vya'sa', Para'sara, Suka etc., with the Lord as their 'antarya'mi'.

'நயதீதி நீதி : ' - The spirit and substance of the Vedas is enlightened by the truths contained in these works.

மலர்மகள் தோள் மணந்தாய் -- Azhwar 's phrase visualises the shoulders of the lotus-born Sri resting on the chest of Narayana in Srivaikunta. “வைகுண்டே து பரே லோகே ஸ்ரீயா ஸர்த்தம் ஜகத்பதி : I ஆஸ்தே விஜ்ஞூரசிந்த்யாத்மா பக்தைர் பாகவதை : ஸஹ II “ “The Lord of the universe Narayana presides over the exalted sphere of Srivaikunta along with Divine Mother surrounded by devotees.”

இரு ஞாலஞ்சூழ் மாயிருஞ் சோலைமலைபோய் - - Inhabitants of this earth circumambulate Thirumalirunjolai surrounded by vast verdant gardens, and groves of bamboo. 'மாலிருஞ்சோலை வலஞ் செய்து நாளும் மருவுதல் வழக்கே ', (திருவாய்- மொ. 2-10-8.). Sri Nammazhwar commends the beauty of the hills of this divya desa' dotted by gardens, in a similar vein.

**மலையேழும் மாநிலங்க ளேழு மதிர
குலகூழ் குரைகடல்க ளேழும் -- முலகூழ்ந்த
நஞ்சுரத்துப் பெண்ணை நவின்றுண்ட நாவனென்று
அஞ்சாதென் னெஞ்சே யழை.** 49

Oh my heart, nestle upto Him without fear, the sweet-tongued Lord, Who shook the seven big mountains, the seven continents and the seven seas, by sucking the life out of Putana' of poison-smeared breasts, lisping appreciatively while drinking.

நவின்றுண்ட – refers to the appreciative lisping sounds made by a child in the act of drinking mother's milk. ' ஒக்கலை வைத்து முலைப்பால் உண்ணென்று தந்திட ' (திருவாய்- மொ. 1-9-5.). ' பேய்ச்சி பெருமுலையுருயிரை வற்ற வாங்கி உண்டவாயான் ', (பெ- திரு. 1-3-1). Azhwar reassures us in this pasuram that if we remember Putana' story, we donot have any cause for fear.

அழைப்பன் திருமால் யாங்கவர்கள் சொன்ன
பிழைப்பில் பெரும்பெயரே பேசி -- இழைப்பரிய
வாயவனே யாதவனே யென்றவனை யார்முகப்பும்
மாயவனே யென்று மதித்து.

50

'Oh the Scion of Yadukula', the difficult-to-imagine child of the shepherd clan, the dazzling Performer of unbelievable deeds,'
- with aforesaid thoughts resonating in me, I will call the Lord of Sri before everyone by the names that the blessed Gopis addressed Him in Gokulam, the very exalted names that cut asunder the gordian knot of samsa'ra'.

பெரும் பெயரே பேசி – Azhwar yearns to call the Lord not by the common names that connote His transcendence or 'parathvam', such as Narayana, but the exalted names that denote the 'soulabhya' and 'sousheelya', the accessibility and condescension of the Lord. What are these names ? Azhwar recounts, ' **இழைப்பரிய ஆயவனே**'. **இழைப்பரிய** - difficult to comprehend by one's own effort. ' **ஆயவன்** - member of the cattle-grazing clan. Swami Nammazhwar describes in a similar vein, 'யாரும் ஒர் நிலையென அன அறிவரிய அம்பெருமான்' - (திருவாய்-மொ. 1-3-4.).

யாதவனே - Son of Vasudeva of Yadukula'.

யார் முகப்பும் – in front of everyone. Lest one should wonder if it is appropriate to utter the names of Lord that denote only His simplicity and condescending grace, Azhwar adds another name to the list, ' **மாயவனே அன்று மதித்து அழைப்பன்**', the wonder kid of incredible deeds. ' Thus, I will respectfully address Him', says the Azhwar.

மதிக்கண்டாய் நெஞ்சே மணிவண்ணன் பாதம்
மதிக்கண்டாய் மற்றவன் பேர்தன்னே -- **மதிக்கண்டாய்**
பேராழிநின்று பெயர்ந்து கடல் கடைந்த
நீராழி வண்ணன் நிறம்.

51

Oh my heart, meditate on the sacred Feet of the Lord with the complexion of the blue ocean. Meditate on His exalted names. Meditate also on the blue complexion of Him Who once left His abode on the milk ocean to churn the oceans.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar lingers here to pause and ponder over the Lord, in slow unhurried steps, as if undecided as to how best it might be accomplished to gratify his inner craving. First, he addressed his heart to dwell on the sacred Feet of the Lord. Then he shifted the focal point of his 'dhya'na' to the great many names of the Lord. In this pasuram, he is drawn by the beauty of the Lord's complexion, and addresses his heart to meditate on that.

**நிறங்கரியன் செய்ய நெடுமலரான் மார்வன்
அறம்பெரிய னாரதறிவார் --மறம்புரிந்த
வாளர்க்கன் போல்வான் வானவர்கோன் தானத்து
நீளிருக்கைக் குய்த்தான் நெறி.** 52

My Lord resembling the rain-bearing black cloud, with chest adorned by the Divine Mother, Whose abode is the big lotus flower, is a tower of grace. How can anyone fathom the magnanimity of Him Who merely condemned the culpable Mahabali, no less a demon than Ravana, to exile in the nether world for his errant ways, eventually rewarding him with Indra lokha'.

நிறம் கரியன் - of black complexion. “ நீலதோயத மத்யஸ்தா வித்யுல்லேகேவ பாஸ்வரா “, (நாராயண-ஸூக்தம்). ' நீலமுண்ட மின்னன்ன மேனிப்பிரான் ' - (திருவிருத்தம் -29).

நெடுமலரான் மார்வன் - He Whose chest is adorned by the presence of Mahalakshmi.

அறம் பெரியன் - ' Who is like a tower of grace.' ' ஆந்ருஸம்ஸ்யம் பரோ தர்ம: ' (ரா- ஸந்திர 38-41). ' Compassion is the greatest

dharma'. Sita Devi reports having heard this from Sri Rama Himself. The Lord is the fountainhead of grace because of His constant association with Divine Mother.

வாளாக்கன் - refers to Ravana who wields the sword given him by Rudra'. Why did the Lord let Mahabali get away with a milder punishment of exile to the nether world, when he deserved, like Ravana, to be killed. It was because Ravana had no redeeming quality whatever, whereas Mahabali had one great quality of a charitable disposition, despite his numerous other faults. As Sri Parasara Bhagava'n observes in Vishnu Puranam, (5-17-30), ' யத்ராம்பு விந்யஸ்ய பலிர் மனோஜ்ஞாந் அவாப போகாத் வஸ்தாலஸ்த: I ததாமரத்வம் த்ரிதஸாதி பத்வம் மந்வந்தரம் பூர்ணமபேத ஸத்ரு 'II 'By offering water on That sacred Hand, Mahabali attained all joys in this world itself, and further achieved without any adversaries for a whole aeon the coveted sovereignty as the ruler of all the three worlds.'. Who can fathom the greatness of the Lord Who made all this possible?, queries the Azhwar, in this pasuram.

**நெறியார் குழல்கற்றை முன்னின்று பின்தாழ்ந்து
அறியா திளங்கிரியென் றெண்ணி -- பிரியாது
பூங்கொடிகள் வைகும் பொருபுனல் குன்றென்னும்
வேங்கடமே யாம்விரும்பும் வெற்பு.**

53

It is Thiruvengkattam of rustling streams in full flow,- where along the winding paths, ascetics sit rooted in 'sama'dhi ', with profuse locks knotted and dangling on the back of their heads, like small mounds of earth around which creepers spread all the year round, - that is our coveted destination.

நெறியார் – In Azhwar's imagery, the pious devotees sitting in silent meditation on the Lord along the winding path to Thirumalai, appear transfixed to terra firma as if enmeshed with the trodden path. Refer to Sri Kulasekhara Peruman's thought on similar lines echoing the greatness of this place. “வெறியார் தண்சோலை

திருவேங்கடமலைமேல் நெறியாய்க்கிடக்கும் நிலையுடையேனாவேனே
“, (பெருமாள்-திரு. - 4-8.).

குழல் கற்றைஅறியாது இளங்கிரி அன்று அண்ணி - To the Azhwar's fertile imagination, the profuse locks of hair knotted at the back of the 'sa'dhus' heads, are mistakenly overrun by the spreading creepers on the hillside to become a part of the surrounding landscape of boulders, since the 'sa'dhus' sit motionless in the intensity of their meditation.

வேங்கடமே யாம் விரும்பும் வெற்பு - Thiruvencatam is our coveted mountain. Refer to Sri Thirumazhisai Piran's 'வெற்பென்று வேங்கடம் பாடினேன் ', (நான் - திரு. 40).

**வெற்பென் றிருஞ்சோலை வேங்கடமென் றிவ்விரண்டும்
நிற்பென்று நீமதிக்கும் நீர்மைபோல் - - நிற்பென்
றுளங்கோயி லுள்ளம்வைத் துள்ளினேன் வெள்ளத்
திலங்கோயில் கைவிடே லென்று.** 54

Even as You graciously descended upon the sacred hills of Thirumalirunjolai and Thiruvencatam, making them Your favourite abodes, You now regard Your shrine in my heart as a favoured residence. On that score, do not ever forsake Your abode of the surging milk ocean. This is my humble prayer.

Although there are several hills, only Thirumalirunjolai and Thirumalai are looked upon as most sacred because of their association with the Lord, Who had made them His favoured abodes in order to attract devotees. But after the Azhwar started describing these hills in endearing terms, the Lord finding Azhwar's heart so very inviting, has made that His favourite shrine. Azhwar pleads with the Lord not to give up His other shrines on that score. “ திருமாலிருஞ்சோலை மலையே திருப்பாற்கடலே யென் தலையே, திருமால் வைகுந்தமே தண் திருவேங்கடமே யெனதுடலே, அருமா மாயத்தென துயிரே

மனமே வாக் கேகருமமே, ஒருமாநொடியும் பிரியான்
 என்னுழிமுதல்வன் ஒருவனே. (திருவாய்.மொ.-10-7-8.). '
 கல்லும் கனகடலும் வைகுந்த வாளுமடும்புல்லென்
 றெழிந்தனகொல் ஏபாவம் – வெல்ல நெடியான் நிறம் கரியான்
 உள்புகுந்து நீங்கான், அடியேன துள்ளத்தகம். (பெ-திருவ -68.).
 'நாகத்தீணக் குடந்தை வெ.'.காத்திருவெவ்வுள், நாகத்தீண
 யரங்கம் பேரன்பில் – நாகத்தீணப் பாற்கடல் கிடக்கு மாத்ரி
 நெடுமால் அணைப்பார் கருத்தனாவான் . (நான்-திரு. 36).

'பனிக்கடலில் பள்ளி கோளப் பழகவிட்டு ஒடிவந்தென் ,
 மனக்கடலில் வாழவல்ல மாயமனா நம்பீ, தனிக்கடலே தனிச்சுடரே
 தனியுலகையென்றென்று, உனக்கிடமாயிருக்க அன்னை யுனக்குரித்
 தாக்கினையே. ' (பெரியாழ்-திருமொ. 5-4-9.).

The 'vyuhasthala's' of 'Paramapada', 'Kshirirabdi', and 'arcasthala's'
 like Thirumalai are designed to enlist devotees, but after the devotees
 are gained, the Lord finds the fulfilment of the former shrines in the
 heart of the devotee, thereby making the latter the more favoured
 abode to the Lord. This is the implicit derivative in the usage by
 Azhwar of the phrase, ' இளங்கோயில் கைவிடேல் '. ' Do not
 give up the 'bha'la'layam'. 'Bha'la'layam', in contemporary parlance,
 refers to a provisional sanctum where the 'utsava' deities are kept
 when the main sanctum is under renovation etc.

' உளங்கோயில் ' - the shrine of the devotee's heart. “ ஹ்ருதயம்
 தத் விஜாநீயாத் விஸ்வஸ்யாயதநம் மஹத் “, (நா- ஸ்). Nara'yana
 Suktham speaks of the devotee's heart, as the big shrine. Azhwar's
 plea with the Lord stems from his concern that the Lord should not
 give up on the other shrines, after finding the niche of the devotee's
 heart more appealing than divya desa's. His concern is rooted in his
 sense of profound gratitude to these shrines for making this happen.
 His mention of the milk ocean is more illustrative. It applies to other
 abodes of the Lord also.

என்று மறந்தறியே னேழ்பிறப்பு மெப்போதும்
நின்று நினைப்பொழியா நீர்மையால் -- வென்றி
அடலாழி கொண்ட வறிவனே இன்பக்
கடலாழி நீயருளிக் காண்.

55

Oh my Omniscient Master, holding the chakra' that is ever triumphant in battles. I had never forgotten You through the cycle of repeated births in view of Your steadfast and ever thoughtful compassion. Grant me that I may now immerse in the ocean of everlasting bliss.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar expresses his gratitude to the Lord, for blessing him with the thought of the Lord through the successive births, and prays to Him to bless him further with the fruit of his 'sa'dhana' in the shape of everlasting bliss. Azhwar, in a typically egoless spirit, attributes his own practice of constant remembrance, ('த்ருவாநுஸ்மருதி ') to Sriman Narayana Who caused the Azhwar to remember Him always, by abiding with him in his thought.

நின்று நினைப்பொழியா நீர்மை - ' grace of constant remembrance'. Similar thought is expressed by Sri Thrumazhisai Piran, ' பரந்தசிந்தை யொன்றிநின்று நின்னபாத பங்கயம் நிரந்தரம் நினைப்பதாக நீநினைக்க வேண்டுமே.' - (திருச்-விருத்தம் - 101). Refer also to Swami Nammazhwar 's lines, ' நின்றாழியுழிதொறும் அதிர் சூழல்புக்கெனைத்தோர்பிறப்பும் அனக்கேயருள்கள் செய்ய', (திருவாய். மொ. - 2-7-6.).

Azhwar adds that the Lord himself must further remove the obstacles in the way of realising the fruit of his bhakthi, and grant him everlasting bliss, for is He not holding the mighty Sudarsana' assuring unfailing success in the obliteration of obstacles, however formidable ?

இன்பக்கடலாழி - ocean of everlasting bliss. இன்பக்கடலாழி நீயருளிக் காண் - "ஏஹ ஹ்யேவாநந்தயாதி", (தை-ப்ரஹ்மானந்தவல்லி - 7-1.). ' This Paramapurusha causes the jiva' to attain bliss. '

காணக்கழி காதல் கை மிக்குக்காட்டினால்
நாணப் படுமென்றால் நானுமே -- பேணிக்
கருமாலப் பொன்மேனி காட்டாமுன் காட்டும்
திருமால நங்கள் திரு.

56

When the passion for His vision grows out of hand, how shall one exercise self-restraint, in order not to appear impatient ? Do not despair. Even before the Lord chooses to bless us with the vision of His golden form, the Divine Mother is ever eager to hasten that process.

காணக்கழி காதல் – Desire can be assuaged only by (His) vision. 'கண்ணாரக்கண்டு கழிவதோர் காதல்' – (திரு-விரு .97).
கைமிக்குக்காட்டினால் – If it begins to grow out of hand.
நாணப்படும் அன்றல் நானுமே – Is it possible to rein in that desire in order not to appear overly restless ? The implication is that the jiva' (beloved) in conformity with ' paratantra' svarupa" must wait for the Master (Paramapurusha') to take her in His fold, and not run wild in despair; in the spirit of Sita's calm and dignified self-restraint. “ தத் தஸ்ய ஸத்ருஸம் பவேத் “, (ரா – ஸ – 39-30).”
“My protection is His role.”

காட்டும் நங்கள்திரு - Azhwar's phrase underscores Divine Mother's ' purushaka'ra" role in representing our case before the Lord, with words such as, “ ந கஸ்சித் நாபராத்யதி “, (ரா-யு . 116-44.). “ There is none who is free from faults.”

திருமங்கை நின்றருளுந் தெய்வம் நாவாழ்த்தும்
கருமங் கடைப்பிடிமின் கண்டீர் -- ஁ரிமையால்
ஏத்தினோம் பாத மிருந்தடக்கை யெந்தைபேர்
நாற்றிசையுங் கேட்டிரே நாம்.

57

Hear ye in all four directions, hold steadfast to the practice of singing the praise of the gracious Lord blessed by Divine Mother, abiding with Him for ever. Let us rightly sing the praise of the sacred Feet of our Master endowed with beautiful long hands.

திருமங்கை நின்றருளும் தெய்வம் - The Divine Mother confers all graces on the Lord by virtue of Her association.

திரு - Sri “ஸ்ரீரித்யேவ ச நாம தே பகவதி ப்ரும: கதம் த்வாம் வயம் “- (Sri Alavanda's Chtusloki). ' Sri is Your name. How shall we speak of You '? As the various Vedic declarations such as Purusha Suktham etc., speak of the 'Param' as the Lord of Sri, it is the blessing of Her constant presence that establishes the ' Param'. “**அபாங்கா பூபாம்ஸோ யதுபரி பரம் ப்ரஹ்ம ததபூத்** “ – “ The principle on which fell the Mother's many graces turned into ' Param. “ As Sri Parasara Bhattar says, “**வேதாந்தாஸ் தத்வ சிந்தாம் முரபிதுரஸி யத்பாதசிஹ்நைஸ் தரந்தி** “ . “ Whose footprints rest in Sri Murari's chest after taking cognizance of which the Vedanta's round up their philosophical inquiry.” Swami Nammazhwar describes the association in the following terms, '**அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று அலர்மேல் மங்கை உறை மார்பன்.**' (திருவாய்-மொ. 6-10-10.).

Sri Thirumazhisai Piran addresses the Lord as '**திருவிருந்த மார்வன் சிரீதரன்** ', ('நான்முகன் – திரு .-62). Azhwar drives home the truth, that it is the Lord of Sri Who is the Supreme Being, not other gods. '**திருவில்லாத்தேவரைத்தேறேல் மின்தேவு** ' - ('நான்முகன் – திரு .- 53). 'Do not consider as Lord those who have no connection whatever to Sri.'

நாம்பெற்ற நன்மையும் நாமங்கை நன்னெஞ்சத்து ஒம்பி யிருந்தெம்மை யோதுவித்து -- வேம்பின் பொருள் நீர்மை யாயினும் பொன்னுழி பாடென்று அருள் நீர்மை தந்த வருள் .

58

Though singing the Lord's praise may be akin to the taste of neem, the goddess of learning Sarasvati has favoured us by residing in our heart, urging us to sing about the Lord with the golden chakra', and endowing us with this ability. This poetic inspiration is due to the grace of the compassionate Lord.

நாமங்கை – goddess Sarasvati, hailed as 'வாக்தேவி', in the Veda's. Azhwar observes in this pasuram, that his poetic skill was the gift of Sarasvati having chosen the Azhwar's good heart, as the appropriate instrument to sing the praise of the Lord. How did the goddess of learning choose Azhwar's heart for conferring this favour? It was because the Azhwar enjoyed the special grace of Sriman Narayana, since the time he was in the womb of his mother, as gratefully acknowledged by the Azhwar later on in the work. 'கருக்கோட்டியுள் கிடந்து கை தொழுதேன் கண்டேன் திருக்கோட்டியெந்தை திரும்' (87). ' I worshipped Him as a foetus in the womb, seeing for myself the grace of the presiding deity of Thirukkottiyur. '

வேம்பின் பொருள் நீர்மையாயினும் பொன்னுழி பாடென்று ஒதுவித்து - Why does the Azhwar compare singing the praise of the Lord to the taste of something as unpalatable as neem ? ; although the Lord's name is usually described as something indescribably sweet, as for instance in the words of Swami Nammazhwar, 'தேனும் பாலும் நெய்யும் கன்னலும் அமுதும் ஒத்தே' – (திருவாய் – மொ. – 2-3-1). It is to demonstrate that this contrary reaction is the result of the cumulative residue of tendencies built up over timeless births, or, in other words, our samska'ra's' which are not easy to shed.

அருள்புரிந்த சிந்தை யடியார்மேல் வைத்து பொருள்தெரிந்து காண்குற்ற வப்போது -- இருள்திரிந்து நோக்கினேன் நோக்கி நினைந்தேன் தொண்கமலம் ஒக்கினே னென்னயுமங் கோர்ந்து.

59

When the Lord cast His benevolent glance at us, His devotees, showering on us the grace of constant remembrance, making some substance out of mere straw, my ignorance dispelled, I looked closely at the reality of God and Self, and meditated on His Feet resembling the lotus flower. I then offered my soul to those feet without a thought of any other recourse.

பொருள்தெரிந்து - making substance out of straw, 'பொருளல்லாத அன்னப் பொருளாக்கி அடி மை கொண்டாய் ', (திருவாய்-மொ.5-7-3.).

காண்குற்ற வப்போது - When the Lord cast His compassionate glance. 'யம் பஸ்யேத் மதுஸூதந : ' - Whom Madhusudana' beholds. **இருள் திரிந்து நோக்கினேன்** - With the veil of 'aviveka' lifting, the knowledge of the connection between the self and Brahman dawned.' ஸ்வத்வமாத்மநி ஸஞ்ஜாதம் ஸ்வாமித்வம் ப்ரஹ்மணி ஸ்திதம் ' - The soul has the quality of being owned. Brahman has the quality of being the owner. '

ஒர்ந்து - - 'Reflecting over the 'parathantram' of the self to the Lord.' **அங்கு ஒக்கினேன்** - - I offered myself to those Feet, realising them as the Way. ' த்வமேவோபாயபூதோ மே பவதி ப்ரார்த்தநாமதி : ஸ்ரணாகதி : ' - -" The prayerful mind steeped in His thought as ' The Way ' is in a state of total surrender."

ஒருருவ னல்ல யொளியுருவம் நின்னுருவம்
ஈருருவ னென்ப ரிருநிலத்தோர் -- ஒருருவம்
ஆதியாம் வண்ண மறிந்தாரவர் கண்டீர்
நீதியால் மண்காப்பார் நின்று.

60

Oh Lord, Yours is not just the face of the Supreme Deity, your essential nature is the effulgent expression of being the constant support of your devotees. The beings of this great earth visualise You as the transcendental reality. It is however, those who understand You as the incomparable repository of redeeming grace, who will truly and for long help conserve this world.

ஒருருவனல்ல -- Azhwar explains in this pasuram the common perception of the Creator, as a Being distinct from all other sentient beings, in accord with the Upanishadic statement, ' நித்யோ நித்யாநாம் சேதநஸ்சேதநாநாம் ஏகோ பஹூநாம் யோ விததாதி காமாந், (சுட 2-5-13.). ' The immortal Being among other immortals, the Conscious Self, Who is the Dispenser of desired fruits. ' ' நதே ரூபம் ந சாகாரோ நாயுதாநி ந சாஸ்பதம் I ததாபி புருஷாகாரோ பக்தாநாம் த்வம் ப்ரகாஸஸே II (ஜிதந்தே)'Neither countenance, nor figure, nor arms, nor abode exists for You..Even so as the goal and support of devotees, You shine in the brilliance of all the above.'

ஈருருவனென்பர் இருநிலத்தோர் - - ' The denizens of this big earth, unaware of the aforesaid quality as your distinguishing characteristic, however, look upon You only as the Supreme Self, inaccessible and difficult to reach.

நீதியால் மண்காப்பார் - - ' Will live long and safeguard this world.' ' வையம் மன்னி வீற்றிருந்து விண்ணும் ஆள்வர் மண்ணூடே ', (திருவாய் -மொ. 4-3-11.).

நின்றதோர் பாதம் நிலம்புதைப்ப நீண்டதோள்
சென்றளந்த தென்பர் திசையெல்லாம் -- அன்று
கருமானியா யிரந்த கள்வனே உன்னைப்
பிரமாணித்தார் பெற்ற பேறு.

61

A long time ago, as a small dark brahmin boy, when You deceptive contriver, asked for the gift of three steps of land, one Foot that supposedly stood on the land filled this earth in a trice, and your towering shoulders traversed in all directions, so say the learned ones. That was a big grace that the faithful ones received from You, Oh Lord.

Sri Bhutat Azhwar illustrates the 'a'srithapa'rathanriyam' described by him in the previous pasuram, by citing Sri Vamanavata'ram in this pasuram.

அன்று – The day a long time ago, when Indra came wailing the loss of his kingdom to Mahabali.

நின்றதோர் பாதம் நிலம் புதைப்ப – At the very instant that the designing Lord asked for the gift of three steps of land of Mahabali, one Foot of the Lord had already filled out the entire expanse of this earth. 'கரே நிபதிதே தோயே வாமநோ பூத வாமந : '. The moment the symbolic offering of water in token of the granting of the gift by Mahabali, fell on the outstretched hand of the diminutive Brahmin, He metamorphosed into Trivikrama filling all directions.

நீண்டதோள் திசையெல்லாம் சென்று அளந்ததென்பர் – 'யஸ்யோருஷ் த்ரீவிக்ரமணேஷ் அதிகூடியந்தி புவநாநி விஸ்வா' – (Vishnusuktham), - 'in Whose three giant strides, all the worlds were encompassed'.

உன்'னப் பிரமாணித்தார் பெற்ற பேறு – This deed was not only to favour Indra but an act of grace to all those who live by their faith in the Lord.

**பேறென்று முன்னறியேன் பெற்றறியேன் பேதைமையால்
மாறென்று சொல்லி வணங்கினேன் -- ஏறின்
பெருத்தெருத்தங் கோடொசியப் பெண்ணசையின் பின்போய்
எருத்திறுத்த நல்லாய ரேறு.** 62

I bowed in prayer to Krishna the Supreme Leader of the Ya'dava' clan, Who drawn by love towards Nila Devi, performed the feat of breaking the horns of the bulls set as wager for her hand. In my ignorance, I had been oblivious of this bliss divine and the sad loser for this.

Azhwar drives home the point that it is the Lord, Who is the dispeller of the veil of ignorance that makes us lose sight of, and miss, the lasting bliss of ' bhagavadhanubhavam ', since this is rooted in the fruits of our action, and the underlying cause of chronic and inseparable association with ' prakriti', (nature).

'ஜ்ஞாநாத் மோக்ஷ : அஜ்ஞாநாத் ஸம்ஸார : ' - ' moksha is attained by wisdom, worldly bondage is caused by ignorance.'

As Sri Krishna declares in the Gita, “ குணமயீ மம மாயா தூரத்யயா I மாமேவ யே ப்ரபத்யந்தே மாயாமேதாம் தரந்தி தே “ II (Gita 7-14). ' This delusive power of Mine which is of three-fold guna's, is difficult to cross. Those who surrender themselves exclusively unto Me cross over this 'ma'ya". For this, His compassion and blessing is essential. Hence Azhwar exhorts us to surrender ourselves at His lotus Feet as he himself has done in saying ' வணங்கினேன் '.

பெண்நசை - This does not signify lust towards women, but the inseparable love between 'jiva'thma' - 'parama'thma'.

ஏறேழும் வென்றடர்ந்த வெந்தை அரியுருவத்
தேறேறி பட்ட விருசாபம் -- பாறேறி
யுண்டதீல வாய்நிறையக் கோட்டங்கை யொண்குருதி
கண்டபொருள் சொல்லில் கதை. 63

The story of how my Master Who had subdued and eliminated the seven bulls, filled blood from His own hand, into the raw skeletal head – swarmed around by scavenger vultures, - stuck in the hand of fire-like red-complexioned, bull – riding Siva, to liberate him from his curse, is a long one to relate.

ஏறேழும் வென்றடர்த்த அந்தை – the Lord Who as Krishna had subdued and killed the seven bulls set as wager for winning the hand of ' Nappinnai Pira'tti '.

அரி உருவத்து – Siva who is red-complexioned like fire. ' தழல்நிற வண்ணன் – (பெரிய- திரு. 6-1-2.). ' உருவம் அரி ' – (முதல் – திருவ . -5).

பட்ட இருசாபம் – refers to the sin of 'brahma-hathi dosha' ', suffered by Siva, for cutting off one of the heads of Brahma. Sri Thirumazhisai Piran relates the same two incidents described by the Azhwar in this pasuram, in the following lines. ' வேறிசைந்த செக்கர்மேனி நீறணிந்த புன்சடைக்கீறுதிங்கள் வைத்தவன் கைவைத்து அவன் கபால் மிசை ஊறு செங்குருதியால் நிறைத்த காரணந்தனை ஏறு சென்றடர்த்த ஈச பேசுகுசமின்றியே ' – (திருச்சந்த – விரு. – 42).

பாறு ஏறி உண்ட தலை வாய் நிறைய – The ' brahma-kapa'lam' stuck in the hand of Siva and used as a begging bowl, was swooped on by vultures which competed with him for food from the same receptacle. One can visualise his agony. As sri Thirumazhisai Piran describes his plight, ' வெண்தலைப் புலன் கலங்க உண்ட பாதகத்தன் வன் துயர் ', (திருச்சந்த – விரு. 13).-

சொல்லில் கதை - - ' if related, will end up as a long story.' This story has been narrated in Chapter 182 of Ma'tsya Pura'nam.

**கதையின் பெரும்பொருளும் கண்ணாநின் பேரே
இதய மிருந்தவையே யேத்தில் -- கதையும்
திருமொழியாய் நின்ற திருமாலே உன்னைப்
பருமொழியால் காணப்பணி.**

64

Oh my Master Krishna, if one prays to You in the light of the substance and spirit of the epics, such prayers address only your name. Lord of Sri, the very embodiment of the eternal scriptures, bless me that I may experience You in the resounding Vedic notes.

Since in the previous pasuram, Sri Bhutat Azhwar spoke of the epic stories, in this pasuram Azhwar affirms that the substance and spirit of the epics is to glorify the Lord's names.

கதையின் பெரும் பொருளும் நின் பேரே - The itiha'sa pura'na's only speak of the Lord's name and glory, (bhagavad-vaibhava and na'ma-sankirtana') in the form of stories.

கண்ணு நின் பேரே - - Even in these stories, it is not those that speak of His 'parathvam', or 'vyuha" or other avata'rs that constitute the core substance of the epics, but those relating to the felicitous simplicity and all-round accessibility of the Lord.

கதையும் திருமொழியாய் நின்ற திருமாலே - - Lord of Sri Who is the substance of the resounding Vedic notes. 'வேதேஸ்ஸ ஸர்வைரஹமேவ வேத்ய : ' (Gita 15-15). ' By means of all the Veda's, I only am to be known. ' ' ஸத்யம் ஸத்யம் புநஸ்த்யம் உத்த்ருத்ய புஜிமுச்ச்யதே I வேதாச்சாஸ்த்ரம் பரம் நாஸ்தி ' I ' Solemnly affirming three times with hand raised, I declare that there is no greater treatise than the Veda's.'

திருமாலே -- Lord of Sri. “ த்வமாலீர் மாத: ஸ்ரீ : கமிதூரிதமித் தந்த்வவிபவ : ததந்தர்பாவாத்த்வம் ந ப்ருதகபிதத்தே ஸ்ருதிரபி” I (ஸ்ரீ குண. 28) “ Mother Sri Devi, since You have the greatness of attesting to the identity and attributes of the Lord, and abide with Him, none of the Veda' declarations speaks of You as apart and different from Him.”

பருமொழியால் காண -- ' தத் விஜ்ஞே : பரமம் பதம் ஸதா பஸ்யந்தி ஸூரய : ' ' The nithyasuris ever behold that exalted seat of Vishnu. '

**பணிந்தேன் திருமேனி பைங்கமலம் கையால்
அணிந்தேனுன் சேவடிமே லன்பாய் -- துணிந்தேன்
புரிந்தேத்தி யுன்னை புகலிடம்பார்த்து ஆங்கே
இருந்தேத்தி வாழு மிது.**

65

Oh Lord of Mother Lakshmi, I bowed to your beautiful Form, and lovingly decorated your pink feet with pretty lotus flowers. Desirous of worshipping You, and with vision fixed on your supreme abode, I made bold to seek my repose there to offer my prayers to You for ever.

பணிந்தேன் திருமெனி – Azhwar speaks of worshipping the Lord as a fulfilment in itself, as he is immersed in 'seshatva rasa ' **பைங்கமலம் அன்பால் அணிந்தேன்** – Following the dictum, “அகிஞ்சித்கரஸ்ய ஸேஷத்வாநுபபத்தி : “ – “ Without service, 'seshatvam ' is not achieved.”- Azhwar possessed of overwhelming love, decorated the Lord's Feet with pretty lotus flowers.

ஏத்தி வாழுமிது துணிந்தேன் – 'determined to lead a life offering eternal 'mangala'sa'sanam' to the Lord ', like nithyasuris in Srivaikuntam, ' தத்விப்ராலோ விபந்யவோ ஜாக்ருவாம்ஸ : ஸமிந்ததே ', (Vishnusuktham), - ' in that paramapadha where the eternal beings who are at once realised, pious, and for ever watchful, sparkle.'

இதுகண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே யிப்பிறவி யாவது
இதுகண்டா யெல்லாம் நாமுற்றது -- இதுகண்டாய்
நாரணன் பேரோதி நரகத் தருகணையா
காரணமும் வல்லயேல் கண்டாய்.

66

Oh my good heart, you have seen how insidious is this worldly life, and the suffering unleashed by it. It is the gateway to inferno and is to be devoutly avoided, by reciting the names of Narayana. If you will, think about the degradation of this existence.

Azhwar underlines the perils of ' samsa'ric existence in this pasuram. **நல்நெஞ்சே** – Azhwar addresses his heart, for a good and congenial heart is an important prerequisite for any kind of worthwhile pursuit of ' bhagavadvishayam '. ' மந ஏவ மநுஷ்யாணாம் காரணம் பந்த மோக்யோ : I பந்தாய விஷயாஸங்கிமுக்த்யை நிர்விஷயம் மந : ' II (Vishnupura'nam, 6-7-28.). “ Mind alone is the cause of a man's bondage and liberation, the mind obsessed with sensual pleasure being the cause of bondage, and mind devoid of sensual desire being the cause of liberation.”

இது கண்டாய் – refers to the fault-ridden 'samsa'ric' existence.
நாரணன் பேர் ஒதி நரகத்து அருகு அணையாக காரணமும்
இது கண்டாய் - Constant recitation of the diverse names of Narayana, the support, the goal, and the sure means of avoiding the portals of hellish existence.

வல்லியேல் காண் – If you can, you will realise the binding nature of this worldly existence.

கண்டேன் திருமேனி யான்கனவில் ஆங்கவன் கைக்
கண்டேன் கனலுஞ் சுடராழி -- கண்டேன்
உறுநோய் வினையிரண்டு மோட்டுவித்து பின்னும்
மறுநோய் செறுவான் வலி.

67

I was blessed with the vision of His beautiful Form in my dream. In that I beheld in His hand the dazzle of the fire-spitting Sudarsana'. In that vision again, I experienced His spontaneous grace capable of cutting asunder the binding ka'rmik affliction, and the underlying residue of past impressions.

In the previous pasuram, the Azhwar issued an advisory to his heart, warning of the degrading potential of 'samsa'ric' existence. As if not prepared to wait that long, the 'nirhetuka krupa" of the Lord, reaches upto the Azhwar in a beatific vision of dream-like actualisation in this pasuram. Manusmrithi describes the divine personalty as 'ஸ்வப்நதீக்ஷயம்', (12- 122), that is 'dream-like mental actualisation' which is the unique gift of Yogis and Azhwars.

திருமேனி கண்டேன். ஆங்கு அவன் கைக்கண்டேன் கனலும்
சுடராழி - Azhwar has the visual experience of the beautiful and auspicious form of Srīman Narayana, complete with the fire-spitting dazzling Sudarsana' in His hand.

ஊ நோய் இரண்டும் ஒட்டுவித்து – Due to this experience, Azhwar feels rid of the shackles of 'samsa'ra' ' in the shape of both papa' and punya'. Not only that, the Lord 's ' nirhetuka krupa" is such that it cuts at the root of the inherent ' va' sana's' and 'samska'ra's' capable of resurrecting the binding affliction.

பின்னும் மறுநோய் செறுவான் வலி கண்டேன் - As Sri Krishna warns in the Gita, “ இந்த்ரியாணி ப்ரமாதீநீ ஹரந்தி ப்ரஸபம் மந : II தாநி ஸர்வாணி ஸம்யமய யுக்த ஆஸீத மத் பர : II, (Gita – II – 60-61), the impellent and impetuous senses as the focal point of our 'va'sana's', forcibly drive the mind astray. Hence, controlling them all, one should integrate the mind with the divine, looking on Sri Va'sudeva' as Supreme.

**வலிமிக்க வாள்விற்பு வாள்வணர் மாள்
வலிமிக்க வாள்வரை மத்தாக -- வலிமிக்க
வாணுகஞ் சுற்றி மறுகக் கடல்கடைந்தான்
கோணுகங் கொம்பொசித்த கோ.**

68

The Lord churned the ocean with the sparkling mandara mountain as churning stick, and the shiny serpent Vasuki as rope, in order to quell the asura' race equipped with a fierce fighting force armed to the teeth – He Who snapped the tusks of the rogue elephant in another age.

In this pasuram, Azhwar describes the unbelievable feat of the Lord, Who single-handedly made the supreme exertion of churning the ocean to fulfil the desire of the emasculated deva's for 'amrit' to be able to prevail over their asura' adversaries who had repeatedly outfought and subjugated them. Azhwar has used the word ' வாள்', in a manifold sense.

வாள் அயிற்று - refers to rapier-like foreteeth of the asura's.' **வாள் அவுணர்**- refers to the asura' army wielding sword as their battle-weapon.

வாள் வரை - stands for the sheen of the mandara mountain.' **வாள் நாகம்** - describes the shiny skin of Va'suki.

மறுக்க கடல் கடைந்தான் – ' churned the ocean far and deep.' Since the deva's were a hopelessly debilitated race, and both they and the asura's were unequal to the task of churning the ocean, the Lord accomplished the feat by His sole exertion. ' ஆயிரம் தோளால் அலைகடல் கடைந்தான், (பெரிய – திரு மொழி 5-7-4).

கோள் நாகம் கொம்பு ஒசித்த கோ – Lord Who effortlessly snapped the tusks of the powerful tusker Kuvalaya'peeta, despatched by Kamsa' to kill Sri Krishna. The term ' நாகம் ' refers to serpent Vasuki, in the usage, ' வாள் நாகம் ', and the elephant in the usage, ' கோள் நாகம் '.

கோவாகி மாநிலங்காத்து நங்கண் முகப்பே
மாவேகிச் செல்கின்ற மன்னவரும் -- பூ மேவும்
செங்கமல நாபியான் சேவடிக்கே யேழ்பிறப்பும்
தண்கமல மேய்ந்தார் தமர்.

69

They who have become royal highnesses and rule over this earth, riding their high horses before our eyes, are what they are, because they were devotees in their several preceding births who placed cool lotuses at the exalted Feet of the Lord Who has a navel adorned by a red lotus flower.

Azhwar observes in this pasuram that the kings who rule this earth, forever extending their domain ensconced in the saddle of the horses they ride, owe their present prosperity to the fact that in their several preceding births in this world, they had been ardent devotees wedded to the sacred Feet of Narayana.

பூ மேவும் செங்கமல நாபியான் – Srīman Narayana from Whose navel springs a red lotus.

' முதலாம் திருவுருவம் முன்றென்பர் ஒன்றே
முதலாகும் முன்றுக்கும் அன்பர் -- முதல்வா
நிகரிலகு காருருவா நின்னகத்தன்றே

புகரிலகு தாமரையின் பூ . ' (பெரிய - திருவந்தாதி - 72). As Swami Nammazhwar has sung in the above pasuram, the lotus flower adorning the navel of Sriman Narayana, distinguishes Him as the primordial fountainhead of all creation, among the Trinity, comprising Him, Brahma, who sprang from the lotus on Narayana's navel, and Rudra who was created by Brahma.

**தமருள்ளம் தஞ்சை தலையரங்கம் தண்கால்
தமருள்ளுந் தண்பொருப்பு வேலை - - தமருள்ளும்
மாமல்லை கோவல் மதிள்குடந்தை யென்பரே
ஏவல்ல வெந்தைக் கிடம்.**

70

The heart of a true devotee is verily like a shrine, be it Tanjai, or hallowed first among 'divya desa's' Srirangam, or Thiruthanga'l, or the ever cool Thiruvenkatam the cherished treasure house of devotees, the milk ocean, Kadanmallai always in the thought of devotees, Thirukkoyalur, or the high-walled Thirukkudandhai, the abode of my Lord Sri Rama.

தமருள்ளம் - - Azhwar likens the heart of the devotee to a shrine, since the Lord is seated therein with great love. He is in His favoured abodes, the divya - desa's. Hence Azhwar mentions very appropriately, the heart of the true devotee first, true to the dictum, 'அப்பர்ஹிதம் பூர்வம்' - that which is preeminent is to be ranked high in the order of things. For it is said in the Upanishad (தை - நா), 'ஹ்ருதயம் தத் விஜாநீயாத் விஸ்வஸ்யாயதநம் மஹத்', 'The devotee's heart is to be understood as the Lord's great shrine, meaning that all other shrines are to be interpreted as 'bha'la'laya's only. In an earlier pasuram (54), Azhwar had himself proclaimed other shrines as 'இளங்கோயில்'. Sri Nammazhwar refers to the devotee's heart as the big shrine, 'நெஞ்சமே நீள்நகர்', (திரு-மொ. 3-8-1.). Azhwar then lists some of the shrines. 'தஞ்சை' also known as 'தஞ்சை மாமணிக்கோவில்', 'தலையரங்கம்', - Srirangam, considered the crown jewel among divyadesa's and referred to in our tradition

only as 'கோயில்'. Sri Thirumangai Mannan describes it as 'ஆராமம்
சூழ்ந்த அரங்கம் '
(சிறிய திருமடல்), ' Srirangam that is surrounded by other
divyadesa's which are like gardens round it '.

தண்கால் - Thiruthangal. By mentioning Tanjai and Thirutangal in
the same company as Srirangam and Thiruvengadam, Azhwar drives
home the point that no invidious distinction is to be drawn among
the divyadesa's.

தமர் உள்னும் தண்பொருப்பு - Cool Thirumalai which is looked
upon as a treasure- house by all SriVaishnava devotees.
வேலை - Milk ocean.

தமர் உள்னும் மாமல்லீ – Mahabalipuram the abode of the Lord
lying on the bare earth, where the sage Pundarika was blessed, and
hence so dear to the devotee's heart.

கோவல் - Thirukkovalur where the Lord manifested Himself along
with His consort to shower His grace on the first three Azhwars,
Poigai, Bhutam, and Pei, in a narrow corridor of a house, where they
had taken shelter from rain and storm. Hence called ' இடைக்கழி
பெருமாள்'.

மதிள் குடந்தை – high –walled Thirukkudandhai where the
presiding Deity was most beloved to Sri Thirumazhisai Piran, and of
Whom this Azhwar inquired with such solicitous concern, 'நடந்த
கால்கள் நொந்தவோ', (திருச்சந்த – விரு. 61).

இடங்கை வலம்புரி நின் றூர்ப்ப எரிகான்
நடங்கா ரொடுங்குவித்த தாழி -- விடங்காலும்
தீவா யரவீணமேல் தோன்றல் திசையளப்பான்
பூவா ரடிநிமிர்த்த போது.

71

When the Supreme Lord of the universe bestirred himself from his bed of the serpent Anantha' puffing out venomous fumes from the mouth, to lift his flower-like foot in order to measure the worlds in all directions, the Sankha' on his left Hand, blew loud, and the fiery Sudarsana' rendered all adversaries nervous by its sparkle.

This pasuram relates the episode of Trivikrama avata'ra', in which the loud thunder of the Lord's Sankha', and the fiery brilliance of Sudarsana' was enough to throw all adversaries into nervous helplessness.

இடங்கை வலம்புரி நின்று ஆர்ப்ப - Hearing the thunderous roar of Sankha', lauded lavishly by Sri Andal as 'பூங்கொள் திருமுகத்து மடுத்த திய சங்கொலி', gladdened the hearts of all devotees to exult, 'ஜிதம் பகவதா ஜகத்', and broke the hearts of adversaries, like it did again, in the Kurukshetra' war, 'ஸ கோஜோ தார்த்தராஜ்டாணம் ஹ்ருதயாநி வ்யதாரயத் .', (Gita – 1-19). Sri Periazhwar echoes the same thought in the line, 'ன்னிது மாயம் ? அன் அப்பன் அறிந்திலன் முன்னைய வண்ணமே கொண்டு அளவாய்', (பெரியாழ்வார் – திரு. 1-8-8.).

அரிகான்று அடங்கார் ஒருங்குவித்தது ஆழி - As if this was not enough, Lord's Sudarsana' by its shower of fiery sparkle all-round, stunned all adversaries freezing them on their tracks.

விடங்காலும் தீவாய் அரவீண - Lord's couch Anantha emitting venomous fumes from its awesome mouths, - is intended to highlight the cold terror of the moment for all adversaries. Sri Thirumazhisai Piran describes it on similar lines, 'ஆங்கு ஆரவாரம் அது கேட்டு அழல் உமிழும் தீவாய் அரவீண .' - (நான்முகன் – திரு. 10.).

அரவீணமேல் தோன்றல் - What is the reason for this preemptive action from the Lord's functionaries ? The reason is their overwhelming eagerness to ensure the undisturbed rest of the Lord,

on the milk ocean, jestfully underplayed by Sri Periazhwar as, ' வெள்ளை வெள்ளத்தின்மேல் ஒரு பாம்பை மெத்தையாக விரித்து அதன்மேலே கள்ள நித்திரை கொள்கின்ற ' (பெரியாழ்வார் – திரு . 5-1-7.). Lest no harm should come to that beautiful body in apparent slumber on the serpent couch, even the nithyasuris are always watchfully alert. ' தத் விஜ்ஞே : பரமம் பதம் ஸதா பஸ்யந்தி ஸுரய: தத் விப்ராஸோ விபந்யவோ ஜாக்ருவாம்ஸ: ஸமிந்ததே ' (Vishnusuktham). பூவார் அடி – Lord's foot is like flower in bloom. புஷ்பஹாஸ : (Vishnu Sahasrana'mam - 952.)

போதறிந்து வானரங்கள் பூஞ்சுனைபுக்கு ஆங்கலர்ந்த போதறிந்து கொண்டேத்தும் போது உள்ளம் -- போது மணிவேங்கடவன் மலராடிக் கே செல்ல அணிவேங்கடவன் பேராய்ந்து.

72

Rising at dawn, the primates would dip in the flower-laden ponds, and gather the freshly blossomed flowers to offer in worshipful prayer. Oh my heart, you also hasten to recite the names of my Lord, and offer flowers at the lotus Feet of Him Who is the Jewel of Thiruvencatam.

While in the previous pasuram, Sri Bhutat Azhwar described the exalted status of the Lord, with only 'nithyasuris' surrounding him in constant attendance and alert, in this pasuram Azhwar reassures his heart of the Lord's 'soulabhya'- accessibility, to even primates and people like us.

போது அறிந்து வானரங்கள் – போது - the early hours of dawn considered very propitious for prayer and meditation. “ ப்ராஹ்மே முஹூர்த்தே சோத்தாய சிந்தயேதாத்மநோ ஹிதம் I ஹரிர் ஹரிர் ஹரிரிதி வ்யாஹரேத் வைஷ்ணவ : புமாந் II “ “ At the stroke of dawn (bra'hma- muhurtha'), a Srivaishnava should rise and recite Hari's name several times.” Sri Andal underlines this in Thiruppa'vai, ' வெள்ளத்தரவில் துயிலமர்ந்த வித்தின உள்ளத்துக் கொண்டு,

முனிவர்களும் யோகிகளும் மெள்ள அழுந்து அரியென்ற பேராவம் உள்ளம் புகுந்து குளிர்ந்து - (திருப்பாவை - 6). This is 'மாநஸ கைங்கர்யம்'. Like the sages and Srivaishnava's, even the primates of Venkata hill, possess intuitively the virtue of rising at dawn and setting out for the worship of the Lord. Lest anyone should wonder if it is possible, this pasuram sets at rest such scepticism, by reminding us that it is possible due to their habitation in a divya-desa' like Thiruvencatam. Azhwar is not alone in this, as it will be seen that other Azhwars have also used similar imagery. For instance, Sri Thirumazhisai Piran also acknowledges existence of similar virtue in the elephants of Thiruvencata forests, in his lines, ' வைப்பன் மணிவிளக்கா மாமதியை மாலுக்கு அன்று அப்போதும் கைநீட்டும் யானையை - அப்பாடும் வேடு வளைக்கக் குறவர் வில்லெடுக்கும் வேங்கடமே, நாடு வளைத்தாடுதுமேல் நன்று ', - (நான்முகன் - திரு - 46).

ஆங்கு அலர்ந்தபோது - Just then freshly blossomed flowers.
ஏத்தும் - The primates pray raising some sounds appropriate to their character. ' மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கடமாமீல வானவர்கள் சந்தி செய்ய நின்றான். ' - (அமலனாதி . -). The Lord of Thiruvencatam accepts with love equally the chatter of the monkeys, and the Vedic hymns sung by nithyasuris.

அணி வேங்கடவன் பேர் ஆய்ந்து - ' reciting the sacred names of the Jewel of Thiruvencatam.' Azhwar underlines the importance of prayerful recitation. (வாசிக கைங்கர்யம்).

வேங்கடவன் மலரடிக்கே செல்லப் போதும் அணி - 'Offer flowers at the lotus Feet of the Lord of Venkatam. ' Azhwar emphasises thus, another aspect of devotional service, viz. ' காயிக கைங்கர்யம் '. Thus, Azhwar underlines the importance of all three-fold service.

ஆய்ந்துரைப்ப னாயிரம்பே ராதிநடு வந்திவாய்
வாய்ந்தமலர் தூவி வைகலும் - - ஏய்ந்த
பிறைக்கோட்டுச் செங்கண் கரிவிடுத்த பெம்மான்
இறைக்காட்டடத் துணிந்த யான்.

73

Firm in resolve to serve my Lord Narayana, the Supreme Protector, —Who saved the red-eyed Gajendra with crescent - like tusk, — I will recite his thousand names, at all times of day,morning, noon,or evening, sprinkling whatever flowers I can gather.

Azhwar affirms his resolve to put into practice, worship of the Lord with all his senses, mind,tongue, and body at all times of the day. The parallel of this sentiment is to be found in Swami Nammazhwar's affirmation, 'ஒழிவில்காலமெல்லாம்உடனாய் மன்னி வழுவிலாஅடிமைசெய்யவேண்டும்நாம், தெழிகுரலருவித் திருவேங்கடத்து அழில் கொள் சோதி அந்தை தந்தை தந்தைக்கே ' - (திருவாய்- மொ.- 3-3-1.). 'At all times without ceasing, we shall pledge ourselves, with body and soul, to the unfailing service of my Father, the Primogenitor of all our forefathers, and the leading Light of beautiful Thiruvengkatam dotted with springs.'

ஆய்ந்து உரைப்பன் – The thousand sacred names of the Lord (' Sahasrana'mam'), are to be meditated upon, and not to be just recited mindlessly.The ' Sahasrana'mam ' of the Lord referred to by the Azhwar in this pasuram, is illustrative, and not exhaustive, for as Swami Nammazhwar observes, Narayana is, ' பேருமோராயிரம் பிற பல உடைய அம்பெருமான் ', (திருவாய்-மொ. 1-3-9.). ' The Lord has a thousand names, and even more.'

ஆதி நடு அந்திவாய் வைகலும் – At all times of day and night irrespective of the hour. To yogis and sages there is no night or day, for the sphere of the ascetic who has mastered his senses, is Supreme Truth. 'As Sri Krishna says, the single-minded yogi is in perpetual communion and constant remembrance. 'அனன்ய சேதா : ஸததம்

மாம் ஸ்மரதி நித்யஸ : ' - (Gita – 8-14.). It is only those who recite the names with a benefit in mind, that consider where, when, and how, of this pursuit. The yogi is not in this category. He is always awake, and ' bhagavadanubhavam' is his life breath. As Swami Nammazhwar asks, ' கழிவதோர் காதலுற்றார்க்கும் உண்டோ கண்கள் துஞ்சதலே, - (திரு-விரு. – 97). Another parallel of the Azhwar's resolve is to be found in Sri Thirumazhisai Piran's statement on how he spent his time, ' வாசித்தும் கேட்டும், வணங்கி வழிபட்டும் பூசித்தும் போக்கினேன் போது ', (நான் – திரு. - 63). Place, state, or time has no relevance to meditating on Narayana. ' ஆஸீநா வா ஸயநா வா திஷ்டந்தோ யத்ர குத்ர வா I நமோ நாராயணயேதி மந்த்ரைக ஸ்ரணா வயம் II ' Wherever we are, while at rest, or standing, let us hold close to 'Ashta'kshara' mantra'.

வாய்ந்த மலர் துவி - Sprinkling whatever flowers are gathered, not necessarily choice ones. ' அத்யந்த பக்தியுத்தஸ்ய ந ஸாஸ்த்ரம் நைவ ச க்ரம : ' . ' To the true devotee, there is no limiting line of sa'stra' or method.'As Sri Krishna, says, 'பத்ரம் புஷ்பம் பலம் தோயம் '

ஆய்ந்த பிறைக்கோட்டுச் செங்கண் கரி - Gajendra with crescent-like tusk and red eyes. ' செங்கண் ' denotes fury or being in heat. ' பிடிசேர் களிறு ' – (முதல் – திரு – 97). ' கரி ' literally elephant to highlight the fact that the Lord's compassion transcends a being's status in life, conduct or intelligence.

கரிவிடுத்த பெம்மான் – The Lord Who delivered the elephant Gajendra from the jaws of the crocodile, when the former called loud 'மூலமே', without letting the elephant drop even one of the lotuses gathered by him for offering to the Lord. When all other gods forsook him, saying, ' not I ', ' not I ', it is Narayana Who rushed to his rescue responding to the 'மூலமே' call, testifying to the truth that He is the primordial Supreme Being.

யானே தவஞ்செய்தே னேழ்பிறப்பு மெப்பொழுதும்
யானே தவமுடையே னெம்பெருமான் -- யானே
இருந்தமிழ் நன்மலை யிணையடக்கே சொன்னேன்
பெருந்தமிழ் னல்லேன் பெரிது.

74

My Master, in life after life, and in all states, I dedicated myself to your service. I have been blessed with the fruit of my penance now, and the opportunity to adorn your sacred Feet with this garland of mellifluous Tamil verses. It is your grace that I excel in the Tamil arts.

Azhwar acknowledges his debt to the Lord for his boundless grace through successive births, culminating in the poetical outpouring about his being blessed with the Lord's thought and service at his Feet.

யானே தவஞ்செய்தேன் ஏழ்பிறப்பும் அப்பொழுதும் - ' I did penance in all births and states.' What penance does the Azhwar allude to ? It is the blessing of ' bhagavad- kainkarya ' through countless births. ' ஜந்மாந்தர ஸஹஸ்ரேஷு தபோஜ்ஞாநஸமாதிபி : I நராணாம் க்ஷணபாபநாம் க்ருஷ்ணே பக்தி : ப்ரஜாயதே ' II ' After thousands of births, one evolves to a state of penance and realisation. Devotion to Sri Krishna is born in men whose sinful karma has withered away.

யானே தவமுடையேன் - ' I have realised the fruit of my penance.' The fruit is ' bhagavad anubhava ' and ' bhagavad kainkarya '.

இருந்தமிழ் நன்மலை சொன்னேன் யானே - ' I composed this beautiful garland of great Tamil poetry. Azhwar mentions this as an instance of ' bhagavad - kainkarya '. ' சொல் மலைகள் நன்று சூடும் விதி எய்தினம் ' - (திருவாய் - மொ. 4-5-7.). If it was in Sanskrit, it would have been within the grasp of only a few people. By composing this in sweet Tamil language, Azhwar's verses come within the comprehension of many. As lauded by Swami Nammazhwar, ' கேட்டார்கள் வானவர்கள் செவிக்கினிய செஞ்சொல்லே, (திருவாய்

– மொ. 10-7-11.) ' Such melodious poetry is music to the ears of the celestials and 'nithyasuris'. ' விதிப்யுக்தாம் பூஜாம் ச க்ருவ்ணாதி ஸ்ரீஸா ஸ்வயம் ' - Such poetry is like ' worship performed according to formulated order which is accepted in toto by the Lord by a nod of his head, as it were.' ' சொல் மால்கள் ஏற்ற நோற்றேற்கு ' - (திருவாய் –மொ. 4-5-1).

மால் இணையடக்கே சொன்னேன் - ' I adorned your sacred Feet with this garland.' Azhwar calls this work a garland, since he thinks of every 'kain karyam' in terms of garlanding and adorning the Feet of the Lord.

பெருந்தமிழன் - Azhwar is proud to call himself a Tamil literateur. **பரிது நல்லேன்** - But he adds that he is just not a technical language expert, but one who is immersed in the experience of the Lord, ('bhagavadvishayam'). Lest any one should be tempted to question the appropriateness of Azhwar's apparent self-accreditation, it may be said that in the matter of ' bhagavadanubhava ', no taint of vanity attaches in speaking out about one's own internal perception of that experience. Swami Nammazhwar strikes a similar note in his 'யாவர் நிகர் அகல்வானத்தே ', (திருவாய்- மொ. – 4-5-8.).

**பெருகு மதவேழம் மாப்பிடிக்கு முன்னின்று
இருகணிள முங்கில் வாங்கி -- அருங்கிருந்த
தேன்கலந்து நீட்டுந் திருவேங்கடங் கண்டீர்
வான் கலந்த வண்ணன் வரை.**

75

Behold Thiruventakam the exalted mountain of the Lord resembling the hue of the blue sky, where the tusker driven by 'mast' could be seen mesmerised in front of its favourite mate, and offering to it a succulent bamboo plant of just two rings plucked by it, and dipped in honey oozing from a honey comb nearby.

This pasuram is set as testimony to the Azhwar's self-description as a gifted Tamil literateur. The splendor and beauty of the literary flavour permeating these lines makes one feel as if the Azhwar breaks out in this poetic flurry in response to a possible poser from the Lord to prove his claim to being a Tamil literateur. Among the Azhwars, Sri Thirumangai Mannan has the reputation of having been a versatile poet ; hence one of the several feathers in his cap sets him out as a ' நாலுகவிப்பெருமான் '. He has, by way of tribute to the artistic excellence of the aforesaid pasuram, borrowed the imagery of this, in one of his pasurams, in the following lines, ' வரைசெய் மாக்களிறு இளவெதிர் வளர்முள் அளமிகுதேன் தோய்த்துப் பிரசவாரிதன் இளம்பிடிக்கு அருள்செய்யும் ' (பெரிய -திரு- 1-2-5.).

பெருகு மத வேழம் – The tusker looks like a hill on the Thiruvankata mountain. ' வரைசெய் மாக்களிறு ' – (பெரிய - திரு – 1-2-5.). The elephant oozes the juices natural to it when it is in heat.

மா பிடிக்கு முன்னின்று – mesmerisedly facing its favourite female partner with whom it is in love, biding a congenial moment to please the mate. ' இளம்பிடிக்கு ' – (பெ – திரு. 1-2-5). The tusker seems to be looking into the eye of its mate waiting for its signal or command, “ ஸர்க்கோ பஸர்க்க ஸ்திதீ :

ஸ்வர்க்கம் துர்க்கதிமாபவர்க்கி க பதம் ஸர்வம் ச குர்வந் ஹரி : I யஸயா வீக்ஷ்ய முகம் ததிங்கித பாராதீநோ விதத்தேஸ்கிலம் II “- (Sri Sthavam 1). When creating, in sustaining and dissolving the worlds, and when conferring the fruits of heaven, hell and moksha' on the worldly beings, Bhagava'n Hari looks into the face of the divine Mother, and carries out those functions in the light of her signals '. The tusker's behaviour is evocative of the Lord's action.

இருகண் மூங்கில் - A succulent bamboo just grown two rings in size. ' இளவெதிர் ', in Sri Paraka'lan's phrase. The tusker is alive to

the sensitivity of its young partner, and chooses a soft, succulent bamboo shoot. Sri Kaliyan adds, ' இளவெதிர் வளர்முனை ', to indicate though a young plant, the bamboo is rich and succulent, due to the richness of the soil of Thirumalai.

முங்கில் வாங்கி - bamboo plucked with due care having regard to its delicate texture. Though the tusker in 'mast' is usually devoid of clear thinking due to a state of passionate intoxication, here since the act is in behalf of its mate, it is extra-vigilant.

அருகிருந்த தேன் - honey dripping from a honey comb nearby. In Sri Paraka'lan's phrase, ' அளமிகுதேன் '.

கலந்து நீட்டும் – offering the bamboo mixed with honey in supplication, entreating the mate to accept it. In Kaliyan's phrase, 'அளமிகுதேன் தோய்த்து '.

Let us now savour the beauty of a pasuram on identical lines from Sri Bhutat Azhwar 's younger contemporary, Sri Pei Azhwar, in the following lines, ' புரிந்து மதவேழம் மாப்பிடி யொடு ஊடித்திரிந்து சினத்தால் பொருது – விரிந்த சீர் வெண்கோட்டு முத்துதிர்க்கும் வேங்கடமே ' - (முன்- திரு.- 45). Sri Pey Azhwar in this pasuram, evokes a parallel imagery of a male and female elephant wandering in separation owing to the common misunderstanding, (ஊடல்) typical between the spouses. Sri Bhutat Azhwar describes the coming together of the tusker and its mate after this separation.

' தன் இளம்பிடிக்கு அருள் செய்யும் ' – Kaliyan completes the imagery on a consummate note of grace on the part of the young female in demurely accepting the treat offered, in a felicitous reconciliation and rebonding, not unlike the divine Mother accepts the garland of her Lord graciously, at Her doorstep on the ' Pankuni Uttaram ' day and invites in the Lord signifying the happy ending of

the 'viraha". In his own ornate way, Paraka'lan uses the phrase, 'அருள் செய்யும் ', implying that the tusker is aware that if he gives the bamboo with the honey, it might choke the young partner, and so instead he chooses to wring the honey in the bamboo into the mouth of the mate.

திருவேங்கடம் கண்டிர் வான்கலந்த வண்ணன் வரை -
Famed for this kind of happening, Thiruvenkatam is the resting place of the Lord, whose complexion blends so beautifully with the colour of the sky.

What is the underlying 'ta'tparya" of the illustration handled in this pasuram ? It is to the effect that the Lord resides in that mountain where the tusker protects its mate by giving her the desired thing. As mentioned in Swami Nammazhwar 's pasuram, 'கண்ணாவான் அன்றும் மண்ணோர் விண்ணோர்க்கு ', (திருவாய் - மொ. - 1-8-3.), it is proof that just as Srīman Narayana confers His grace on, and protects, the celestials, and people of this earth standing at Thirumalai, even the animals like the monkeys and elephants are an integral part of His 'rakshana" scheme.,

**வரைச் சந்தனக்குழம்பும் வான் கலனும் படும்
விரைப்பொலிந்த வெண் மல்லிகையும் -- நிரைத்துக்கொண்டு
ஆதிக்கண் நின்ற வறிவனடியிணையே
ஒதிப் பணிவ துறும்.**

76

Gathering plenty of mountain sandal paste, exquisite jewellery and silks, as also fragrant jasmines, worship prayerfully, with bowed head, as befitting a true devotee, the sacred Feet of the all-knowing primordial Cause of all creation.

வரைச் சந்தனக்குழம்பும் -- The sandal referred to as suitable for the lovely texture of Lord's body, is that gathered from mountain Chandanagiri which is known for its special quality sandal tree. It should be like the sandal paste prayed for from the 'Kubja", (the hunch-back woman), on the streets of Muthura' by Sri Krishna, with

the plea, 'ஸுகந்தமேதத் ராஜார்ஹம் ருசிரம்ருசிராநநே I ஆவயோர் காத்ர ஸத்ருஸம் தீயதாமநுலேபநம் ' II ' This sandal is highly fragrant as fit for kings, and has texture, Oh Lady of beautiful face, give us some sandal paste suitable for our bodies.' Azhwar 's mention of high quality sandal to offer to the Lord, does not mean that the Lord accepts only that. He will no doubt graciously accept whatever is offered with love. It only means that the best of things befits the beauty and loveliness of His 'svarupa'. In a figurative sense, it means the devotee's yearning heart is ever overflowing with love for him, looking upon him as the 'upa'yo-upeyam ', (the formula and the fruit), or in the words of Swamy Nammazhwar “ பூவை வீயா நீர் தூவிப் போதால் வணங்கேலும் நின் பூவை வீயாம் மேனிக்குப் பூசும் சாந்து - என் நெஞ்சமே “ - (திருவாய் - மொ. 4-3-1.).

வான்கலனும் – exquisite jewels as can adorn the Master of all worlds. In Sri Nammazhwar's reckoning, it is the act of folding of both the hands in fervent prayer. “ தேசமான அணிகலனும் என் கைகூப்பும் செய்கையே “, (திருவாய் - மொ. 4-3-2.).

பட்டும் - Silks. “படிச்சோதியாடையொடும் பல்கலனாய் நின்மைப் பொன் கடிச்சோதி கலந்ததுவோ “ - (திருவாய்- மொ. 3-1-1).

விரைப்பொலிந்த வெண்மல்லிகையும் - fragrant and fascinatingly white jasmine garlands. This could also be taken to mean garlands of hymns. “ புனையும் கண்ணி எனதுடைய வாசகம் செய்மாலையே வான் பட்டாடையும் அ.தே, (திரு-வாய் மொ. 4-3-2.). ' கண்ணி எனதுயிர் காதல் கனகச்சோதி முடிமுதலா எண்ணில் பல்கலன்களும் ஏலுமாடையும்.தே ' - (திருவாய்- மொ. 4-3-5.). In a metaphorical sense, the flower garlands, the jewels, and silks translate in Swami Nammazhwar's equation, to life breath, love, and fervent prayers.

நிரைத்துக்கொண்டு – gathering in plenty.

ஆதிக்கண்ணிற்ற – The Primordial Being, “ந ப்ரஹ்மா நேஸாந :

நேமே த் யாவா ப்ருதி வீ ந நகூத்ராணி “, (Mahopanishad).
 ' ' When there were no Brahma, Rudhra, nor any sentient beings,
 worlds, or stars.' “ ஏகோ ஹ வை நாராயண ஆஸீத் “ - ,
 (Mahopanishad). ' Only Narayana was.' “ யோ ப்ரஹ்மாணம் விததாதி
 பூர்வம் முமுகூர் வை ஸ்ரணமஹம் ப்ரபத்யே “,
 (Swetasvatara Upanishad). ' He Who at the beginning of creation
 projected Brahma and others.... seeking liberation I seek refuge at
 his Feet,' Thus the 'parathvam' of this eternal effulgent Being, the
 original Source of everything is well-nigh impossible to visualise, let
 alone comprehend.

அறிவன் - The all-Knowing. “ ஸஹஸ்ராம்ஸு: “, (Vishnu
 Sahasranamam). He that has the knowledge and understanding
 capable of gratefully equating one small good deed to a hundred
 thousand fold, and commensurate love. The knowledge spoken of
 here is just illustrative of the Lord 's omniscience.

அடியிணையே ஒதி - fervently praying, reciting hymns in praise of
 Him or His names, or addressed to His lotus Feet.

பணிவது - bowing in reverence.

ஊம் – befitting the self.

ஊங்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே யுத்தமன் நற்பாதம்
ஊங்கண்டா யொண்கமலந் தன்னால் - - ஊங்கண்டாய்
ஏத்திப் பணிந்தவன் பேரீரைஞ் ஞுறெப்பொழுதும்
சாத்தி யுரைத்தல் தவம். 77

See my good heart, it is but proper for us to worship the exalted
 Feet of the Supreme Lord of all beings. It is fitting to adorn
 his Feet with pretty lotus flowers. Adorning them thus, and
 bowing in reverential homage, and worshipful prayer, it
 behoves us to engage in penance of constant recitation of his
 Sahasrana'ma'.

ஊங்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே -- See my good heart, it is but proper. 'முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே' -- (பெரிய -திருவந்தாதி -1). 'அன்னை நெகிழ்க்கிலும் அன்னுடை நன்னெஞ்சம் தன்னை நெகிழ்விக்கத் தானும் கில்லான் இனி' - (திருவாய்- மொ. - 1-7-8.). Though ostensibly the Azhwar addresses his heart, the hearts of Azhwars are always engaged in constant pursuit of 'bhagavadvishayam'. As such the underlying message is like a wakeup call to ordinary people like us, with wayward hearts which are after lesser pursuits, to arise, awake and approach the redeeming Feet of the Master, and meditate on That. Such a construction would be in line with the interpretation of Swami Peria'vacha'n Pillai.

உத்தமன் நற்பாதம் - - The exalted Feet of the Purushothama', (The Greatest of all Beings). His Feet are, in a sense, like his nama', larger than He, since they have the magic quality of redeeming and liberating without drawing any distinction between worthiness and worthlessness, as was the case in conferring 'moksha' on the reprobate Sisupala in his moment of departure. In Sri Periazhwar's elegant phrase, 'அலவலமை தவிர்த்த அழகன்', (பெரியாழ்வார் திரு. 4-3-5), His grace is boundless taking within the fold of his Feet even such a hardened sinner. As Swami Nammazhwar puts it, 'திருவடி தாட்பால் அடைந்த', (திருவாய்- மொ.7 -5-3.). Hence it is, that the Lord's sacred Feet have been the object of adoration and adulation of Azhwars and Acha'ryas' alike. “வண்புகழ் நாரணன் திண்கழல்”, (திருவாய்-மொ. 1-2-10.). Swami Pillai Loka'cha'rya, in his Mumukshupadi – 146, reinforces this thought in the words, 'பிராட்டியும் அவனும் விடிலும் திருவடிகள் விடாது ; திண்கழலாயிருக்கும்', meaning 'even if forsaken by divine Mother, or the Lord Himself, his sacred Feet do not ever forsake. They remain the unfailingly safe haven to all.' Also, “நின்னிற் சிறந்த நின் தாளிணையவை”, (Sanga-Tamil Paripa'dal – 3).

ஒண்கமலம் தன்னால் சாத்திப் பணிவது - Adorning the Feet with pretty lotus flowers, and prostrating to them.

ஏத்தி - worshipfully praying with lips.

அவன் ஈரைஞ் ஞாறு - - His one thousand names, (Vishnu Sahasrana'ma').

உரைத்தல் தவம் – Recitation, (of His names) is penance enough. Whether called by accident, or design, for a purpose or mechanically, or jestfully, his name has redeeming quality, and in Lord's reckoning bears fruit. That is the gist of this pasuram.

**தவஞ்செய்து நான்முகனே பெற்றான் தரணி
நிவர்ந்தளப்ப நீட்டிய பொற்பாதம் -- சிவந்ததன்
கையினத்து மாரக் கழுவினான் கங்கைநீர்
பெய்தினத்துப் பேர்மொழிந்து பின் .**

78

It was only the four-faced Brahma that reaped the fruit of his devout penance, when he, reciting the many names of the Lord, washed with sacred Ganges water the towering golden Feet of Him when He set out to measure the worlds.

தவஞ்செய்து நான்முகனே பெற்றான் - It was only the four-faced Brahma that reaped the fruit of ' divya -na'ma sankirtana" by being blessed with the opportunity to wash with his own hands, the Lord's Feet in His Trivikrama'vata'ra'.

பொற்பாதம் – Lord's golden feet that are not only the instrument of all 'purusha'rtas', but also the self-fulfilling object of all spiritual search, striving and sa'dhana'.

தரணி நிவர்ந்தளப்ப நீட்டிய பொற்பாதம்- The raised golden Feet of the Lord in their giant stride to measure the worlds. Lord 's Trivikrama'vata'ra' is referred to here, which He took in order to restore to Indra the rightful sovereignty over the celestial world. While Indra got his kingdom back, it was Brahma who got something of

far greater value, the blessed state of touching and washing the golden Feet of the Lord with water of river Ganga. “நேரே கடிக்கமலத் துள்ளிருந்தும் காண்கிலான் கண்ணன் அடிக்கமலந்தன்ன அயன் “, (முதல் திருவந்தாதி – 56). Even though, he was born in the lotus flower sprung from the navel of the Lord, Brahma had never ever had as much as a glimpse of the lotus Feet of Narayana. For the first time, he had that blessing now in Trivikrama'vata'ra'. No one before or after had that kind of up close and personal benediction of the Lord's Feet.

கங்கை நீர் பெய்து - - sprinkling the Ganges water. Ishvara Samhita narrates how when Narayana set out to measure the worlds as Trivikrama', the devotion of Brahma and other celestials transformed into sacred water which filled Brahma's ' kamandal '. Taking that water in his hands, Brahma washed the Feet of Trivikrama' with great love and respect. Siva who saw the overflowing 'thirumanjana" water took that water and sprinkled it over his head, saying to himself, ' I can purify myself with this sacred water ', and did not release that water from his matted locks for thousands of years, till Bhagiratha' did penance and prayed to him to release it for the liberation of his forefathers condemned to damnation by Kapila Muni. This water then descended to this earth as river Ganga.

அனத்துப் பேர் மொழிந்து -- reciting all the names of the Lord. **தன் சிவந்த கை அனத்தும் ஆரக்கமுவினான்** - - washed to the ecstatic relief of his pretty hands.

பின்னின்று தாயிரப்பக் கேளான் பெரும்பீணத்தோள் முன்னின்று தானிரப்பாள் மொய்மலராள் -- சொல்நின்ற தோள்நலந்தான் நேரில்லாத் தோன்றல் அவனளந்த நீணிலந்தானத்தைனக்கும் நேர்.

79

In matching comparison to the Feet of the Lord in measuring this vast universe, the greatness of the unparalleled courage and valour of the hero of the epic Ramayana, stands out – the Lord who, ever true to his word, would not be dissuaded from his purpose by the mother's plea, nor that of his Consort of slender shoulders, the incarnation of the lotus-born Lakshmi.

Azhwar cites the rectitude and courage of Sri Rama as something which matches the greatness of Sri Vamana's feet, in measuring all the worlds with His Feet.

பின்னின்று தாயிர்ப்ப – Following Sri Rama, and pleading with him, mother Kausalya' implored.....' Her plea was, “யதைவ தே புத்ர பிதா ததாஸஹம் குரு: ஸ்வதர்மேண ஸஹ்ருத்தயா ச I ந த்வாநுஜாநாமி ந மாம் விஹாய ஸூது :க்கி தாமர்ஹஸி கந்துமேவம்”II (Srimad Ramayanam – Ayodhya. 21-52). 'My Son, even as your father is venerated by you, so am I venerable by you. From what I consider righteous, and with my overwhelming love towards you, I will not allow you to go to the forest, nor is it proper for you to leave me in my state of grief.' Sri Rama did not consent to her plea, citing the overarching 'dharma' applicable to both of them - of his implicitly following his father's dictat, and his mother as the wife of his father falling in line with her husband's wish. “குருஸ்ச ராஜா ச பிதா ச வருத்த:

க்ரோதாத் ப்ரஹர்ஷாத் யதி வாஸபி காமாத் I யத் வ்யாதிலேத் கார்யம வேக்ஷ்ய தர்மம், கஸ்தம் ந குர்யாத் ந்ருஸம்ஸ வருத்தி : II ஸ வை ந ஸக்நோமி பிது : ப்ரதிஜ்ஞா மிமாமகர்த்தும் ஸகலாம் யதாவத் I ஸ ஹ்யாவயோஸ் தாத குருந் நியோகே, தே வ்யாஸ்ச பர்த்தா ஸ கதி : ஸ தர்ம : “ II, (Srimad Ramayanam, Ayodhya 21-59-60.). 'Whatever a person who is, a teacher, king, father, and an elder, lays down whether in anger, joy, or desire, how could a right-thinking son who considers that righteous and proper conduct, not comply with that ? I, being that son, cannot refrain from carrying out that wish, since he is the father who can legislate our action, and who is husband, guardian, and the law to mother Kausalya'.

பெரும்பீணத்தோள் மொய்மலராள் முன் நின்று தான் இரப்பாள்-"Then Sita of slender shoulders like bamboo, and incarnation of lotus-born Maha'lakshmi, eager to hasten to the forest, a step ahead of her husband, pleaded with him in the following words. 'யதி த்வம் ப்ரஸ்திதோ துர்க்கம் வநமத்யைவ ராகவ I அக்ரஸ்தே கமிஷ்யாமி ம்ரதந்தீ குஸகண்டகாந் II ', (Srimad Ramayanam, Ayodhya – 27-6).' Oh Raghava', if you should be on your way to the impenetrable forest, let me be your pilot and walk ahead of you, setting the path free from weed and thorns.' Sri Rama would not however listen to her plea, until she cited his own words in reference to mother Kausalya, as equally pertinent to her.

சொல் நின்ற தோன்றல் – the hero of the epic Ramayana.
தோள் நலம் தான் நேரில்லாத் தோன்றல் – non pareil in the power and valour of his shoulders, and fortitude of character.
அவனளந்த நீணிலந்தான் அத்தனைக்கும் நேர் – The only thing that matches all this, is the expanse of space that He strode (in Trivikrama'vata'ra'). What Azhwar implies in this analogy is that Sri Rama's valour in destroying Ravana and his army, matches that of Sri Va'mana' in subjugating Namusi and others, in the same way as Sri Rama's steadfast adherence to 'dharmaarakshana', compares to Sri Vamana's adherence to 'a'sritharakshana'.

நேர்ந்தே னடிமை நினைந்தேன் அதொண்கமலம்
ஆர்ந்தேனுன் சேவடிமே லன்பாய் -- ஆர்ந்த
அடிக்கோலங் கண்டவர்க் கென்கொலோ முன்னைப்
படிக்கோலம் கண்ட பகல்.

80

Being blessed to be your devoted servant, and constantly meditating on your lotus Feet, I have found fulfilment in overflowing love towards your pink sacred Feet. To those blessed with the vision of the bare Feet of the Lord as He scaled the worlds, would the sight of his bejeweled Form hold any greater allurements?

நேர்ந்தேன் அடிமை – Blessed with the opportunity of service at the Lord's Feet, due to his overwhelming 'nirhetuka krupa'. As Swami Nammazhwar echoes the thought in his lines, 'குட்ட நாட்டுத்திருப்பலியூர் நின்ற மாயப்பிரான் திருவருளாம் இவள் நேர் பட்டதே - அன்றிமற்றோருபாயமென்' -(திருவாய் மொழி - 8-9-11). 'மூவுலகக்கும் நாயகன் தன்னடிமை நேர்பட்ட' - (திருவாய் மொ.8-9-11).

நீனந்தேன் ஒண்கமலம் அது – 'My thoughts centred round the lotus Feet.

ஆர்ந்தேன் உன் சேவடிமேல் அன்பாய் – 'I found fulfilment in overflowing love towards your pink sacred Feet.'

ஆர்ந்த அடிக்கோலம் கண்டவர்க்கு முன் னப்படிக்கோலம் கண்ட பகல் அன் கொலோ? – Two alternative interpretations have been presented.1. To those blessed with the eye-full vision of the Lord's Feet, how much inadequately equipped would the eyes be, given the vision of the Lord's complete Form.? 2. To those blessed with the vision of the bare Feet of the Lord, as He ascended the skies to scale the worlds, would the sight of His bejeweled Form hold any greater attraction ? The second construction has been adopted in the translation, on the consideration that the beauty of the Lord's Form lends charm to the adornments that cover Him, and not vice versa, because He is, 'ஆபரணஸ்யாபரணம்', 'ஸர்வபூஷண பூஷார்ஹா : '.

பகல்கண்டேன் நாரணனைக் கண்டேன் கனவில் மிகக்கண்டேன் மீண்டவனை மெய்யே மிகக்கண்டேன் ஊன்திகழு நேமி யொளிதிகழுஞ் சேவடியான் வான்திகழுஞ் சோதி வடிவு.

81

In a vision of eternal daylight, I saw Sriman Narayana, in a clearer light than a passing dream. In that vision, I witnessed clearly his resplendent Form as in his celestial abode, with his Chakra' shedding its dazzle on his Body, and his crimson Feet.

In the previous pasuram, Sri Bhutat Azhwar described the ecstasy of those who were blessed with his vision in time long gone by. In this pasuram, Azhwar describes his own overwhelming experience of the Lord's vision here and now.

பகல் கண்டேன் - the dawn of realisation, or awakening of 'bhagavad vishaya jna'na" dispelling the cloud of 'samsa'ric ' existence, underlying the Vishnu Pura'nam phrase, ' ஸுப்ரபாதா ச மே நிஸா ', (V.P. 5-17-2).

நாரணனைக் கண்டேன் – In that brilliant light, Sriman Narayana shines like an eternal sun. ' பீஜோதேதி ஸூர்ய : ' – The sun rises impelled by fear of the Supreme Being, Who inheres in everything and is the Controller of all beings ; ' அந்த : ப்ரவிஷ்ட : ஸாஸ்தா ஜநாநாம் ஸர்வாத்மா ', (Thattriya, Aranyam 3-11). '

கனவில் மிகக்கண்டேன் – This vision springs from inner realisation, and is forever, unlike a passing dream or visual perception. **மெய்யே கண்டேன்**- The vision is real. In pasuram 67, Azhwar had sung, ' கண்டேன் திருமேனி யான் கனவில்', in reference to his mental visualisation. Here, he says, ' மிகக் கண்டேன் '. This vision is real and describable in specific terms.

ஊன் திகழும் நேமி – Chakra' shedding its dazzle on Lord's body. “ வடிவார் சோதி வலத்துறையும் சுடராழி “- (திருப்பல்லாண்டு -2). **ஒளி திகழும் சேவடியான்** - The Lord with lustrous crimson Feet. **வான் திகழும் சோதி வடிவு மிகக் கண்டேன்** – I saw Him in his resplendent abode of Sri Vaikunta. ' பரமே வ்யோமன் '.

வடிக்கோல வாள்நெடுங்கண் மாமலரான் செவ்விப் படிக்கோலம் கண்டகலாள் பன்னாள் -- அடிக்கோலி ஞாலத்தாள் பின்னும் நலம்புரிந்த தென்கொலோ கோலத்தா லில்ல குறை.

The lotus –born divine Mother of perfectly chiselled beauty with sparkling eyes having set her sight on the eternal endowed youthfulness of the Lord, is ever in his company. So is Mother Bhu Devi always at his Feet with overflowing love. Does this beauty become ever less because so many drink from it?

Azhwar extending the thought of his vision of the Lord, observes in this pasuram, that what he envisioned was not celibate Narayana, but Sriman Narayana.

வடிக்கோலம் – chiselled beauty.

வாள் நெடுங்கண் – In that overall chiselled form, her eyes sparkle.

மாமலராள்- born in the pretty lotus blossom.

செவ்விப் படிக்கோலம் கண்டு அகலாள் பன்னாள் – Setting her sight on Lord's beautiful countenance, and unable to tear herself away from that. 'யு வாகுமார் ', (Rigveda'). The Paramapurusha is described as in the beginning stage of youth and the completed stage of adolescence. ' அரும்பின் அலரை ', (பெரிய- திரு. 7-10-1). The divine Mother is ever present in His company true to Swami Nammazhwar 's depiction, ' இறையும் அகலகில்லேன் ',

(திருவாய்- மொ. 6-10-10.). 'Never parting from Him even for a fraction of a second.

ஞாலத்தாள் – Bhu Devi, the very embodiment of patience.

அடிக்கோலி நலம் புரிந்தது அன்கொலோ- in constant touch with Lord's Feet, with overwhelming love.

கோலத்தால் இல்ல குறை- Lord's beauty does not diminish because Sridevi and Bhudevi drink deep from the same. “ தயா ஸ ரஸஜர்ஹிஸ்தோ஽பிராமயா உபேயிவாந் உத்தமராஜ கந்யயா I அதீவ ராம : ஸ்ரீபேதி காமயா, விபு: ஸ்ரீயா விஜ்ஞூரிவாமரேஸ்வர : II”, (Srimad Ramayanam – Balakandam – 77-36. “ In the company of the beautiful daughter of Janaka of the exalted royal family line of Mithila, Sri Rama the son of Rajarishi Dasaratha shone resplendent

like the leader of all the celestials Vishnu in the company of Goddess Sri." Other parallels from Divyaprabhandam are, ' திகழ்கின்ற திருமார்பில் திருமங்கை தன்னோடும் திகழ்கின்ற திருமாலார் ', (திருவாய்.மொ 10-6-9). ' வடிவாய் நின் வலமார்பினில் வாழ்கின்ற மங்கையும் ', (- Thiruppalandu). The union of Sridevi and Bhudevi with Narayana is not a competitive game as in the case of worldly unions with co-wives competing for the same piece of enjoyment. The Lord is like a big perennial river in which the jivathma's can immerse in whatever number, without detracting from the infinite bliss-potential. Echoing this thought is the following verse of Bhattar. "லக்ஷ்மீம் விஹாரரஸிகாமிவ ராஜஹம்ஸீம் சாயாமிவாப்யுதயிநீமவநீம் ச தஸ்யா : “-, (Rangaraja-stavam – 1-63).” Divine Mother and her shadow-like Bhudevi, forever desirous of frolicking,(in the pond of Sri Rangana'tha'), like two queen swans.”

**குறையாக வெஞ்சொற்கள் கூறினேன் கூறி
மறையாங் கெனவுரைத்த மால -- இறையேனும்
ஈயுங்கொ லென்றே யிருந்தே னெனப்பகலும்
மாயன்கண் சென்ற வரம்.**

83

I spoke of the Lord in inadequate terms in a presumptuous vein, the Master of whom even the Vedas whisper in a venerable tone as 'That'. Having spoken thus, I still looked upto Him, all this while hoping for some tiny part of his infinite storehouse of grace.

In pasuram 74, Azhwar had, in a momentary burst of enthusiasm, referred to himself as a great Tamil literateur. Having envisioned the Lord in the indescribably exalted company of His divine Consorts, Azhwar is overtaken by a twinge of conscience as it were, wondering in a self-introspective mood, if he had not sounded somewhat self-flatteringly presumptuous about his literary merit, and thereby committed a ' bhagavad – apacha'ra" in sounding so daring before

the Lord, of Whom, even the Vedas dread to speak any louder than in a reverential whisper.

குறையாக வெஞ்சொற்கள் கூறினேன் - 'Spoke daring words that detracted from any merit thereof.' It must be noted that the Azhwar's remorse is keeping in mind the sheer indescribable greatness of the Lord, and does not have any bearing on his poetic acumen, for he has been extolled by no less than Swami Nammazhwar, and that multi-dimensional master of Tamil language and literature, Sri Thirumangai Azhwar, in the following terms. 'பாலேய் தமிழர் இசைகாரர் பத்தர்', (திருவாய்-மொ. 1-5-11). 'இன்கவி பாடும் பரமகவிகள்', (திருவாய்- மொ. - 7-9-6). 'ஆங்கரும்பிக் கண்ணீர் சோர்ந்து அன்பு கூறும் அடியவர்', (பெரிய - திருமொ. 2-10-4.).

மறை ஆங்கு அன உரைத்த மால் - 'Ma'l of whom the Vedas speak as 'That''. The Vedas which began to describe Him as 'யவா ஸ்யாத்', proceeded to equate the blissful state in all possible worlds in multiples of hundred years, finally describing the summum bonum of the final state of bliss as 'ஸ ஏகோ ப்ரஹ்மண ஆநந்த :', ('That One is the bliss of the Brahman'). They fall short of describing Him in nearer terms such as 'This', and admitted 'யதோ வாசோ நிவர்த்தந்தே', - 'from where words return without reaching', meaning that He cannot be described in words. Also refer to, 'தத்விஜ்ஞே : பரமம் பதம்', 'Vishnu's supreme abode is That.' 'யஸ்யாமதம் தஸ்ய மதம்', 'He that is comprehended by one who does not comprehend'. Azhwar ruminates on these Upanishadic declarations, and is struck by a regretful thought, 'What kind of deceitful poetry was this?. Whom was I trying to hoodwink?.'

மாயன் கண் சென்ற வரம் இறையேனும் ஈயுங் கொல் அன்றே அன்புக்கலும் இருந்தேன் - 'I looked upto the great One hoping for a tiny bit of the infinite reservoir of His grace all this while.' Azhwar observes self-disparagingly, 'Not only did I compose these verses, but hopefully looked upto Him to bestow on me a tiny bit of his infinite

grace as a recompense for my labours.' Actually Azhwar was not one to expect any kind of reward for his poetic labours. The term 'வரம்', however indicates gracious consent, so at best, the Azhwar might have implied his wistful looking up to catching the Lord's glance in gracious acknowledgement of his musical versification as a rich reward in itself.

**வரங்கருதித் தன்னை வணங்காத வன்மை
உரங்கருதி முர்க்கத் தவனை -- நரங்கலந்த
சிங்கமாய்க் கீண்ட திருவ னடியிணையே
அங்கண்மா ஞாலத் தழுது.**

84

The Feet of my beautiful Lord are the quintessential nectar of this beautiful spacious land, the Lord Who in half-leonine, half-human form tore up the wilful Hiranya inebriated by his brawn and the boons obtained from gods, and unremitting in his enmity to the Lord.

வரம் கருதி – regarding highly his boons.

தன்னை வணங்காத—not submitting to Him.

த்விதாபஜ்யேயமப்யேகம் ந நமேயம் து கஸ்யசித்', (Srimad Ramayanam, Yuddha Kandam, 36-11). Ravana's boast, ' would rather be broken in two than bow to anyone.'

வன்மை உரம் கருதி முர்க்கத்தவனை - obstinately obsessed with his prodigious muscle power, and the boon obtained from Brahma granting him near immortality.

நரங்கலந்த சிங்கமாய்க்கீண்ட – 'As half-lion half-man, tore to bits' – As Hiranya's boon granted him immunity,among other things, from being killed by man or animal, the Lord assumed this hybrid form to kill him.

திருவன் – The beautiful Nrsimhavata'ra' has been hailed as, 'மருகோ ந பீம : ', in Rig Veda, and as 'நாரஸிம்ஹவபு: ஸ்ரீமாந் ', in Vishnu Sahasrana'mam. Also refer to Sri Thirumazhisai Piran's 'அழகியான் தானே அரியிருவன் தானே ', (நான்முகன்- திரு. 22).
அங்கண் ஞாலத்தமுது – Nectar of this expansive universe.

' உதீர்ண ஸம்ஸார தவாஸஸ்க்ஷணிம், க்ஷணேன நிர்வாப்ய பராம் ச நிர்வருதிம் I ப்ரயச்சதி த்வச்சரணம்புஜ த்வயாராகாம்ருத ஸிந்து ஸ்ரீகர : II ' – (Sri Alavandar's Stotra Ratnam – 29). Sri Alavandar says, ' One drop of the nectar ocean of love springing from Thy two lotus Feet, extinguishes in a trice, the forest fire of samsara' and reaches to the devotee the greatest happiness that he can ever find.'

அமுதென்னும் தேனென்று மாழியா னென்றும்
அமுதன்று கொண்குகந்தா னென்றும் -- அமுதன்ன
சொன்மால யேத்தித் தொழுதேன் சொலப்பட்ட
நன் மாலயேத்தி நவின்று.

85

The Vedas hail the Lord who wields the sparkling Chakra' as nectar and honey, He who exulted in churning and distributing nectar to celestial beings. I hail my Supreme Lord, and praise and worship him with this nectar-like garland of verses.

அமுதென்றும் – The Lord is the nectar of all living beings, unlike the nectar of the milk ocean which was available only to the celestial beings.

தேன் அன்றும் – Upanishads hail the Lord as ' ஸர்வரஸ : '. Honey is a compound of all six tastes that cover the whole spectrum of what we call taste.

ஆழியான் – Wielding the Sudarsana'.

அமுது கொண்கு உகந்தான் அன்றும் – Though the Lord churned the ocean for the sake of the celestial beings, at their request, his exultation was more than theirs in this, because He is quick to

recognise even those who look upto him for favours as elevated beings. ' உதாரா : ஸர்வ ஏவைதே ', (Gita 7-18). All the three categories of devotees, viz. they who seek Him for worldly or celestial joys and the realised beings who love Him for his own sake, (ஐஸ்வர்ய கைவல்யார்த்தி ஜ்ஞாநி), are elevated beings.

அமுது கொண்டு - Here, ' அமுது ', could be construed to mean divine Mother Sri who materialised from the milk ocean. ' விண்ணவர் அமுதுண்ண அமுதில்பெண்ணமுதுண்டஏம்பெருமானே, (பெரிய - திரு . 6-1-2).

அமுதன்ன சொன்மால் – nectar like garland of poetry. Only in the previous pasuram, Azhwar had spoken deprecatingly of his verses as, ' குறையாக வெஞ்சொற்கள் கூறினேன்'. But since the subject matter of his verses is the unsatiating nectar of ' baghavad vishayam', Azhwar changes tack having tasted the sweetness of the subject and refers to his verses as nectar-like garland.

சொலப்பட்ட நன்மால் – The great Lord spoken of so endearingly by the Vedas which are replete with such statements. ' ரஸோ வைஸ : ', (Thaithriya Upanishad, Brahma'nandavalli - 7-1.) The Paramapurusha is the essence of essences. ' ஸர்வரஸ : ', (Chandogya Up. 3-14-2). 'He is of all tastes. ' விஜ்ஞே : பதே பரமே மத்வ உத்ஸ : ', (Vishnu-Suktham).
' Honey flows from Vishnu's exalted Feet.'

நவின் றுரைத்த நாவலர்கள் நாண்மலர்கொண்டு ஆங்கே பயின்றதனால் பெற்றபய னென்கொல் -- பயின்றார் தம் மெய்த்தவத்தால் காண்பரிய மேகமணிவண்ணை யான் எத்தவத்தால் காண்பன் கொ லின்று. 86

What fruit have the learned ones reaped by their prayer to the Supreme Lord, with freshly gathered flowers, and constant remembrance and utterance of His sacred names! This is not achieved by tortuous body-beating penance, but by His grace. How else have I been blessed by His vision except by the grace of my Lord with complexion like a blue jewel and the sky?

Azhwar makes the point that at the root of any spiritual sa'dhana' which culminates in God-experience is his grace, for no penance, however rigorous and marked by self-punishing practice can lead to Him, unless it is blessed by his 'nirhetuka krupa'.

நவீன்றுரைத்த நாவலர்கள் - The learned ones naturally endowed with spiritual proclivities who seek their progress, by constant japa' and meditation.

நாண்மலர்கொண்டு- gathering just blossomed fresh flowers.
பயின்றதனால் பெற்ற பயன் அன் கொல்? – literally, what is the fruit of their worshipful prayer to Him ? The implication is that God-experience is not the outcome of any mechanical input-output equation, for Narayana is the fruit as well as the dispenser of the fruit,
'ஸ ஸ்வேநைவ பலப்ரத: பலமபி ஸ்வேநைவ நாராயண : '.

பயின்றுர் தம் மெய்த்தவத்தால் காண்பரிய - difficult to envision by the pursuit of ' karma yoga" practices.(of those well-versed in such practices).

மேக மணி வ ண்ணை- Lord Who resembles the blue sky and a blue diamond.

யான் இன்று அத்தவத்தால் காண்பன் கொல் – 'With what ascetic powers do I see Him now?' The implication is that it is the 'nirhetuka krupa' that enables the Azhwar to experience the Lord in his day to day thoughts and pursuits. Swami Appillai 's commentary has it that the Azhwar refers to himself as 'யான்', in utter humility, that is meaning, ' humble as I am '.

Swami Periava'cha'n Pillai 's interpretation, however is that Azhwar refers to himself as 'யான்', in an exulting and euphoric sense, blessed as he is with direct experience of the Lord, even as Swami Nammazhwar does under similar circumstances, 'யாவர் நிகர் அகல் வானத்தே ', (திருவாய்- மொ. 4-5-8.). ' வானக்கோனக் கவி சொல்ல வல்லேற்கு இனி மாறுண்டே ', (திருவாய்- மொ. 4-5-1.).

**இன்று வறிகின்றே னல்லேன் இருநிலத்தைச்
சென்றங் களந்த திருவடியை -- அன்று
கருக்கோட்டி யுள்கிடந்து கைதொழுதேன் கண்டேன்
திருக்கோட்டி யெந்தை திறம். 87**

A long time ago, lying in foetal state, I witnessed the powers of my Lord of Thirukkottiyur. Drawn by this, I folded my hands in prayer. It is not that only today I have awakened to the drawing power of my Lord's sacred Feet which scaled the heavens and earth aeons ago.

Azhwar recounts in this pasuram, how as a formative child in his mother's womb, he was blessed by Lord's vision, and experienced to his utter amazement, the greatness of His 'svaruparupa guna vibhutis '.

இன்று அறிகின்றேனல்லேன் -' It is not as if I have become aware of Him, (bhagavad-vishayam), only today '. As if anticipating a question as to if it is possible to have that experience as a mere foetus, Azhwar refers to the Trivikrama'vata'ra.

இருநிலத்தைச் சென்று ஆங்கு அளந்த திருவடியை -' His sacred Feet which scaled the heaven and earth.' Did the Lord make this exertion at anybody's behest ? It was like the instinctive reaching out of the mother to the baby in sleep. It is all the ' nirhetuka krupa' of the Lord, Who showers His grace without any apparent reason.

Even as Swami Nammazhwar eulogises, 'கண்டாயே நெஞ்சே கருமங்கள் வாய்க்கின்று ஓர், அண் தானும் இன்றியே வந்து இயலுமாறு உண்டான் உலகேழும் ஓர் மூவடி கொண்டானேக்கண்டு கொண்டனே நியுமே.' – (திருவாய்.மொ.1-10-5).

கருக்கோட்டியுள் கிடந்து - lying in foetal state. 'ஸ்குமாரதநூர் கர்ப்பே', (Vishnu Puranam – 6-5-10.). Starting with this phrase, Vishnu Puranam describes, in six slokas, painful states confronting the foetus. So the Lord is cognizant of all this. Did he not move quickly to understand the helpless state of Parikshit in Uttara's womb, and act to protect him from the 'brahma'stra' launched by Asvatta'ma'? Sri Bhutat Azhwar's pasuram is on similar lines as Sri Poigai Azhwar's line, 'கருவரங்கத்துட் கிடந்து கை தொழுதேன் கண்டேன் திருவரங்கமேயான் திசை', (முதல் – திரு. 6). 'ஜாயமாநம் ஹி புருஷம் யம் பஸ்யேந் மதுஸூதந: I ஸாத்விகஸ் ஸ து விஜ்ஞேய : ஸ வைமோக்ஷார்த்த சிந்தக : II, (Maha'bha'ratham Santhi Parva, 358-73). “ He that is still in the mother's womb, who is blessed by Madhusudhana's grace, is a sa'thvikā' by nature, and is attuned to ultimate liberation.”

திருக்கோட்டி அந்தை திறம் - The qualities (of svarupa, rupa, guna, vibhūti, and actions), of the presiding Deity of Thirukk- ottiyur, which is famous for its bountifully fertile soil texture.

கை தொழுதேன் - (As evidence of this experience) I folded my hands'.

திறம்பிற றினியறிந்தேன் தென்னரங்கத் தெந்தை திறம்பா வழிசென்றார்க் கல்லால் -- திறம்பாச் செடிநரகை நீக்கித்தாம் செல்வதன்முன் வானோர் கடிநகர வாசற் கதவு.

88

Except for those who walk the unfailing path of my Lord of Thiruvaram, the portals of the bastion of celestials and the abode of my Lord, Sri Vaikuntam, would shut before others who tread their own fallible path, ever reach them, enmeshed as they are, in the tangled web of hellish existence. This I know now.

Here again, Azhwar underscores the point that the Lord's grace and guidance is an integral part of our spiritual pursuit, seeking oneness with Him, and that they who are daft enough to think that they can find liberation by dint of their own effort, will never be able to cut the gordian knot of samsa'ric existence.

தென் அரங்கத்து அந்தை - Lord of Thiruvaram, the same Lord who, on Kurukshetra battle-field, rounded up his gospel with the ultimate enunciation that He is the Upa'ya', and told his disciple Arjuna to seek recourse to Him. “மாம் ஏகம் ஸரணம் வ்ரஜி”, (Gita – 18-66).

அந்தை திறம்பாவதி – The Supreme Lord who is ever the unfailing path. The Upanishads drive home this truth, 'ஸரணம்- நாராயண : ', (Subhalopanishad). 'நாராயணம் பராயணம் ', (Narayana – Suktham). Since His is the only infallible royal path, ('சக்கனி ராஜமர்க்கமு' – Saint Sri Thiagaraja) other paths are fraught with risks of failure.

திறம்பாச் செடி நரகை நீக்கி – cutting through the impenetrable undergrowth of samsa'ra'. Before one is able to find the root of this undergrowth, and remove this by his own 'sa'dhana'nu-shtana", the doors of Sri Vaikuntam will have closed down. **வானேர் கடநகர வாசற்கதவு திறம்பிற்று - திறம்பிற்று** – closed down. **கடி** – bastion. **வானேர் நகர்** – city of the nithyasuris. 'மரீசீநாம் பதம் ', (Purusha – Suktham). Instead of meandering aimlessly, one would be advised to seek recourse to the Lord's Feet as the Upa'ya'. **இனி அறிந்தேன்** – ' This I got to understand after much reflection.'

கதவிக் கதஞ்சிறந்த கஞ்சீனமுன் காய்ந்து
 அதவிப்போர் யானை யொசித்து -- பதவியாய்ப்
 பாணியால் நீரேற்றுப் பண்டொருகால் மாவலியை
 மாணியாய்க் கொண்டீலையே மண்.

89

You finished off the vengeful Kamsa in a burst of anger, and vanquished the battle-tested elephant by breaking off its tusk. In an earlier age, melting with compassion, You as the diminutive Brahmin, accepted the symbolic offering of water from Mahabali and took away this earth from him.

As if conjecturing the Lord's mind as to how the Azhwar could be so sure of the Lord carrying out the devotee's wish underlying his act of surrender, Azhwar enumerates three illustrative episodes, as if telling the Lord, ' This is how You are.

கதவிக் கதம் சிறந்த கஞ்சீன - Finishing off the vengeful, angry Kamsa, in a greater burst of anger. As Sri Andal says, ' கஞ்சன் வயிற்றில் நெருப்பென்ன நின்ற நெடுமால் '- Sri Krishna was like a smouldering cauldron of fire in the stomach of Kamsa. “சாதுசனத்தை நலியும் கஞ்சீனச்சாதிப்பதற்கு ஆதியஞ்சோதியருவை அங்கு வைத்திங்கு பிறந்த வேதமுதல்வன்”, (திருவாய்-மொழி, 3-5-5).

The Paramapurusha took birth here to punish Kamsa for his evil of ' bha'gavadapachara", of which the Lord takes an irrevocable view. As Swami Nanjiyar has commented, ' ஈஸ்வரன் அவதரித்துப்பண்ணின ஆனத்தொழில் களெல்லாம் பாகவதபசாரம் பொருமை'. Next the Azhwar refers to the Kuvalaya'peeda episode.

போர் யானை - battle-thirsty elephant. ' ஆருமதயானை அடர்த்தவன் தன்னை ', (திருவாய்- மொ. 9-4-11).

ஒசித்து – breaking the tusk like a matchstick. ' குலநல்யானை மருப்பொசித்தாய் ', (திருவாய்-மொ. 4-3-1.)

பதவி – melting concern.

பாணியால் நீரேற்று – accepting the symbolic offering of water, in his hand. ' அலம்புரிந்த நெடுந்தடக்கை – (திருந்நெடுந்தா.- 6).

Lord 's Hand is described as generously long to make the favour – seeker put up both his hands, to say ' enough, enough '.

மாவலியை – Mahabali who was determined to give anything to anyone in his sacrificial altar.

மாணியாய்க் கொண்டலியே மண் – accepting the gift of land as the celibate Vamana. ' க்ருஷ்ணர்ஜிநேன ஸம்வருண் வந்வதாம் வக்ஷ: ஸ்தலாலயாம் ' – 'concealing His Consort on His chest with deer skin'. Such was the concern and compassion of the Lord for his devotees like Vasudeva', Devaki, Indra' and so on.

மண்ணுலக மாளேனே வானவர்க்கும் வானவனாய்
விண்ணுலகம் தன்னகத்துக்கு மேவேனே -- நண்ணித்
திருமாலச் செங்க ணையான எங்கள்
பெருமானைக் கைதொழுதபின் .

90

After approaching and submitting in self-surrender to the Lord of Sri, of pink-lotus eyes, the Supreme Being and our Master, would I not rule over this world, and even walk the corridors of paradise, as a celestial among celestials ?

As if anticipating another poser from the Lord, suggesting ' leave aside what I did for other devotees; tell me what it is that you want'. Azhwar proceeds to reassure the Lord that he got everything he wanted when he surrendered at His Feet. That, by itself, to Azhwar is like ruling over this wide earth, and walking the regions of Sri Vaikunta, with complete freedom.

மண்ணுலகம் ஆளேனே - 'would I not rule over this earth. ' மண்ணுலகம்' is only illustrative. It refers to the whole 'lilavibhuti'.

வானவர்க்கும்
தன்னகத்துமேவேனே -

வானவனாய்

விண்ணுலகம்

Would I not mesh with Vaikunta as a celestial among celestials? 'தன் அகத்து' implies freely roaming the inner corridors, even the private chambers of the Lord and divine Mother.

திருமால் – Lord of Sri.

செங்கண் நெடியான் - The Paramapurusha' with eyes like pink lotus flowers. “ தஸ்ய யதா கப்யாஸம் புண்டரீகமேவமக்ஷிணி தஸ்ய உதிதி நாம “, (Chadogya Upanishad). ' He has two eyes resembling the lotus flowers opened up in the sun's rays. His name is, 'The Exalted One '. 'செங்கண்' also indicates eyes reddened by melting concern towards the devotees. “கோவிந்தேதி யதாக்ரந்தத் க்ருஷ்ண மாம் தூரவாஸிநம் I

ருணம் ப்ரவ்ருத்தமிவ மே ஹ்ருதயாந் நாபஸர்ப்பதி “II, (Mahabharatham. Uttaraparva – 47-33). Sri Krishna says, ' The distant cry of ' Govinda ' by Draupathi weighs heavily on my heart like a compounded debt.'

எங்கள் பெருமான் - ' our Lord '.” அஸ்மத்ஸ்வாமிந் “,(Saranagati-gadyam).

நண்ணிக் கை தொழுதுபின் – approaching and worshipping Him in self-surrender and with folded hands. Azhwar says that all that he did was one act of worship. That, by itself, had melted the heart of the great Lord. As Swami Alavandar says, “ த்வதங்க்ரிமுத்திஸ்ய கதாபி கேநசித், யதாததா வாபி ஸக்ருத்

க்ருதோஞ்சலி : I ததைவ முஷ்ணாத்யஸ்பாந்யஸேஷத: ஸ்பாநி புஷ்ணதி ந ஜாது ஹீயதே II”, (Stotra Ratnam – 28). ' One act of surrender at Thy sacred Feet, by anyone anytime, in whatever manner, wipes out all sins then and there and makes all the good to multiply. It never suffers any reduction.'As Swami

Nammazhwar sings, ' அடங்கெழில் சம்பத்து, அடங்கக்கண்டு ஈசன் அடங்கெழில் அ. '.தென்று, அடங்குக உள்ளே '(திருவாய்-மொ.1-2-7).

As Hanuman exulted at the sight of the victorious Rama after decimating His enemies,'அர்த்ததஸ்ச மயாப்ராப்தா தேவராஜ்யாதயோ குண : I. ' I have reaped a bonanza similar to heavenly kingdom.'

பின்ன லருநரகம் சேராமல் பேதுறுவீர்
முன்னுல் வணங்க முயல்மினே -- பன்னூல்
அளந்தானக் கார்க்கடல்குழ ஞாலத்தை எல்லாம்
அளந்தா னவன் சேவடி.

91

Oh confused men, who worry over how best to avoid entering the terrible hell after you have shuffled off your mortal coils. Try to pray to His sacred Feet beforehand, He who scaled the worlds surrounded by dark oceans and has been objectified in various Scriptures.

In this and the next three pasurams, the Azhwar in his overflowing compassion for the 'samsa'ris', of the world, gives out his message of faith and prayer. In this pasuram, he cautions against the all-too-common notion that prayer and meditation can wait till after the evening of one's life. If one follows the proclivities of one's nature, to the logical end, then the gates of hell will be wide open to receive him at the end of life's journey. So Azhwar rightly advises us to shake off our inertia, and go to the Lord beforehand. How can one be sure that He is the One to seek? We have Azhwar's assurance on this. He is the One who has been objectified in Sruthi, Smrithi, Iithiha'sa Pura'na's. They all speak eloquently about the Parathvam of Narayana. To a possible question whether it is appropriate to say of Him, 'அளந்தான்', or literally 'Who has been measured or determined', when the Srutis whisper, 'யதோ வாசோ நிவர்த்தந்தே', - 'from whose quarters the words turn back', it can be submitted that to say that He is difficult to spell out specifically is also some measure of objectivisation, to be guided by. That is why, Sruti in recognizing “யஸ்யாமதம்”, (to whom It is not comprehensible), quickly adds, '

தஸ்ய மதம் ', (by him, It is comprehended). Even the Vedapurusha' Who declares about Himself, ' வேதாஹமேதம் புருஷம் ', (Purusha-Suktham).- ' I know this Purusha", adds as if to fill the blank, to the next question 'How?' ' மஹாந்தம் ', - ' The immeasurably Great '.

கார்க்கடல் சூழ் ஞாலத்தை அல்லாம் அளந்தான் – He who scaled all the worlds surrounded by dark oceans. ' ஸ பூமீம் விஸ்வதோ வ்ருத்வா ', He pervaded the universe in all sides. This He did for the apparent purpose of fulfilling the need of the celestials, but underlying this, was the overarching purpose of casting His net, far and wide, to bring as many ' chetana's', (devotees), as possible within His net. His sacred Feet touched and blessed all and sundry beings all over, in a spontaneous outpouring of His “ soulabhya', souseelya', ka'runya', va'tsalya'dhi guna's”.

பின்னால அருநரகம் சேராமல் பேதுறுவீர் – ' So that you can avoid the catastrophe of hell later on.'

முன்னால வணங்க முயல்மினே -Try to worship Him beforehand. For this life and body is a fleeting phenomenon. “ மன்னுயிராக்கைகள் மின்னி ன் நிலையில் “, (திருவாய் –மொ . 1-2-2).

அடியால்முன் கஞ்சீனச் செற்று அமரரேத்தும்
படியான் கொடிமேல் புள்கொண்டான் - - நெடியான்றன்
நாமமே யேத்துமின்க ளேத்தினால் தாம்வேண்டும்
காமமே காட்டும் கடிது.

92

Chant His names and glorify Him, He that has a long memory and a flag that sports Garuda the eagle king and is ever glorified by celestials, Who killed Kamsa before he could even stir, by a mere kick. If you glorify His names thus, it will usher in the desired blessings for you.

Purusha'rtha's or goals of human life can be classified into two general categories, viz. ' anishtanivriti' - removal of suffering and pain which everyone is averse to, and 'ishtapra'pithi' – attaining desired ends. In the previous pasuram, Azhwar spoke about the former goal. In this pasuram, he says that even for getting what one wants in life, one should have the Lord's grace.

அடியால் முன் கஞ்சீனச் செற்று – Kamsa 'vadham' is an instance of the Lord conferring both the purusha'rtha's on celestials. This He did with just one kick by His Foot.” **படிக்களவாக நிமிர்த்த நின் பாதபங்கயமே தலைக்கணியாய்**”, (திருவாய் –மொ.9-2-2.). This the Lord did, before Kamsa could even dare to lift his little finger against Him.

அமரர் ஏத்தும்படியான் – ever glorified by celestials for the Lord's countless acts of kindness.

கொடி மேல் புள் கொண்டான் – He Who sports mighty Garuda, hailed as ' வேதாத்தா விஹகேஸ்வர : ', on His flag., symbolic of Lord's supreme quality as the Protector of everything. Even the ancient Tamils in their various poetic works, had repeatedly glorified the flag sporting Garuda as attesting to the Lord, as 'Parama'. ' சேவல் அம் கொடியோய் ', (பரிபாடல் –1), ' செவ்வாய் உவணத்து உயர்கொடியோனே ', (பரிபாடல் –2), ' புள்ளின் நிவந்து ஒங்கு உயர் கொடிச்சேவலோய் ', (பரிபாடல் –3), ' அவிழ்துழாய் மலர்தருசெல்வத்துப் புள் மிசைக் கொடியோனும்', (பரிபாடல் –8).

நெடியான் – He who has a long memory. The Lord never forgets the devotee who chants his names in prayer.

தன் நாமமே ஏத்துமின்கள் - glorify His names. ' த்ருவாலோ அஸ்ய கீர்யோ ஜநாஸ : - ' They who chant His names achieve long-lasting fruits'.

காமம் – desired results. “ ஜஹலௌகிகமைஸ்வர்யம் ஸ்வர்க்காத்யம் பாரலௌகிகம் I கைவல்யம் பகவந்தம் ச மந்த்ரோசயம் ஸாதயிஷ்யதி “ II ' This mantra' will reach to us worldly prosperity,

celestial bliss and otherworldly joys, everlasting happiness and the Lord's proximity itself.' Lest one should doubt if a 'prapanna', like Azhwar should propagate the message of 'na'ma japa",etc.it may be clarified, that since that is an integral part of 'prapatti marga", and the world is composed of a diverse range of people with varying levels of predisposition, most of whom can at best evolve in slow step-by-step stages. Even the 'Shastra's ' advocate different goals and ways of achieving them, while stressing the truth of the Lord being the 'Way' and the supreme 'Goal'. So Azhwar says, '**தாம் வேண்டும் காமமே காட்டும் கடிது**', - It (Lord's name), will facilitate quick realisation of all our desires.

**கடிது கொடுநரகம் பிற்காலும் செய்கை
கொடிதன்றதுகூடா முன்னம் -- வடிசங்கம்
கொண்டானக் கூந்தல்வாய் கீண்டானக் கொங்கை நஞ்
சண்டான யேத்துமினோ வற்று.** 93

Hell is a vast cauldron of horrors wrought by the emissaries of death too terrible to bear. Wake up and try to ward off this deathly desolation, by seeking and worshipping the Lord, with the beautiful Sankha' Who tore apart the maned horse-demon, and drank off the poisoned bosom of the ogress.

கடிது கொடுநரகம் – hell is first and foremost too horrible to visualise.

பிற்காலும் செய்கை கொடிது – over and beyond this, the persecutions heaped on the sufferers too terrible to bear. As Swami Periazhwar's line has it, ' தென்னவன் தமர் செப்பம் இலாதார் சேவதக்குவார் போலப்புருந்து பின்னும் வன் கயிற்றால் பிணித்தெற்றி பின்முன்னாக இழுப்பதன் முன்னம்', (பெரியாழ்வார் –திரு. 4-5-7.). சே அதக்குவார் – 'Those that carry out the act of mutilation on a bull '. ' நமன் தமர் செய்யும் வேதனைக்கு ஒருங்கி நடுங்கினேன் ',(பெரிய-திரு.1-6-3.), ' வம்புலாங்குந்தல் மனைவியைத் துறந்து பிறர் பொருள் தாரமென்றிவற்றை நம்பினார் இறந்தால் நமன் தமர் பற்றி அற்றிவைத்து அரியெழுகின்ற

செம்பினூலியன்ற பாவையைப் பாவீ தழுவென மொழிவதற்கு,'
(பெரிய-திரு. - 1-6-4.).

Azhwar warns us that regardless of our belief-system in regard to questions like hell and experiences of hellish existence, since 'Sha'stra's' and learned people make reference to these things, we may atleast sit up and ponder this matter and turn to Him for protection from such terrors.

அது கூடாமுன்னம் – before it happens to you and me.

வடி சங்கம் கொண்டான - He who holds the beautiful 'Sankha' in his hand.

கூந்தல் வாய் கீண்டான - Lord who tore the mouth of the maned horse demon, Kesi. 'கூந்தல் அரிசிமை கொன்றாய்' - (பரி பாடல் - 3-31). 'மேவார் விடுத்தந்த கூந்தற்குதிரையை வாய்ப்பகுத்திட்டு', (கலித்தொகை -67), 'கூந்தன் மா கொன்று குடமாடிக் கோவலனாய்' - (முத்தொள்ளாயிரம்).

கொங்கை நஞ்சு உண்டான - He who drank the life out of the poison-smeared bosom of the ogress Putana'.

ஏத்துமினோ உற்று – Take to Him and pray to Him, (leaving aside your doubts and disbeliefs), as the only certain remover of all such fears and adversaries.

உற்று வணங்கித் தொழுமின் உலகேழும்
முற்றும் விழுங்கும் முகில்வண்ணன் - - பற்றிப்
பொருந்தாதான் மார்விடந்து பூம்பாட கத்துள்
இருந்தான ஏத்துமென் நெஞ்சு.

94

My heart sings the glory of the Lord with complexion of the sky, Who once swallowed the worlds for safe-keeping, and dug into the heart of the sworn irredeemable enemy, and now resides in beautiful Pa'takam. You also take to Him and sing His glory in fervent prayer.

உற்று வணங்கித்தொழுமின் – seek and bow to His Feet and pray to Him. Let us not entertain the thought how we, being so lowly, can ever deserve to reach the vicinity of the supreme Being of all. He does not look at our station in life. He is forever eager for identity and communion with our spiritual entity, ('a'thmavastu ') even as Sri Krishna, He was so eager to taste all the butter in Gokulam offered with such ingenuous and innocent devotion and love, by the cattle-raising ya'dava's who did not know the difference between their right and left hands.

உலகு ஏழும் முற்றும் விழுங்கும் – Who swallowed all the worlds in whole for safe-keeping. “ ஆல மாமரத்தின் இலைமேல் ஒரு பாலகனாய் ஞாலமேழு முண்டான் அரங்கத்தரவினீணயான் , (அமலனாதிபிரான் - 9).

பொருந்தாதான் – Hiranya who was evil beyond redemption.
மாந்விடந்து – digging into the heart as if exploring if it contained atleast an iota of saving grace. 'உளந்தொட்டு' - (பெரிய-திரு.-1-6.9).
பூம்பாடகத்துள் இருந்தான் - residing in the beautiful divya-desa' Pa'takam revealing the Form that hastened for the protection of the devotee Prahla'da.

ஏத்தும் அன் நெஞ்சு – ' my heart will sing the glory of '.

என்னெஞ்சு மேயானென் சென்னியான் தானவனை
வன்னெஞ்சம் கீண்ட மணிவண்ணன் - - முன்னம்சே
யூழியா னாழி பெயர்த்தான் உலகேத்தும்
ஆழியா னத்தியூ ரான் .

95

The great Lord, resplendent like a blue diamond, and resting on the milk ocean, Who in time immemorial absorbed the universe in Himself, and brought it forth for creation of life, and tore the hard-heart of the demon Hiranya, abides in Athiyur, radiating His grace as always. How gracious of Him that He inheres in my heart and head.

The previous four pasurams contained the message of the Azhwar to the world at large. From this pasuram till the end, the Azhwar immerses in self-experience. In this pasuram, he is beside himself with sheer wonder about Lord's 'soulabhya'. The pasurams of all the Azhwars usually harmonise in terms of diction and meaning. But sometimes, for greater felicity of expression, the order could get transposed, as for example, in this pasuram where the Azhwar begins the pasuram by saying, “என்னெஞ்சமேயான் என் சென்னியான்”, 'resides in my heart and head'. Later only, Azhwar talks about Who resides there.

முன்னம் சேய் ஊழியான் – In time immemorial, the whole cosmos was in 'Brahman' state. “ஸதேவ ஸோம்ய இதமக்ர ஆஸீத்” (Chandogya- 6-2-1). 'In the very beginning, this universe remained as 'sath' in Brahman state. 'ஏகோ ஹவை நாராயண ஆஸீத் ந ப்ரஹ்மா நேஸாந :', (Mahopanishad). 'Only Narayana was there in the inception, neither Brahma nor Siva. That Brahman willed 'பஹுஸ்யாம்', 'let me become manifold'.

ஊழி பெயர்த்தான் – at that time, the Lord created the worlds, and life. **உலகேத்தும் ஆழியான்** - reclining on the Milk ocean, and cherished by all beings.

'தரீபாது ரத்வ உதைத் புருஷ :', பாதோஸ்யேஹாபவாத் புந :', (Purusha- Suktam). Purusha willed to assume three forms, Aniruddha, Sankarshana, and Pradhyumna, in the 'Paramapadha'. One form viz. Aniruddha transformed into 'kshira'bdhinadha", reclining on the Milk ocean. 'ததோ விஜ்வங் வ்யக்ராமத் ஸாஸநாநாஸநே அபி', (Purusha-Suktham). After that Purusha pervaded everywhere to protect all lives, those that take food, and those that do not.

தானவீன வன் நெஞ்சம் கீண்ட – tearing the hard heart of the demon, Hiranya.

மணி வண்ணன் - with complexion like a blue diamond.

அத்தியூரான் – the sacred divya-desam of Hastisaila, or Kancheepuram, where Lord resides as Varadha'. “தென்னத்தியூரர் கழலிணைக் கீழ்ப்பூண்ட அன்பாளன் இராமானுசன்”

(இராமானுஜ- நூற்றந்தாதி – 31.). In the next pasuram, Azhwar continues to invoke the name of the Lord of this divya-desam, with words beginning, 'அத்தியூரான் புள்ளியூர்வான் ', which is evocative of the famous ' Garuda-seva" 'utsavam' for this Lord.

என் நெஞ்சம் மேயான் - He resides in my heart. ' வடதடமும் வைகுந்தமும் மதிள் துவராபதியும் இடவகைகள் இகழ்ந்திட்டு என்பால் இடவகை கொண்டனையே, (பெரியாழ்வார்-திரு. 5-4-10). 'அனந்தன்பாலும் கருடன்பாலும் ஐது நொய்தாக வைத்து என் மனந்தன்னுள்ளே வந்து வைகி,(பெரியாழ்வார்-திரு.5-4-8). பனிக்கடலில் பள்ளிகோளப் பழகவிட்டு ஓடிவந்து என் மனக்கடலில் வாழவல்ல மாயமனாள் நம்பீ ', (பெரியாழ்வார்-திரு. 5-4-9.).' கல்லும் கனகடலும் வைகுந்த வாடும் புல்லென்றெழுந்தன ஏபாவம் – வெல்ல நெடியான் நிறம்கரியான் உட்புகுந்து நீங்கான், அடியேனது உள்ளத்தகம் ' – (பெரிய திருவந்தாதி – 68).

என் சென்னியான் – 'resides in my head too.' ' தலைமேல் தாளிணைகள் – நிலபேரான் என்னெஞ்சத்து ' – (திருவாய் – மொ. 10-6-6.).

அத்தியூரான் புள்ளியூர்வான் அணிமணியின் துத்திசேர் நாகத்தின்மேல் துயில்வான் -- முத்தீ மறையாவான் மாகடல் நஞ்சுண்டான் றனக்கும் இறையாவா னெங்கள் பிரான் .

96

Our Lord Who has the eagle king Garuda as His vehicle, and the serpent king with hood embedded in jewels, and patterned in colours, for His bed, is the substance of the Veda's which speak of three-fold fires, and is the Master of Rudhra'. He abides as the presiding deity at Athiyur.

அத்தியூரான் புள்ளுபூர்வான் – He who has the eagle king as his vehicle, and presides at Athiyur as our Lord. “ஆதிராஜ்யமதிகம் புவநாநாமீஸ தே பிஸ் நயந கில மௌளி : “, (Varadara'jasthavam 25). “ Lord, Thy crown by itself attests to the fact that Thou art the Emperor of all the worlds.” Similarly, the fact that the Lord at Kancheepuram has Garuda as his vehicle testifies to that. This is borne out on the strength of Azhwar's 'mangala'sa'sanam' to this Deity in this and the previous pasuram.

அணி மணியின் துத்திசேர் நாகத்தின் மேல் துயில்வான் – ' He who rests in sleep on Thiruvanantha' embedded in jewels, and patterned in colours. 'அமிதௌஜ : பர்யங்க : தஸ்மிந் ப்ரஹ்ம ஆஸ்தே '- (Kaushidhaki). ' The bed Anantha' is of immeasurable strength. On that rests the Brahman.' In citing Garuda, the head of the 'nithyasuris', and Anantha', Azhwar pays tribute to the 'nithyavibhuti' of the Lord. **முத்தீ மறை ஆவான்**- He who is worshipped with three-fold 'agnis' as proclaimed by the Veda's. These three-fold fires are 'ga'rhaspathyam', 'a'vahaniyam', and 'dakshina'gni'.

மறை – Upanishads that constitute the crown of the Veda's. He is the One who is the substance of the Veda's, and proclaimed by them as the 'Parama-purusha'. Even the ancient Tamils recognised this as evident from the phrase, ' வேதத்து மறை நீ ', (பரிபாடல் 3.66).

மாகடல் நஞ்சுண்டான் தனக்கும் இறையாவான் – Even Rudra' who considers himself Isvara' by virtue of having swallowed the poison that emanated while churning the Milk ocean, looks upon Narayana as his Master. ' கேஸீ விஷஸ்ய பாத்ரேண யத்ருத்ரேண அபிபத் ஸஹ ', (Rukh Mandalam 10 –136.7). ' Kesava Who has beautiful locks, drank the poison with Rudra' as the symbolic instrument which contained the venom.' The idea is that Rudra' was just the apparent instrument for drinking the poison, Narayana being the 'Antarya'mi', who absorbed it. In referring to Rudra' who is considered the head of the 'samsa'ris', the lila'vibhuti' of the Sriman Narayana is implied. By referring to Him as 'மறையாவான்', Azhwar drives home the point, that the Veda's which are 'apaurusheya', themselves proclaim Him as the embodiment of both 'nithyavibhuti'

and 'lilavibhuti', and by his benediction, 'அங்கள் பிரான் அத்தியூரான்', he further adds that such a great Master of all life and creation, has for all our benefit, and in all his love and simplicity, come to abide in Hasthisailam. By the choice of the the pronoun 'ஏங்கள்', the Azhwar has been most generously inclusive of all of us, and not merely him, and a few chosen ones, even as Swami Nammazhwar does in his line, 'கேசவன்தமர் கீழ்மேல் அமர் ஏழுபிறப்பும்', (திருவாய்-மொ. 2-7-1.)

**எங்கள் பெருமா னிமையோர் தலைமகன் நீ
செங்க ணெடுமால் திருமார்பா – பொங்கு
படமுக்கி னாயிரவாய்ப் பாம்பிணமேல் சேர்ந்தாய்
குடமுக்கில் கோயிலாக் கொண்டு.**

97

**My Lord, with divine Mother lovingly seated on your chest,
You are the supreme Being with beautiful red eyes, the Head
of all celestials, and our Master. You laid down on Anantha'
with a thousand hoods and mouths at the shrine at Kudandhai,
wishing to abide there.**

திருமார்பா-He who has Sridevi adorning his chest. In addressing the Lord as 'திருமார்பா', Azhwar underscores the 'Purusha'ka'ra" (mediatrix) role of divine Mother following the meaning of the dvaya' mantra'. Again, in calling the Lord as, 'எங்கள் பெருமான்', Azhwar continues to dwell on the 'soulabhya" of the Lord, as in the previous pasuram. 'ஹ்ரீஸ்ச தே லக்ஷ்மீஸ்ச பத்நயௌ', (Purusha-Suktham). **இமையோர் தலைமகன்** – Chief of all celestials. The parathvam of the Lord is addressed. 'அயர்வறும் அமரர்கள் அதிபதி', (திருவாய்-மொ. 1-1-1). 'தத் விஜ்ஞே : பரமம் பதம் ஸதா பஸ்யந்தி ஸூரய :', (Vishnu –Suktham).

செங்கண் நெடுமால் – 'தஸ்ய யதா கப்யாஸம் புண்டரீகம் ஏவம் அக்ஷிணீ', (Chandogya.U. 1-6-7). That Paramapurusha has two eyes like a pair of lotuses, opened up by sun's rays.

நெடுமால் – Great One.

குடமுக்கில் கோயிலாக் கொண்டு – wishing to abide in Kudandhai, (Kumbakonam).

பொங்கு படமுக்கின் ஆயிரவாய் பம்பீணமேல் சேர்ந்தாய் – You laid down on Anantha' with one thousand hoods,mouths,and noses.

கொண்டு வளர்க்கக் குழவியாய்த் தான்வளர்ந்தது
உண்ட துலகேழு முள்ளொருங்க - - கொண்டு
குடமாடிக் கோவலனாய் மேவி என்னஞ்சம்
இடமாகக் கொண்ட விறை.

98

The Lord who has ensconced himself in my heart,came down to this earth, to be raised lovingly in the cowherd family to grow up prancing around with milk pots. As a tiny baby lying on a banyan leaf, He swallowed the seven worlds to be tucked away in a corner of his stomach. What marvel was that !

கோவலனாய்- As a cowherd. The Lord of all the worlds chose in all his simplicity the lowly cowherd clan for his incarnation as Sri Krishna. ' நூஹம் தேவோ ந கந்தர்வோ ந யக்ஷோ ந ச ராக்ஷஸ: I அஹம் வோ பாந்தவோஜாத:நைதத்சிந்த்யமிதோந்ஸயதா ' II

' I am not a deva',neither gandharva' nor yaksha'. I am yours and you ought not to look upon me in any other way.', reassured Krishna.

' குடம் கொண்டு ஆடி – prancing around with pots. The dance of cowherd girls and boys with milk pots on their heads is a typical cultural trait.

என் நெஞ்சம் மேவி இடமாக கொண்ட இறை – entering my heart and perching Himself there as his abode.

உண்டது உலகேழும் உள்ளொருங்க – Azhwar's reference to seven worlds is only illustrative.It means the whole universe.Azhwar marvels at the protective instinct of the Lord in that tiny state, even

as his predecessor Sri Poigai Azhwar did in his Prabhandam, 'பாலன்றனதுருவாய் ஏழுலகுண்டு ஆலிலயின் மேலன்று நீ வளர்ந்த மெய்யன்பர் - ஆலன்று வேலை நீர் உள்ளதோ ? விண்ணதோ மண்ணதோ சோலை சூழ் குன்றெடுத்தாய் சொல்லு. (முதல் திருவந்தாதி - 69). In a similar vein, Swami Nammazhwar sings, 'பாலனாய் ஏழுலகுண்டு பரிவின்றி ஆலிலை அன்னவசம் செய்யும் அண்ணலார் ', (திருவாய் - மொ. - 4-2-1). 'அடியார்ந்த வையமுண்டு ஆலிலை அன்னவசம் செய்யும் படியாதுமில் குழவி ', (திருவாய் - மொ. 3-7-10).

**இறை யம்பெருமா னருளென்று இமையோர்
முறைநின்று மொய்மலர்கள் துவ -- அறைகழல்
சேவடியான் செங்க ணெடியான் குறளுருவாய்
மாவலியை மண்கொண்டான் மால்.**

99

With the celestials beseeching prayerfully for His grace, respectfully looking upto Him, and strewing fresh flowers, the Lord our Master, the Greatest of all, with rosy jingling anklet-laden Feet, and bewitching red eyes, and ever gentle and loving towards devotees, assumed the form of the dwarf, and strode the worlds to strip Mahabali of his kingdom.

இறை எம்பெருமான் அருள் அன்று – Lord, our Master, Kindly bless us. 'அகில ஜகத்ஸ்வாமிந் அஸ்மத்ஸ்வாமிந் ', (Sarana'gathi gadyam).

இமையோர் – Brahma, Siva, and other celestials.

அறைகழல் சேவடி – with beautiful, rosy, jingling anklet-laden feet. 'தமீஸ்வராணாம் பரமம் மஹேஸ்வரம் தம் தேவாநாம் பரமஞ்ச தைவதம் ' – (Svetas. Upanishad). 'He who is the supreme Lord of the ruling deities and the Deva' of deva's.

நெடியான் – Greater than all the rest.

மால் – fountainhead of love and compassion.

குறளுருவாய் - as diminutive Vamana'.

மண் கொண்டான் – accepted the earth given as a gift. From Azhwar's expression, ' மாவலியை மண்கொண்டான் மால் ', it is evident that even in the act of dispossession, the Lord was motivated by ' va'tsalya ' towards Mahabali as his devotee.

மாலே நெடியோனே கண்ணனே விண்ணவர்க்கு
மேலா வியன் துழாய்க் கண்ணியனே -- மேலால்
விளவின் காய் கன்றினால் வீழ்த்தவனே என்றன்
அளவன்றால் யானுடைய வன்பு.

100

My resplendent,glorious Lord, immeasurably great, Master of all celestials wearing the cool tulasi garland, Oh Sri Krishna, Who, in time gone by, hurled a demon disguised as calf, at another disguised as a wood-apple,and struck both down. My love for You is like an overflowing river, bursting the limits of my being.

Azhwar rounds up his work with the thought that his love for the Lord is like a river current that overflows the banks, and prays to Him to help him keep it contained within himself. He cites six different attributes of the Lord for this overflowing emotion. They are 1. மாலே – glorious in 'svarupa'-rupa' guna's and vibhutis. 2. நெடியோனே - immeasurably Great. 3. கண்ணனே - guiding all beings, like the eye. 'கண்ணாவான் அன்றும் மண்ணோர் விண்ணோர்க்கு, (திருவாய்- மொ. – 1-8-3). 4. விண்ணவர்க்கு மேலா – Master of all celestial beings. 5. வியன் துழாய்க் கண்ணியனே - always decorated by cool tulasi garland. 6 மேலால் விளவின் காய் கன்றினால் வீழ்த்தவனே-Once upon a time, You slayed the two asura's who came to kill you disguised as a calf and a woodapple hidden in the branches.This also redounds to your greatness.

என்றன் அளவன்றால் யான் உடைய அன்பு - My love for you overruns the limits of my being., meaning, ' I feel loose in limbs and thoughts, and at a loss how to have my fill of Thy experience.' 'காலாமும் நெஞ்சழியும் கண் சுழலும் '- (பெரிய –திருவ. – 34). 'சித்தமும் செவ்வை நில்லாது '- (திருக்குறள். –10). Azhwar prays to the Lord to help him rein in his free-flowing emotion.

'பத்திமைக்கன்புடையேனாவதே பணியாய் ஏந்தாய்'

– (திருக்குறு-10).

இரண்டாம் திருவந்தாதி வ்யாக்யானம் முற்றிற்று.

The end of the commentary on Iranda'm Thiruvandhadhi.

ஸ்ரீ பூதத்தாழ்வார் வாழித்திருநாமம்.

அன்பே தகளி நூறும் அருளினான் வாழியே
ஐப்பசியி லவிட்டத்தில் அவதரித்தான் வாழியே
நன்புகழ்சேர் குருக்கத்தி நாண்மலரோன் வாழியே
நல்லதிருக் கடன்மலலை நாதனார் வாழியே
இன்புருகு சிந்தைதிரி யிட்டபிரான் வாழியே
அழில்ஞானச் சுடர்விளக்கை ஏற்றினான் வாழியே
பொன்புரையும் திருவரங்கர் புகழுரைப்போன் வாழியே
பூதத்தார் தாளிணைஇப் பூதலத்தில் வாழியே .

Benedictory Verse on Sri Bhutat Azhwar

Long live the One who showered the grace of 'Anbe
Thagali' of hundred verses. Long live the One born on
'Aippasi Avittam', in a 'kurukathi' flower. Long live
The One who brought fame to Thirukkadanmallai.
Long live the One who laid the wick of melting love
And lighted the beautiful lamp of 'Gnanachchudar'.
Long live the One who sang the praise of the Lord
Of Srirangam, Long live the sacred Feet of Bhuta Muni.

ஸ்ரீ பூதபிரான் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

I seek refuge at the sacred Feet of Sri Bhuta Muni.

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