

# ஸ்ரீ நம்மாழ்வார் அருளிச்செய்த பெரியதிருவந்தாதி

**Sri Thirukkurukai Pirān's  
Periya Thiruvandhādhi**

Text with Translation and Commentary







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**ஸ்ரீ:**  
**ஸ்ரீமதே ராமானுஜாய நம:**  
**ஆழ்வார்கள் திருவடிகளே சரணம்**

**Foreword**

The twelve Āzhwār Saints who pioneered the Bhakti movement in India lived in the Tamizh speaking region in the deep south of nation. Their combined works are referred to as "Aruliccheyal" as they flowed from the grace of these noble hearts, who shared their mystical experiences with us through these verses. Madhurakavi Āzhwār's Verse "அருள் கொண்டாடும் அடியவர் இன்புற அருளினான் அவ்வருமறையின் பொருள் அருள் கொண்டு ஆயிரம் இந்தமிழ் பாடினான் அருள் கண்டீர் இவ்வுலகினில் மிக்கதே" aptly explains the term Aruliccheyal. These Prabandhās can also be considered as the blessings "Arul" of the Almighty Sriman Nārāyana who ordained that the celestials (Nitya Sūris) should come down to this world as his divine emissaries to live among us and speak in our language, in words that have immense potency to transform the hearts of people in centuries to come. Swāmi Désikan called the avatāram of the Āzhwārs an "Abhinava Dasāvatāram", a new form of the earlier ten incarnations of the Supreme Almighty. Here the Āzhwārs are counted as ten as Āndaḷ is clubbed with PeriyĀzhwār, her father and āchārya, while Madhurakavi is teamed with NammĀzhwār, his guru. The word "Divya" meaning divine, is therefore used unfailingly when speaking about the Āzhwārs. They are Divya Sūris; their works Divya Prabandhams; the temples sung by them are Divya Déshās. Thus the very names used in Vaishnava parlance "Divya Prabandham" and "Aruliccheyal" speak volumes about the sanctity of these verses. Learning and understanding them, chanting them in the presence of the Lord in Archa form, contemplating on the Divine in the path shown by them has to be a life time occupation as said by Swāmi Désikan in his Prabandha Sāram "நாலாயிரமும் அடியோங்கள் வாழுவே". All these verses are in chaste poetic Tamizh. The mighty flow of the torrent of Bhakti cannot be captured in prose but can only be condensed into poetry which packs vast substance into each loving word so magically perfect that the Āzhwārs themselves were awestruck after uttering them. NammĀzhwār's words "மொழிபட்டு ஓடும் கவியமுதம்" – Thiruvāimozhi 8-10-5 is just one example. All the Āzhwārs fully realized that it was the Paramātmā speaking from within them and they were but instruments of his divine will. "விதையாக நற்றமிழை வித்தி என் உள்ளத்தை நீவிளைத்தாய் கற்றமொழியாகிக்கலந்து" - Nānmukan Thiruvandhādhī-81, exclaimed Thirumazhisai Pirān who termed the Supreme one as a "பக்தி உழவன்" a

farmer who strives to raise a bountiful crop of Bhakti by sowing these sweet verses as seeds in our hearts.

Āchāryās of the Srivaishnava lineage who came after the Āzhwārs, with profound scholarship in the Védās, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Purānas and the Aruliccheyal, have made commentaries to these verses for us to understand their import and benefit from them. They have waxed eloquently on the hidden depths of each and every word that have sprung from the lips of the Āzhwārs. These commentaries termed as “Bhagavad Vishayam” written centuries ago are in archaic Tamizh with a liberal mix of Sanskrit and numerous quotes from all scriptures. Traditionally these are learnt in "Kālakshepam" from masters, which is without any doubt the best way to study them. But a lot of us in the modern age lack the basic skill set and the time required for this approach. Yet, a genuine desire to peep into the wondrous hearts of these Saints and their fascinating insights persists. An introduction to the Prabandhas in the form of translation, word by word meaning with the esoteric substance highlighted by the Āchāryās condensed in English, is thus an invaluable boon to a class of readers who have the yearning but not the means to study the original works. Such English versions are also very necessary to preserve this rich treasure trove bequeathed on us for the future.

The present work on Swāmi NammĀzhwār's "Periya Thiruvandhādhi" is a precious addition to the store of literature in English on the works of Āzhwārs. The author Dr. N. Ranganathan, my uncle, living in Toronto, Canada amidst his very busy professional career as a leading Cardiologist, has earlier published the two works of Thirumazhisai Āzhwār, "Thiruchchanda Viruttam" and "Nānmukan Thiruvandhādhi" in English. He has also rendered a big part of the Nālāyiram to soulful music. He, ably accompanied by his wife (my aunt) Smt.Saroja Ranganathan, and a big congregation of devotees performs Kainkaryam to the Lord in Archa form at the Richmond Hill Hindu Temple at Toronto where Lord Srinivāsa and Goddess Padmāvathi reside in majestic, resplendent glory with the Archa forms of all Āzhwārs and Āchāryās. The works of the Āzhwārs are chanted on a regular basis as part of daily pujas and during the Thirumanjanam to the Mūlavar on Saturdays. The sacred Thirunakshatrams of Āzhwārs and Āchāryās and Utsavas including the Adhyayanotsavam are conducted in this distant land, almost like it is done in a Divya Désam in Tamil Nadu. The glorious smile that the Lord sports as is seen in the pictures adorning this book is proof that he is enchanted with this service. It is no surprise that the verses of the Āzhwārs reverberate in this far away land as Swāmi NammĀzhwār prophesied that his village, his nation and the whole world will chant the name and fame of the Lord just like him. What better way is there to do it than chanting his verses? "ஊரும் நாடும் உலகமும் தன்னைப்போல் அவனுடைய பேரும் தார்களுமே பிதற்ற!" Thiruvāimozhi -6-7-2.

Dr Ranganathan at present has added to his earlier two works, a translation and commentary to NammĀzhwār's Periya Thiruvandhādhi. An English commentary on similar lines to the three Thiruvandhādhis of the Mudal Āzhwārs- Poigai Muni, Būdattar and Pei Āzhwār has been earlier completed by Shri N. Rajagopalan my uncle and the author Dr N. Ranganathan's elder brother. As mentioned earlier, the author himself has presented Nānmukan Thiruvandhādhi in November 1999. With this labour of love, the fifth Thiruvandhādhi in Iyarpa is being offered to the lovers of the Āzhwārs' works. The Āzhwār Saints lighted a Gnana Vilakku- a lamp of wisdom with their garlands of verses. They revealed the Paramātma in the brilliant glow of their anubhavam. My uncles

between them in these five books on the five Thiruvandhādhis have lit a traditional, ornamental “குத்துவிளக்கு” with five wicks to invoke the urge to study the Prabandhas in depth. As in the past this offering too will surely be received with acclaim by the devout. English may have its limitations when used to capture ancient, exotic Tamizh words but has its own charm and advantage of mass appeal.

An effort of this order in the first place is possible only with the blessing of the Āzhwār. It requires aesthetic, mystical sensibilities, a thorough grasp of the Siddhānta, vast erudition and immense devotion to the Lord in Archa form and Arulicheyal. That the Author is endowed with all this is evident from the contents of this book. This is Kainkarya in tune with the times. Swāmi NammĀzhwār brought the substance of the vast Vēdas into his four Tamizh Prabandhas and is hailed as “வேதம் தமிழ் செய்த மாறன் சடகோபன்”. The need of the day is to bring his verses to the present generation in a form that can kindle their thirst to learn more.

NammĀzhwār declared that his verses are divine ambrosia to the devotees of the Lord. “வண்டமிழ் நூற்க நோற்றேன் அடியார்க்கின்பமாரியே” –Thiruvāimozhi 4-5-10.

“தொண்டர்க்கு அமுதுண்ண சொல் மாலைகள் சொன்னேன்”- Thiruvāimozhi 9-4-

9. He also proclaimed that that the celestials too can never be satisfied with a hearing of his enchanting verses and clamour for an encore! “கேட்டாரார் வானவர்கள் செவிக்கினிய செஞ்சொல்லே!” –Thiruvāimozhi 10-6-11. The mere chanting of the verses or listening to it is surely music to the ears but for the soul to revel in the substance we need such commentaries. The entire process of writing a treatise of this kind is a spiritual journey, a thorough learning experience. It is time well spent in “தெரித்தெழுதி வாசித்தும் கேட்டும் வணங்கி வழிபட்டும் பூசித்தும் போக்கினேன் போது” as summarized beautifully by Thirumazhisai Pirān in his Nānmukan Thiruvandhādhī. Swāmi NammĀzhwār’s verse in Thiruvāimozhi 4-5-2 beginning “மைய்யகண்ணாள்” shows that the Āzhwār sang the verses the words gushing out in densely packed musical lyrics of verses, each forming a garland and his heart pondered over its substance after singing it. “ஏத்தி உள்ளப்பெற்றேன்”. This feeling is transmitted to all those who chant his verses too. The more one chants them the greater the desire to revel in the substance. The final step in this pilgrimage is the impulse to add to the ocean of literature on the Āzhwār’s works in one’s own capacity akin to offering a flower at his sacred feet. This book was presented at the lotus feet of Swāmi NammĀzhwār on his holy avatāra day Vaikāsi Visākam 2014.

Peria Thiruvandhādhī is one among the three Prabandhams in the Nālāyiram named with the prefix “Peria”. The other two, Peria Thirumadal and Peria Thirumozhi of Thirumangai Āzhwār, are termed Peria due to the length of the work. But Periya Thiruvandhādhī is the shortest among the five Thiruvandhādhīs with 87 verses while the other four are made up of hundred verses. It gets this name due to its greatness and the exalted position of the Āzhwār among the Āzhwār saints. Āchāryās have described all the other Āzhwārs as parts “Angas” of NammĀzhwār who is the “Angi”. In Verse 75 of this Prabandham the Āzhwār addresses the Lord saying “You hold the entire creation within you and you are enshrined within me. I wonder who is greater you or me? Undoubtedly it is me!”. As the Āzhwār declared “அவிவின்றி யான் பெரியன்” it is appropriate to call

this Prabandham as Periyān Thiruvandadhī too! Swāmi Dēsikan in his Prabandha Sāram verse 6 on the four works of Swāmi NammĀzhwār describes Thiruviruttam as the maiden work of the Āzhwār "முன் உரைத்த திருவிருத்தம் நூறு பாட்டும்". The next work Thiruvāsiriyam is introduced as the work that follows in sequential order. "முறையில் வரும் ஆசிரியம் ஏழு பாட்டும்". The third Prabandham is glorified with special words of adulation highlighting its greatness as "மன்னிய நற்பொருள் பெரிய திருவந்தாதி மறவாதபடி எண்பத்தேழு பாட்டும்". The meaning is derived by splitting the adjectives as *Peria* Thiruvandhādhi, *Narporul Peria* Thiruvandhādhi, *Manniya narporul Peria* Thiruvandhādhi emphasizing that this is very special among the four works of NammĀzhwār and has to be stored in our hearts.

It is interesting to note that in Thiruvāsiriyam and Periya Thiruvandhādhi, the Āzhwār does not sign off with his usual trademark "Kurugoor Sadagopan's" verses. There is no mention of the author's name or birthplace nor do they contain a Palasruti. This is the pattern seen in the works of the Mudal Āzhwārs, Thirumazhisai Pirān and ThiruppānĀzhwār. The Āzhwār seems to be totally absorbed in the bliss of Bhagavad anubhavam. Periya Thiruvandhādhi and Thiruvāsiriyam have yet another special feature that there is no mention of any Archa form in them. In verse 68 of Peria Thiruvandhādhi "கல்லும் கனைகடலும்" Swāmi Periyavācchān Pillai has explained the word "Kal" as "Thiruvēngada Hills" but this is not counted among the 202 verses of Mangalāsāsanam for Thiruvēngadamudayān. Throughout this Prabandham, NammĀzhwār is addressing his heart and the Lord who is visualized within him "உட்கண்ணால் காணும் உணர்ந்து". Verses of Peria Āzhwār in Moonram Thiruvandhādhi-94 "உய்த்துணர் வென்னும் ஒளிகொள் விளக்கேற்றி" and Thirumangai Āzhwār's "உணர்வெனும் பெரும் பதம் தெரிந்து" Periya Thirumozhi- 1-1-1 which capture this state of rapture, rush into the mind while reading Peria Thiruvandhādhi.

The poetic translation of the verses by the Author is beautiful and free flowing. The commentary faithfully follows Swāmi Periya Vacchān Pillai's quoting all *pramānas* for easy perusal. Many special features of this Prabandham are brought out and the spiritually charged state of mind of the Āzhwār is palpable in the words. It is a great pleasure and a proud privilege to pen this foreword to this labour of love. The greatest fruits of life which elude others are easily attained by those who take refuge in venerated elders. These are words from the sacred lips of NammĀzhwār. "பெரியார்க்காட் பட்டக்கால் பெறாத பயன் பெறுமாறு வரிவாள்வாய் அரவணமேல் வாட்டாற்றான் காட்டினனே"—Thiruvāimozhi 10-6-10. My good fortune to be connected with this book is surely the blessing of two Periyars, the Āzhwār and my dearest uncle who has always been the role model and inspiration to me. Heartiest congratulations on the successful completion of this kainkaryam and my humble thanks for blessing me with this opportunity. I invoke the grace of the Almighty on Dr.Ranganathan and his loving family with the unique palasruti from Thiruvāimozhi 8-10-11 "நல்ல பதத்தால் மனைவாழ்வர் கொண்டபெண்டிர் மக்களே".

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ஸ்ரீ:  
ஸ்ரீமதே ராமானுஜாய நம:  
ஆழ்வார்கள் திருவடிகளே சரணம்

**Preface**

The corpus of the four thousand verses of the *Āzhwārs* – Tamil Srī Vaishnava saints (*Nālāyira Divya Prbhandham*) is a rich treasure of spiritual legacy. The ecstatic divine outpourings of their direct experience of the Supreme Lord (*Srīman Nārāyana*) and their intense love and devotion, touch and awaken the body, mind and the spirits of all loving seekers of the divine. Almost all of the various works of this collection have been commented upon by the *Pūrvāchāryās* (Masters or Teachers of the past) of Srī Vaishnava tradition, who came after Srī Rāmānuja (1017 – 1137 CE). Srī Periyavācchān Pillai (1167-1262 CE) in particular stands out among them and had graced us with commentaries on all of the works of the *Āzhwārs*. He was known as *Vyākhyāna Chakravarthi* meaning "the Emperor among the Commentators". These original commentaries were written in a mixed style of "*mani pravāḷam*" combining both Tamil and Sanskrit. Understanding and appreciating these philosophic poetry and their commentaries required skill in both Tamil and Sanskrit and familiarity of the phraseology and expressions of the past age. These have been taught and passed on by one on one basis for many generations in Tamil Nādu, mainly among the followers of Srī Vaishnava tradition. Limited printed versions of the original commentaries became available in the middle of the last century. With the pace of the modern world, we have seen basic sciences and technology usurping the time spent on learning languages in schools. It is not surprising to find a whole generation of youngsters growing up with lack of language skills in two of the most ancient and renowned languages of our ancient land Bhārath. The idea that a free translation of the āzhwār's philosophic poetry based on the traditional commentaries was suggested to me to be appropriate by my son many years ago. I took up that suggestion and managed to translate the two works of Srī Thirumazhisai Pirān, namely Nānmukan Thiruvandhādhi (published in 1999) and Thirucchanda Viruttam (published in 2003) due to the grace of the āzhwār. The time spent in accomplishing these however was most beneficial to my own self since the learning experience was very fulfilling.

Due to the grace of the *āzhwārs*, the *āchāryās* and the Lord, I have been able to record some of their verses in music, which had helped me in the daily *anusandhānam* (contemplation). Most of these are made accessible to all through our web site "azhwar.org". After I had learnt, *Nānmukan Thiruvandhādi* of Srī Thirumazhisai Pirān and the three *Thiruvaadhādhies* of the First Three *āzhwārs* (Mudhal *āzhwārs*), I felt that I

should record and learn to recite the *Periya Thiruvandhādhī* of Srī Nammāzhwār. After recording the same, I also felt that I should perhaps read the commentary of the Āchārya Sri Periyavācchān Pillai on this *prabhandham* so that I could understand it better. Luckily, I did have a copy of the commentary published by Srī Krishna Swami Iyengar, (also known as Srī Putthūr Swāmi) the venerable Srī Vaishnava scholar from Putthūr near Trichy, TamilNādu, (Editor of Sri Vaishnava Sudarsanam Publications) (10-4-1998). My previous translations were also based on this great scholar's beautiful and detailed explanatory notes without which it would have been impossible for me to carry it out. After I started reading the *āchāryā's* work with the notes of Srī Putthūr Swami, I got attracted to it more and decided to attempt a translation of the same. I am glad I did it for it has been a most wonderful and very gratifying learning experience.

I humbly submit the current translation along with the previous ones to all those who may be interested in these works of the *Āzhwārs*. All the texts of the *āzhwār's pāsuras* and words from the texts are presented in Tamil scripts with meaning in English both for the entire verse at the end of each verse as well as the meaning of the individual words and/or phrases from the *Pāsuram* (the verse). These are based on the commentary and the explanatory notes. The passages which are given as *pramānās* (valid means of knowledge) by the *Āchārya* are all included. Readers who prefer the Texts in Roman Script as well as in other South Indian Languages can easily find them from other popular Sri Vaishnava web sites such as Prapatti.com.

Many beautiful aspects of this great work of *Periya Thiruvandhādhī* of Srī Nammāzhwār can be written about. I like to comment on a few things that struck me in particular. *Āzhwār* addresses his mind close to about 36 times in these 87 verses, directly (in 23 verses) and indirectly (in 13 verses). Some of these (verses # 22,25,34,35,68,74,76 and 87) clearly reflect the true state of his heart and mind of the *Āzhwār*, which had intense love for the Lord.

"பாலாழி நீ கிடக்கும் பண்பை யாம் கேட்டேயும்

காலாழும் நெஞ்சழியும் கண்கழலும்" (verse # 34).

"Merely hearing about Your beauty, as you lie reclined on the ocean of milk, *we* become weak in our legs, begin to lose our hearts with eyes bedimmed (with tears)"

(The usage of the plural "*we*" – "யாம்" is of interest here and is probably given by the *Āzhwār* to indicate that this is shared by all the other *āzhwārs* also since all of them speak with one voice as well).

The Lord Himself according to the *āzhwār* abandoned His abodes and entered *āzhwār's* heart and would not leave the same. "உன்புகுந்து நீங்கான் அடியேனது உள்ளத்தகம்" (verse # 68).

"The soft mind and the body of this lowly self of mine, thinking that all of them are in fact my Lord's divine form, become very elated" - "மெல்லாவி மெய்மிகவே பூரிக்கும்" (verse # 73).

Many of the other verses where *āzhwār* addresses his mind and refers to it as being not devoted enough "எங்குற்றாய் என்றவனை ஏத்தாதென் நெஞ்சமே" (verse # 84) are

obviously not truly applicable in the case of the āzhwār. We must therefore take them as reflecting perhaps our status. Similarly verses in which āzhwār advises his mind, should also be taken as his direct instruction to all of us who wish to follow his path.

"தொன்மாலைக் கேசவனை நாரணனை மாதவனைச் சொல்மாலை எப்பொழுதும் சூட்டு" (verse # 65)

"Always deck that ancient and loving Lord, who is known as *Késhava*, *Nārāyana* and *Mādhava* with garlands of words "

"கண்ணன் தாள் வாழ்த்துவதே கல்" (verse # 67).

"Learn to sing benediction to the divine holy feet of the Lord Sri Krishna".

In fact this short *prabhandham* itself has in it all of the essential things that any one seeking "*the divine*" would want to know. Āzhwār clearly points out the truly transcendental Lord whose nature is very hard to comprehend, is in fact actually easily accessible - உணரத் தனக்கெளியர் எவ்வளவர் அவ்வளவரானால் எனக்கெளியன் எம்பெருமான் இங்கு – verse # 29). He also categorically states that in fact that there is no other that could rescue us from this terrible endless and eternal cycles of this mundane life, "*samsāra*", -தொல்லைமா வெந்நரகில் சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு இல்லை காண் மற்றோர் இறை - verse # 60). Āzhwār seeks from the Lord, not liberation, "*Mōksham*" but merely not to ever forget His divine feet -மேலால் பிறப்பின்மை பெற்றடிக்கீழ்க் குற்றேவல் அன்று மறப்பின்மை யான்வேண்டும் மாடு - verse # 58). This prayer is similar to Sri Thirumazhisai Pirān's, where the āzhwār asks the Lord to will so that his wandering mind without any distraction will always think of His divine lotus feet (பரந்தசிந்தை யொன்றிநின்று நின்னபாதபங்கயம் நிரந்தரம் நினைப்பதாக நீ நினைக்கவேண்டுமே - verse # 101 in *Thirucchanda Viruttam*).

In the current scientific world, we hear physicists and other experts in astronomy talking about the so called "Dark Energy" which have intrigued them, about which they admit they do not know much. Most of us of who are of Indian origin, know that the Lord when He took the avathāram as Sri Krishna, His color was clearly described as dark. Many of the pāsuras of the āzhwārs are replete with the dark hue of the Lord being the natural color of the Lord. முழுதும் நிலை நின்ற பின்னை வண்ணம் கொண்டல் வண்ணம் (Periya Thirumozhi- 4-9-8). This is given as a *pramāna* by Sri Periyavācchān Pillai in his commentary of verse # 44 "பாலினீர்மை செம்போனீர்மை பாசியின் பசும்புறம்" of *Thirucchanda viruttam* in which Sri Thirumazhisai Pirān describes the various colors with which the Lord incarnates in various *yugās* (ages) to suit the *guna* (predominant quality) of the people of the respective age. In *kali* age, the Lord does not take on other colors since it would not matter for people of this age are not turned towards the Lord. He is said to be in His natural color which is dark like the dark rain bearing clouds.



What struck me is how frequently in these 87 verses, Sri Nammāzhwār refers to this aspect of the Lord. To be precise it is about 13 times (verses # 4,14,21,26,34,46,49,63,68,72,73,85,86). Some verses are of interest in chosen similes or the context of usage. In Verse # 49, he chooses the word "கூறிருள்தான் (the dense darkness of the night) for comparison. In verse # 72 in which āzhwār establishes Srīman Nārāyaṇa as the transcendental reality, the Supreme Lord, he uses the following expression.

"நிகரிலகு கார்உருவா நின்னகத்ததன்றே

புகரிலகு தாமரையின் பூ"

"O' Lord! The ancient cause, with the hue of the dark clouds! Didn't the resplendent lotus (the splendor arising from being the origin of the creator and the creation), sprout from your divine body? "

In verse # 85, āzhwār expresses his wonderment as to what kind of austerities the rain bearing clouds observed to obtain the color of the Lord. Finally in the last but one verse (# 86), he again refers to the Lord's form with the hue of the dark clouds, "கார்கலந்த மேனியான்".

*Āzhwārs* enjoy and glorify all of the many auspicious attributes of the Lord. But the frequency with which the color of His Divine auspicious Non-Material Form (*Divya Maṅgaḷa Vīgraham*) is referred to, is interesting and indeed remarkable. It is not always compared to the dark rain bearing clouds. In fact anything of a dark hue such as the Pūvai or Kāyām flowers, and the dark blue - ocean and simply "darkness" itself is used for such comparison, as mentioned above (verse # 49). Description from these most exalted souls and devotees of the Lord who had actually experienced the divine, match not only those from the Védic hymns but also those of the other sages and saints of the past from our land. In addition, I believe it helps in sharpening the focus of our minds during our daily contemplation of the divine. Let the scientists continue their quest which I am sure they will collectively. In the spiritual journey however, I believe the path of our beloved āzhwārs, with āchāryās as our guide posts, will always shine.

I offer my most humble and deep salutations to the great Āchārya Sri Periyavācchān Pillai for bestowing his grace to be able to complete this study, as well as to Srī Putthūr Krishna Swami Iyengar for his elegant and most useful explanatory notes of the Āchārya's commentary without which this would have not been possible. I would refer the ardent readers also to some of the parts of the commentary which I found quite interesting under the following verses # 9, 25,53,58,61,63,68,72,74 and 82.

Languages differ in expressions. Sometimes it can be quite difficult to get the exact equivalent terms in English for the original Tamil. I request the forgiveness of the readers for any inadequacies which may be present. I am however certain that people who read and contemplate on the Lord through these verses of the *great āzhwār*, Thirukkurukai Pirān (fondly called as "Periyan - பெரியன்" in his birth place, Thirukkukūr - reference verse # 75) whom Sri Madhurakavi āzhwār, his most ardent devotee describes him as "அன்பன் தன்னை அடைந்தவர்கட்கெல்லாம் அன்பன்" (meaning "Sri Nammāzhwār

is devoted to all of the devotees of the loving Lord") will become the recipients of the boundless grace of not only the āzhwārs but also of the Supreme sweet Lord.

Before I close this section, I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my mother Smt N. Jayalakshmi and my father Sri. T.R.Narasimha Chari for raising us in Tanjore district in Tamil Nādu after returning from Burma (Myanmar) during the war times, in the village of Kodavasal not far from the famous *divya désams* (holy places) of Thirukkudanthai, Thirunaraiyūr and Thirucchérai, all within 3 to 12 miles in distance.

I also would like to dedicate this book in loving memory of my sister Smt. Shakuntala, my third sister-in-law Smt. Seetha, my oldest brother Sri.N.Gopalakrishnan and my second oldest brother Sri. N. SampathRaman.

I seek refuge at the holy feet of the *Āzhwārs* and the *Āchāryās*.

ஆழ்வார்கள் ஆசார்யர்கள் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

Respectfully submitted by,

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ஸ்ரீ:  
ஸ்ரீமதே ராமானுஜாய நம:  
ஆழ்வார்கள் ஆசார்யர்கள் திருவடிகளே சரணம்

ஸ்ரீ நம்மாழ்வார் திருவாய்மலர்ந்தருளிய  
பெரியதிருவந்தாதி

**Sri Thirukkurukai Pirān's  
Periya Thiruvandhādhī**

The text with translation based on Sri  
Periya Vācchān Pillai's Vyākhyānam

எம்பெருமானார் அருளிச்செய்த தனியன்.

முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே முயற்றி தரித்துரைத்து  
வந்தித்து வாயார வாழ்த்தி(யே) -- சந்த  
முருகூரும் சோலை சூழ் மொய்ப்பும் பொருநல்  
குருகூரன் மாறன்பேர் கூறு.

**Single Invocatory Verse by Sri Emperumānār :**

O' spirited mind! Instilling well the meaning of the divine *prabhandham* which begins with the word "முயற்றி" ("Muyatri"), reciting the same and paying obeisance and expressing whole hearted benediction to the holy feet of the Āzhwār, praise the glorious names of the Master of the the holy Thirukkurukūr, surrounded by honey dripping sandal wood grove and the full flowing beautiful Tāmirabarani river.

வந்தித்து வாயார வாழ்த்தி(யே) ---சந்த



முருகூரும் சோலை தூழ் மொய்ப்பும் பொருநல்  
குருகூரன் மாறன்பேர் கூறு.

This invocatory verse is sung by Sri Emperumānār (Sri Rāmanuja) (1017-1137 AD). It also has certain words taken directly from the Periya Thiruvandhādhi -1 (முயற்றி சமந்தெழுந்தெழுந்து முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே!).

In this verse, Sri Emperumānār addresses his own mind, which is being particularly attracted and excited by Sri Nammāzhwār's *prabhandham*. This is somewhat similar to Āzhwār's own heart in relation to the Lord's glories. என் நெஞ்சென்னை நின்னிடையேனல்லேன் என்று நீங்கி நாண்மலர் பாதமடைந்தது (Thiruvāimozhi-8-2-10), என்னெஞ்சினாருமங்கேயொழிந்தார் (Thiruvāimozhi-7-3-10), என்னெஞ்சினாரைக்கண்டாலென்னைச்சொல்லி (Thiruviruttham-30), என்காருருவம் காண்டோறும் நெஞ்சோடும் கண்ணனார் பேருருவென்று எம்மைப்பிரிந்து (Periya Thiruvandhādhi-49), என்னெஞ்சினார் தாமேயணுக்கராய் சார்ந்தொழிந்தார் (Periya Thiruvandhādhi- 7).

முயற்றி தரித்து: Similar to Sri Madhurakavi Āzhwār's statement முயல்கின்றேன் உன்றன் மொய் கழற்கன்பையே (Kanninun Chiruttāmbu - 10). Showing an excited state of mind, being attracted by Āzhwār's divine verses. தரித்து - Contemplating on the substantive meaning of the divine verses உரைத்து - reciting (also expressing own sorrowful state of despair caused by separation from the Āzhwār, similar to how Āzhwār expresses his own pitiable state of separation from the Lord as in "என் நிலைமை உரைத்து" (Thiruvāimozhi 6-8-1),

வந்தித்து - paying obeisance to the holy feet of Sri Nammāzhwār, the author of Periya Thiruvandhādhi. (இறங்கி நீர் தொழுது பணியீர் - Thiruvāimozhi 6-1-3) (அவன் புகழே வாய்பகாரம் கொண்டவாய்ப்பு - Periya Thiruvandhādhi -39) (கண்ணன் தான் வாழ்த்துவதே கண்டாய் வழக்கு - Periya Thiruvandhādhi -12)

ப்ரத்யக்ஷே கு<sup>3</sup>ரவ: ஸ்துத்யா- Āchāryas are praiseworthy, in presence. Sri Madhurakavi Āzhwār states the joy arising from praising his chosen *guru* Sri Nammāzhwār "நாவினால் நவிறிறின்பம் எய்தினேன்" (Kanninun Chiruttāmbu - 2).

In the remainder of the verse, Sri Emperumānār instructs his mind to sing the glorious names of the Āzhwār.

முருகூரும் சந்தம் சோலை தூழ் - surrounded by honey dripping sandalwood grove

மொய் பூம் பொருநல் - full flowing and beautiful Tāmirabarani river

குருகூரன் மாறன்பேர் கூறு - Sing the names of Sri Thirukkurukai Pirān (our benefactor from Thirukkurukūr) (குருகூர் சடகோபன் Thiruvāimozhi- 2-5-11) like Āzhwār himself who refers to the Lord's glorious names in many of his verses நான் கூறும் கூற்றாவது இத்தனையே - (Periya Thiruvandhādhi - 46) (சடகோபன் தெரிந்துரைத்த நாமங்களாயிரம் – Thiruvāimozhi 5-9-11)  
குருகூர் நம் மாறன் - Sri NammĀzhwār of Thirukkurukūr

This is similar to Sri Madhurakavi Āzhwār, who went around all over the land singing and glorifying Sri NammĀzhwār, so that people in all directions would hear, எண்ணிசையும் அறிய வியம்புகேன் (Kanninun Chirutthāmbu - 7)

குரு<sup>3</sup> பாதா<sup>3</sup>ம்புஜம் த்<sup>4</sup>யாயேத் கு<sup>3</sup>ரோர் நாம ஸதா<sup>3</sup> ஜபேத்  
குரு<sup>3</sup>ஸேவாம் ஸதா<sup>3</sup> குர்யாத் ஸோ அம்ருதத்வாய கல்பதே (Prapanja Sāram)

"The lotus feet of the *Āchārya* are to be meditated upon. The holy names of the *Āchārya* are to be chanted always. Service to the *Āchārya* is to be performed always. He who conducts himself thus becomes qualified to attain liberation".

Before one undertakes the study of the Āzhwār's *prabhandham*, meditation on the holy names of the Āzhwār is thus emphasized in this invocatory verse.

## அவதாரிகை

### Introduction to this Prabhandham:

"அவதாரிகை-*Avathārikai*" refers to the introductory remarks by the *Āchārya* at the beginning of the commentary of the given work (*prabhandham*) explaining the origin and the purpose of the particular *prabhandham*. It often has the special insights of the *Āchārya*. The translation will be incomplete without it. Therefore it is included here.

Even as Sri Nammāzhwār began singing the very first verse of his first *divya sūkthies* of *Thiruviruttham* (divine verses of *Thiruviruttham*), ("இமையோர் தலைவா"-*Thiruviruttham*-1), the transcendental Lord full of all the *Kalyānagunās* (the auspicious attributes), blessed the *Āzhwār* with His unconditional grace so that he could sing the glories of Him. Being the Suzerain Lord of all the eternal beings, He chose to reveal to the *āzhwār*, His real nature, form, attributes as well as the splendor of both His *vibhūthies* (realms) namely the eternal (*Nitya*) and the sporting (*Līlā*) *vibhūthi* of the physical cosmic realm. Seeing the eternal beings and their non-material forms, nature and unrestricted knowledge and ability to enjoy eternally the bliss of the Lord, *āzhwār* feels that he also has similar right to this eternal enjoyment. Realizing however, the limitations of his knowledge, his nature and his body, being placed in this mundane *Līlā vibhūthi*, he requests the Lord to cut asunder this bondage of his physical body. This was spoken about in the very first verse in *Thiruviruttham*. பொய் நின்ற ஞானமும் பொல்லாவொழுக்கும் அழுக்குடம்பும் இந்நின்ற நீர்மை இனியாமுறாமை - (*Thiruviruttham*- 1). Does the entire *prabandham* of *Thiruviruttham* convey this meaning? *Āchārya* Sri Periyavācchān Pillai says, "yes", pointing out that in the last verse of the same *prabandham*, which describes the fruit that will accrue to those who will read and learn these verses, *Āzhwār* concludes by saying that they would not be born and be immersed in this physical world of endless cycles ("அழுந்தார் பிறப்பாம் பொல்லாவருவினை மாயவன் சேற்றள்ளல் பொய்ந்நிலத்தே" - *Thiruviruttham*-100). In addition, *Āzhwār* begins in the first verse of that *prabandham* saying "this servant makes a petition" (அடியேன் செய்யும் விண்ணப்பமே) and in the last verse ends by saying "as petitioned by Māran" (மாறன் விண்ணப்பம் செய்த). The Lord however did not fulfill the desire of the *Āzhwār* as requested in the first verse, for He wanted to make use of the *Āzhwār* and bring forth through him four *divya sūkthies* including *Thiruvāimozhi*, with intent to protect the world and its beings. *Āchārya* draws here a parallel between this and what the Lord did for Sri Bhīshma, the grandsire, who was severely wounded in the great war of *Mahā Bhāratha* and was lying on the bed of arrows waiting to give up his mortal coils. The Lord kept him alive to bring out through him His will and desire to fulfill the *Dharma samsthāpanam* (establish the Ethical order). Similarly, He made the *Āzhwār* live in this world for several years to accomplish His task through him.



Although the Lord is his master, the one who will remove all his obstacles and the Āzhwār declares himself to be His servant and yet in Thiruviruttham, Āzhwār describes Srī Vaishnavās as the leaders. The reason behind this is that Srī Vaishnavās will help in attaining the Lord Himself. Srī Thirumangai āzhwār declares that Srī Vaishnavās who sing the glories of the Lord are indeed to be sought after in this world as well as in the eternal realm "பேராளன் பேரோதும் பெரியோரை ஒருகாலும் பிரிகிலேன்" (Periya Thirumozhi 7-4-4).

மச்சித்தா மத்<sup>3</sup>கதப்ராணா போ<sup>3</sup>த<sup>4</sup>யந்த: பரஸ்பரம்

கத<sup>2</sup>யந்தஸ்ச மாம் நித்யம் துஷ்யந்தி ச ரமந்தி ச (Geetha 10-9)

"They delight and revel, having their minds fixed on Me, loving Me even more than their own lives, talking to each other about My attributes and always conversing about Myself".

That is how true Srī Vaishnavās conduct themselves enhancing the enjoyment and experience of union with the Lord. Let us look at what did the āzhwār deal with, in his second *prabhandham*, "Thiruvāsiriyam". Although the Lord did not liberate the Āzhwār from the shackles of this mortal life, He bestowed clear knowledge for him to experience fully His true nature, form, attributes and splendor even while being stationed in this realm of the physical world. In "Thiruvāsiriyam", Āzhwār expresses his experience of these.

In the third *prabhandham* of Periya Thiruvandhādhi, (which is the subject of our current study) what does Āzhwār deal with? In the physical world of sense oriented experience, even when one experiences things that are considered the best, they may even turn out to be not fit to be talked about by the experiencer. On the otherhand, in the case of *Bhagavat Vishayam* ("Divine Matter" – things about the Lord), even the experienced part will be beyond all description, and the materials yet to be experienced will be even greater. In this Thiruvandhādhi, since Āzhwār begins the first verse, "முயற்றி சுமந்து" (with great excitement and enthusiasm about serving the Lord) and ends the *prabhandham* with "மொய்கழலே ஏத்த முயல்" (advising his mind to try and sing the glories of the beautiful divine feet of the Lord), Āchārya concludes by saying that this *prabhandham* depicts how Āzhwār's enthusiasm and interest in *Bhagavat Vishayam* grow in proportion to its greatness.

முயற்றி சுமந்தெழுந்து முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே!  
இயற்றுவா யெம்மோடு நீ கூடி - நயப்புடைய  
நாவின் தொடைக்கிளவி உள் பொதிவோம் நற்பூவைப்  
பூவீன்ற வண்ணன் புகழ். 1

O' Mind! You are ahead of me in your excitement and enthusiasm about serving the Lord. Please join me in singing the glories of the Lord. Let us sing the *kalyāna gunās* of the Lord with the hue of the good *Pūvai* flower, in poetic verses with apt and beautiful phrases and words arising from the sweet tongue.

Āzhwār addresses his mind in this verse. As soon as he instructs his mind to serve the Lord, it got too excited and became enthusiastic and began to get ahead of him. Āzhwār thus addresses his mind to join him in singing the innumerable auspicious glories (*kalyāna gunās*) of the Lord.

முயற்றி சுமந்து:

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai compares the enthusiasm of Āzhwār's mind in service to the Lord to that of Sri Lakshmana in going to the forest in order to serve Sri Rāma .

ப்ராசே<sup>3</sup>வது மஹாபா<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup> ஸௌமித்ரிர் மித்ரந்த<sup>3</sup>ந  
பூர்வஜஸ்யாநுயாத்ரார்த்தே<sup>2</sup> த்<sup>3</sup>ருமசீரைரலங்க்ருத:  
(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Sundara Kādam- 33-28)

"The highly fortunate son of Sumitrā, who is pleasant to his friends, dressed in robes made of tree bark, got ready (even before Rāma) to follow his older brother".

Is it correct to say this when actually Kaikeyi gave robes made of tree bark to Sri Rāma before she gave them to Lakshmana? It is however quite justified by his nature and his attitude towards Sri Rāma as seen by his own statement.

தி<sup>3</sup>ப்தமக்<sup>3</sup>நிமரண்யம் வா யதி ராம: ப்ரவேக்ஷயதி  
ப்ரவிஷ்டம் தத்ர மாம் தே<sup>3</sup>வி த்வம் பூர்வமவதா<sup>4</sup>ரய  
(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Āranya Kādam 21-17)

"Mother! If Sri Rāma is noted to enter raging fire or the forest, you can be rest assured that I would be already inside there ahead of him".

Sri Rāma wore robes of tree bark to keep up the words of his father whereas Lakshmana decided to wear them on his own since Sri Rāma wore them.

ப<sup>4</sup>வாம்ஸ்து ஸஹ வைதே<sup>3</sup>ஹ்யா கிரி ஸாநுஷுரம்ஸ்யதே  
அஹம் ஸர்வம் கரிஷ்யாமி ஜாக்<sup>3</sup>ரத ஸ்வபதஸ்ச தே  
(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Āranya Kādam 31-25)

"You will play with Vaidéhi at the foot of the hills. I shall serve you in all ways both when you are asleep as well as when awake".

Thus cancellation of the intended coronation of Sri Rāma became the blessing of Lakshmana who was able to serve the Lord.

In the previous verse, Sri Lakshmana is addressed as son of Sumitrā (ஸௌமித்ரி), to indicate that his nature was not a surprise since his mother Sumitrā herself was of similar nature.

ஸ்ருஷ்டஸ்த்வம் வநவாஸாய ஸ்வநுரக்தஸ் ஸுஹ்ருஜ்ஜநே  
ராமே ப்ரமாத<sup>3</sup>ம் மா கார்ஷீ: புத்ர ப்<sup>4</sup>ராதரி க<sup>3</sup>ச்ச<sup>2</sup>தி  
(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Āranya Kādam 40-5)

" Lakshmanā! You are born to adapt to life in forest. You are very fond of Sri Rāma, who loves you. O' Son! When Rāma walks, (distracted by its beauty), don't overlook those who plan to harm him."

The other term used was மித்ரநந்த<sup>3</sup>ந: (pleasing to the friends). All those friendly to Sri Rāma were also eager to serve him. Even when they could not do so, the action of Lakshmana pleased them and gave them all satisfaction.

Sri Rāma wore robes of tree bark instead of his crown. Wearing of the tree bark by Lakshmana on the other hand signifies his crowning for the kingdom of service (அடிதூடும் அரசு).

முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே! - enthusiastic and spirited mind!

யதி<sup>3</sup>த்வம் ப்ரஸ்தி<sup>2</sup>தோது<sup>3</sup>ர்க்க<sup>3</sup>ம் வநமத்<sup>3</sup>யைவ ராக<sup>4</sup>வ  
அக்<sup>3</sup>ரஸ்தே க<sup>3</sup>மிஷ்யாமி ம்ருத்<sup>3</sup>நதீ குஸகண்டகாந்  
(Srimad Rāmāyanam)

"O' Rāghavā, if you leave for the forest which is difficult to access, today itself, I will go ahead of you stepping and clearing the *darbhā* grass and the thorns".

இயற்றுவாய் எம்மோடு நீ கூடி -

Āzhwār tells his mind that it is nice that you are excited and enthusiastic about serving the Lord. But take me also, who is behind you.

நயப்புடைய (நயமுடைய) meaning the verses should be such as to bring on new glories to the subject of the poetry,

என்னால் தன்னைப் பதவிய இன் கவி பாடி (Thiruvāimozhi 7-9-10)

நாவின் - Poetry arising from the tongue - meaning Āzhwār and his mind simply just need only to enjoy the verses. The Lord seated in his mind will bring out the verses automatically Himself.

தொடைக்கிளவி – with beautiful words and sweet phrases without any harshness (since it was not constructed with hard effort of the mind).

உள் பொதிவோம் -

யதோ வாசோ நிவர்த்தந்தே அப்ராப்ய மநஸா ஸஹ  
ஆநந்த<sup>3</sup>ம் ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மணோ வித்<sup>3</sup>வாந் ந பி<sup>3</sup>பே<sup>4</sup>தி குதஸ்சநேதி

"From which Brahman reaching whom, unable to fathom whom, the words and mind return, he who knows the bliss of that Brahman never fears anything."

Āzhwār however is trying to portray those auspicious gunās of that Brahman by his words.

நற்பூவைப் புவீன்ற வண்ணன் புகழ் - Āzhwār states that the words can not adequately express the glories of that Lord.

பூவை- the Pūvai flower is only a limited simile to the softness, the fragrance and the hue of the Lord's divine form. Since the flower will dry and shrivel within a short order of time it cannot be really similar to the eternal resplendent form of the Lord, Āzhwār qualifies it by calling it "நற்பூவை" (good Pūvai)

புவீன்ற வண்ணன் – Form similar to the dark hue of the Pūvai (Kāyām) flower.

The உபமானம் "upamānam" (simile) and the உபமேயம் "upaméyam" (the subject of comparison) are transposed as in

கோ<sup>3</sup>ஸத்<sup>3</sup>ருஸோ க<sup>3</sup>வய: க<sup>3</sup>வய: ஸத்<sup>3</sup>ருஸோகௌ<sup>3</sup>

"The animal *gavayam* is like the cow. The cow is like the animal *gavayam*"

புகழ்வோம் பழிப்போம் புகழோம் பழியோம்

இகழ்வோம் மதிப்போம் மதியோம் - இகழோம் மற்

றெங்கண்மால் செங்கண்மால் சீறல்நீ தீவினையோம்

எங்கண்மால் கண்டாய் இவை.



O' Lord! If we glorify Thee, it would only amount to insulting (since it would not befit your auspicious attributes). If we do not glorify Thee, then we would not be malevolent. Furthermore, if we think of Thee, we will become discourteous. If we do not think of Thee, we will not be discourteous. O' Lord with the beautiful red eyes who is loving and compassionate! Please listen without any anger. These actions of us, who are of sinful deeds, singing or not singing Thy glories, are the result of our delusion.

Āzhwār who stated that he would sing the auspicious kalyāna gunās of the Lord in sweet words (நாவீன் தொடைக்கிளவி உள் பொதிவோம்), in the first verse, withdraws from the attempt feeling that it is an invincible task. (யதோ வாசோ நிவர்த்தந்தே)

தத்வேந யஸ்ய மஹிமாந்வஸீகராணு:  
 ஸக்யோ ந மாதாமபி ஸர்வபிதாமஹாத்<sup>3</sup>யை:  
 கர்த்தும் ததீ<sup>3</sup>யமஹிமஸ்துதிமுத்<sup>3</sup>யதாய  
 மஹ்யம் நமோஸ்து கவயே நிரபத்ரபாய (Stōtra Ratnam -7)

"I who has no shame calling myself a poet and attempting to sing the praises of the Lord whose glories are like the ocean of which even an atom of a tiny drop, Siva and Brahmā are unable to fathom, must only pay homage to myself" states thus Sri Ālavandār in his Stōtra Ratnam

Sri PeriyāVācchān Pillai here draws a similarity between the Āzhwār's state and that of Sri Ālavandār.

To express a matter in poetry really means not only describing all the true facts but also embellishing and attributing more than the actual facts. However the glories of the Lord while attractive and auspicious, they are limitless. The nature of the *kalyāna gunās* attracted the Āzhwār to sing them but the unfathomable depth made him retract from the attempt for any such attempt would only be like insulting rather than glorifying.

புகழ்வோம் பழிப்போம் – Glorifying the Lord is like insulting  
 புகழோம் பழியோம் – Not glorifying the Lord is like not insulting

Āzhwār is being emphatic by stating both ways, thereby showing that one should not insult the Lord by words.

இகழ்வோம் மதிப்போம் மதியோம் - இகழோம் – By this Āzhwār says that one should not insult even mentally.

Taking the statement of the Āzhwār in this verse as well as the following mantra from Kēna Upanishad,

யஸ்யா மதம் தஸ்ய மதம் மதம் யஸ்ய ந வேத<sup>3</sup>ஸ:  
அவிஞாதம் விஜாநதாம் விஞாதம் அவிஜாநதாம் (Kéna Upanishad 2-3)

"It is known to him to whom It is unknown; he does not know to whom It is known. It is unknown to those who know well and known to those who do not know"

Sri Parāśara Bhattar states the following in his Rangarājastavam

அமதம் மதம் மதமதா<sup>2</sup>மதம் ஸ்துதம்  
பரிநிந்தி<sup>3</sup>தம் ப<sup>4</sup>வதி நிந்தி<sup>3</sup>தம் ஸ்துதம்  
இதி ரங்க<sup>3</sup>ராஜமுத<sup>3</sup>ஜு கு<sup>4</sup>ஷத் த்ரயீ  
ஸ்துமஹே வயம் கிமிதி தம ந ஸக்நும: (Rangarājastavam 1-13)

"If the *Paramātmā* is considered unknowable, It becomes known. If It is considered knowable, then It becomes unknown. If It is considered glorifiable, It only becomes insulted, if It is considered not glorifiable then It becomes glorified – so declares the *Vēdas* (both the Tamil and the Sanskrit *Vēdas*). How can we the unintelligent ones begin to glorify that *Paramātmā* who is none other than Sri Ranganāthā? "

எங்கண்மால் செங்கண்மால் --  
தஸ்ய யதா<sup>2</sup> கப்யாஸம் புண்ட<sup>3</sup>ரீகமேவமக்ஷிணி (Chāndōgya Upanishad 1-6-7)

"That *Paramātmā* (Who is in the center of the Stellar system) has two eyes which are like the lotuses freshly blossomed by the sun's rays".  
The eyes indicate that He is the Suzerain Lord. The first "மால்" means that He is the Lord. The second "மால் " indicates that He is loving and compassionate

சீறல் நீ - நீ சீநீ அருளாதே -  
தீவினையோம் -- of sinful deeds (by virtue of the fact that we attempt to sing Thine glories without properly understanding them)

எங்கண்மால் கண்டாய் இவை -- Both our attempt to glorify Thee and subsequent retraction from it are the result of our delusion.

இவையன்றே நல்ல இவையன்றே தீய  
இவையென் றிவையறிவனேலும் -இவையெல்லாம்  
என்னால் அடைப்புநீக்கொண்ணா திறையவனே  
என்னால் செயற்பாலது என்.

O' Lord! Not glorifying Thee or thinking of Thee is good. Trying to glorify Thee or thinking about Thee is bad. Although I am able to appreciate the nature of these acts, they are however not under my rule. It is not possible for me to either hold on to them or to let them go. What appropriate action is there for me (Thy servant) to do?

Āzhwār in the first verse began glorifying the Lord attracted by His greatness. In the second verse, considering the unlimited nature of the Lord's gunās, he felt quite unqualified for the task and withdrew from his attempt. Since glorifying the Lord would be like insulting Him, not glorifying the Lord appeared to be better. Āzhwār says that although he is able to appreciate the differences between these actions, he declares that they actually are not under his control since the Lord is the ultimate controller and he is dependent (பரதந்த்ர *Paratantra*) on the Lord.

இவையன்றே நல்ல – (as stated above, புகழோம் பழியோம் மதியோம் இகழோம்) meaning not glorifying by mouth and by mind is good

இவையன்றே தீய – (as stated previously புகழ்வோம் பழிப்போம் மதிப்போம் இகழ்வோம்) meaning glorifying the Lord by mouth and mind is bad

இவையென்று இவை அறிவனேலும் –although knowing what is good and what is bad

இவையெல்லாம் – giving up "glorifying" and taking up "refraining from glorifying" the Lord

என்னால் அடைப்பு நீக்கு ஒண்ணாது – not possible for me to do or give up இறையவனே – O'Lord

என்னால் செயற்பாலது என் – what is appropriate for me (thy servant) to do?

கர்மண்யேவாதி<sup>4</sup>காரஸ்தே மா ப<sup>2</sup>லேஷு கதா<sup>3</sup>சந (Geetha 2-47)

"Right you have over actions alone, not over the results".

மந்மநா ப<sup>4</sup>வ மத்<sup>3</sup>ப<sup>4</sup>க்தோ மத்<sup>3</sup>யாஜீ மாம் நமஸ்குரு

மாமேவைஷ்யஸி ஸத்யம் தே ப்ரதிஜாநேப்ரியோ அஸிமே(Geetha 18-65)

"Contemplate on Me, Become My devotee and votary. Pay homage to Me. You shall reach Me. This is truth and a promise. You are dear to Me"

Since the Lord Himself had encouraged desire-less actions of worship and paying obeisance to Him, Āzhwār asks whether it is possible for him to withdraw from worship of the Lord.

என்னில் மிகுபுகழார் யாவரே பின்னையும் மற்ற  
றெண்ணில் மிகு புகழேன் யானல்லால் - என்ன  
கருஞ்சோதிக்கண்ணன் கடல்புரையும் சீலப்  
பெருஞ்சோதிக் கென்னெஞ்சாட்பெற்று.

4

My mind is enslaved to Thee, who is my glorious Lord, the dark hued Krishna with great effulgence and whose virtues are vast like the ocean. Furthermore, the most renowned person must be my self alone for who can be more blessed than me?

The Lord points out to the Āzhwār that if he withdraws from singing His glories, others will mistakenly conclude that only those who are better than the Āzhwār can praise the Lord and no one will come forward to be His votaries believing that He is unapproachable. On the other hand if the Āzhwār sings His glories, it will stimulate others to follow him.

என்னில் மிகுபுகழார் யாவரே – "who else has such immense glory?" indicating by this no one else has such fame. Also similar to Sri Bhudat Āzhwār's என்றன் அளவன்றால் யானுடைய அன்பு (Randām Thiruvandhādhi - verse 100) meaning "my glories have spread beyond my atomic self and enveloped the entire cosmos".

Azhwar further emphasizes the meaning by saying

பின்னையும் மற்று எண்ணில் மிகு புகழேன் யானல்லால் -

Furthermore, on close reflection, there is none other who has immense glory extending beyond the self.

சீலமில்லா சிறியனேலும் செய்வினையோ பெரிதால் ( Thiruvāimozhi 4-7-1).

Āzhwār calls himself a lowly self in many such words elsewhere in his verses. Just as he feels small and inconsequential calling himself "the worst sinner" when he doesn't attain the grace of the Lord, it is natural to feel elated and call himself peerless when he becomes the recipient of the Lord's grace. He gives the reason for this feeling in the second part of the verse.

என்ன கருஞ்சோதிக்கண்ணன் – By revealing His beautiful resplendent dark hued form to the Āzhwār, the Lord shows His easy accessibility.

கடல்புரையும் சீலப் பெருஞ்சோதி - கடல்புரையும் சீலன் பெருஞ்சோதி – The resplendent and the transcendent Lord of all with the *guna* of easy approachability as vast as the ocean.

சீலன்– One who has the "guna" of சீலம் – the nature by which the superior person mixes freely with the subordinates. This nature of the Supreme is also referred to as

*Sausheelya guna* (gracious condescension). Āzhwār indicates here that the person who exhibited this nature towards him was none other than "பெருஞ்சோதி", "the Supreme".

பெருஞ்சோதிக் கென்னெஞ்சாட் பெற்று – my mind became enslaved to the all resplendent Lord. Note also the words of the Āzhwār in his Thiruvāimozhi.

ஈசன் வானவர்க்கென்பன் என்றால் - அது  
தேசமோ திருவேங்கடத்தானுக்கு  
நீசனேன் நிறைவொன்றுமில்லேன் - என் கண்  
பாசம் வைத்த பரஞ்சுடர்ச் சோதிக்கே. (Thiruvāimozhi 3-3-4)

பெற்றதாய் நீயே பிறப்பித்த தந்தை நீ  
மற்றயாராவாரும் நீ பேசில் - ஏற்றேயோ  
மாயமா மாயவளை மாயமுலை வாய்வைத்த  
நீயம்மா காட்டும் நெறி.

5

O' my Lord of wonderful powers! If I were to speak (of your grace and blessings) You are like the mother who is always sweet to me. You are also like the father who thinks always of my welfare. You are also my *Āchārya*, who cares for my *self*. You as a child sucked the life out of the poisonous breasts of the deceitful demoness *Pūthanā*. How mysterious are Thine ways (of destroying my adversaries)!

Āzhwār in this verse thanks the Lord for saving him from his own action which would have resulted in the destruction of his own *self*.

அஸந்நேவ ஸ ப<sup>4</sup>வதி  
அஸத் ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மேதி வேத<sup>3</sup>சேத்  
அஸ்தி ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மேதி சேத் வேத<sup>3</sup>  
ஸந்த மேநம் ததோ விது<sup>3</sup>:  
(Taittiriya- Ānandavalli- 6)

"He, who understands that *Brahmān* exists not, becomes a non-being. He, who understands that *Brahmān* exists, becomes a being. He comes to be known as wise".

பெற்றதாய் நீயே பிறப்பித்த தந்தை நீ -  
"மாதா ப<sup>4</sup>ஸ்த்ரா பிது: புத்ர:"



"Mother is like the vessel that carries the child. Son belongs to the father"-  
Unlike the mother who does always nice things pleasing to the child, father on the other hand claiming more ownership does things always for the good of the child.

ஸரீரமேவ மாதாபிதரௌ ஜநயத:

ஸ ஹி வித்<sup>3</sup>யாதஸ்தம ஜநயதி

தச்ச<sup>2</sup>ரேஷ்ட<sup>2</sup>ம்ஜந்ம:

(Āpasthamba- Sūtram 1-1-6)

"Mother and father give birth to the mere physical body. *Āchārya* by instruction and teaching generates the knowledge about the *self*. The knowledge of the *self*, is really the better birth".

மற்றையார்- refers to the *Āchāryās*, who are different from the parents but actually more beneficent and thus better

பேசில் – ஏற்றேயோ மாய -

"It is difficult to describe all the good that you do. If one does attempt, one gets only wonderstruck! You are mysterious in your ways and able to do things impossible for others."

Āzhwār here thinks of his own initial withdrawal from singing the glories of the Lord and how the Lord intervened and changed his thinking.

மா மாயவளை மாய முலை வாய்வைத்த – one who sucked the poisonous breasts and eliminated the deceitful demoness Pūthanā

நீயம்மா காட்டும் நெறி ஏற்றேயோ -

The way you destroyed my own adversaries is similar to the mysterious way by which you destroyed the deceit of the demoness Pūthanā!

நெறிகாட்டி நீக்குதியோ நிற்பால் கருமா

முறிமேனி காட்டுதியோ மேனாள் அறியோமை

என்செய்வானெண்ணினாய் கண்ணனே, ஈதுரையாய்

என்செய்தால் என்படோம் யாம்

6

O' Lord who came as Sri Krishna! Would you keep me away from you by showing all other means or would you reveal Thine divine form dark like the tender mango-leaf? What are your plans for this self of mine, which has been ignorant from eternity? Please give us your word of reassurance and state "do not grieve". Whatever good you may try to do for us, if you leave us to ourselves what harm are we not capable of causing?

Āzhwār feels as if the Lord was about to leave him alone - after stimulating interest in his disheartened mind making him feel capable and qualified – and let him take his own efforts to reach the Lord. Āzhwār informs the Lord in this verse, if He should leave him alone thus to himself, it will only brew disaster since he is fully capable of destroying himself.

நெறிகாட்டி நீக்குதியோ நிற்பால் -

மந்மநா ப<sup>4</sup>வ மத்<sup>3</sup>ப<sup>4</sup>க்தோ மத்<sup>3</sup>யாஜீ மாம் நமஸ்குரு  
மாமேவைஷ்யஸி ஸத்யம் தே ப்ரதிஜாநேப்ரியோ அஸிமே(Geetha 18-65)

"Contemplate on Me, Become My devotee and votary. Pay homage to Me. You shall reach Me. This is truth and a promise. You are dear to Me"

When Lord Krishna pointed out to Arjuna the means of *Bhakthi yōga*, Arjuna still remained sad. That led to the statement by the Lord, "மா ஸாச: " in the next verse, the *Charama Slōkam*.

Āzhwār here points out to the Lord that those means are in conflict with his eternal relationship with the Lord. He is the possession of the Lord and his servant and therefore he cannot indulge in self motivated efforts. If one instructs the other to look after himself, it means that he is left alone on his own.

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai draws a parallel here to the statement of *Nala* to *Damayanthi*.

ஏஷ பந்தா<sup>2</sup> வித<sup>3</sup>ர்பா<sup>4</sup>ணாம் ஏஷ யாதி ஹி கோஸலாந் -

"This is the way to *Vidarbhā* and this is the way to *Kōsala*" saying thus *Nala* left *Damayanthi* and went away from her.

நிற்பால் கரு மாமுறிமேனி காட்டுதியோ - or

Would you reveal Thine divine form dark like the tender mango leaf?

நாயாத்மா ப்ரவசேந லப்<sup>4</sup>யோ

ந மேத<sup>4</sup>யா ந ப<sup>4</sup>ஹுநா ஸ்ருதேந

யமேவைஷ வ்ருணுதே தேந லப்<sup>4</sup>ய:

தஸ்யைஷ ஆத்மா விவ்ருணுதே தநாம் ஸ்வாம்

(Kathōpanishad 1-2-23)

"(The *Paramātmā*) is not attainable by mere listening, by mental effort or meditation (devoid of devotion). It is only attainable by whomever It chooses. To him alone, the *Paramātmā* reveals Its resplendent form".

மாமுறிமேனி –

மாமுறி - tender leaf of mango (indicates the softness of the Lord's திருமேனி or divine non- material form)

கரு - (qualifying மா முறி ) to indicate that it is darker than the tender mango leaf.  
Also, bright and dark like the collyrium from which the superficial dusty layer has been removed.

மேனாள் கரு மாமுறி மேனி காட்டுதியோ -- Will you reveal your ancient and eternal non-material divine form?

மேனாள் அறியோமை -- eternally ignorant self of mine,  
(Similar statement by Sri Ālavandār's in his Stōtra Ratnam)

அவிவேக<sup>4</sup>நாந்த<sup>4</sup> தி<sup>3</sup>ங்மு<sup>2</sup>கே<sup>2</sup>  
ப<sup>3</sup>ஹு<sup>4</sup>தா<sup>4</sup> ஸந்தத து<sup>3</sup>க்க<sup>2</sup> வர்ஷிணி  
ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வந் ப<sup>4</sup>வது<sup>3</sup>ர்த்தி<sup>3</sup>நே பத<sup>2</sup>  
ஸ்க<sup>2</sup>லிதம் மாமவலோகயாச்யத  
(Stōtra Ratnam - 49)

"O'Lord! Full of auspicious attributes like knowledge and power! One, Who does not let down His devotees! Please show your grace to me who has lost his way from the right path, by the darkness of this worldly life (like the darkness of the rainy days) whose directions are darkened and clouded by lack of wisdom, and which showers incessant rain of sorrows".

என்செய்வான் எண்ணினாய் --

What is your intention towards me? Are you going to show me the way of devotion, as in?

மந்மநா ப<sup>4</sup>வ மத்<sup>3</sup>ப<sup>4</sup>க்தோ மத்<sup>3</sup>யாஜீ மாம் நமஸ்குரு  
மாமேவைஷ்யஸி ஸத்யம் தே ப்ரதிஜாநேப்ரியோ அஸிமே(Geetha 18-65)

Or as you had promised, you show yourself as my ultimate refuge?

ஸர்வ த<sup>4</sup>ர்மாந் பரித்யஜ்ய மாமேகம் ஸரணம்வ்ரஜ  
அஹம் த்வாம் ஸர்வ பாபேப்<sup>4</sup>யோ மோக்ஷயிஷ்யாமி மாஸூச:  
(Geetha 18-66)

"Giving up all means (of liberation), take Me alone as your refuge. I will liberate you from all sins. Don't feel sorrow."

கண்ணனே, ஈதுரையாய் --

Please tell me also the same and give me Thine shelter.

என்செய்தால் என்படோம் யாம் --

Āzhwār acknowledges all the good that the Lord has done for him (மயர்வற மதிநலம் அருளினன்)f Yet if He leaves him alone to himself, he says that he is likely to undo all that and end up in the mundane life.

யாமே அருவினையோம் சேயோம் என்னெஞ்சினார்  
தாமே அணுக்கராய் சார்ந்தொழிந்தார், பூமேய  
செம்மாதை நின்மார்பில் சேர்வித்துப் பாரிடந்த  
அம்மா நின் பாதத் தருகு

7

O' Lord! Thou (at the time of churning of the ocean for the nectar) received the divine mother who has a red complexion and is seated on the lotus to reside in Thine divine heart and (at the time of the dissolution) lifted the submerged earth from underneath the deluging waters! My mind on its own accord (without my permission) had become close to the holy divine feet of Thee, the Master. Only my self, who is full of sinful deeds, is far removed from Thee.

Āzhwār in the previous verse expressed his desire to see the Lord. The Lord in order to fulfill his desire revealed His resplendent form to Āzhwār's mind. In this verse, Āzhwār feels sorry expressing his disappointment that he didn't get the same experience, which his mind obtained.

யாமே அருவினையோம் சேயோம்--

I (being full of sinful deeds) am very far from Thee (unable to see Thee with my eyes).

என்னெஞ்சினார் --

my "mind". Āzhwār addresses as நெஞ்சினார் with respect for -

தாமே அணுக்கராய் சார்ந்தொழிந்தார் -- my mind reached close to the Lord, without my permission thereby provided me the mental experience.

In the remaining part of the verse, Āzhwār provides the reasons for considering himself lowly and unqualified to reach the Lord and why his mind however wants to get closer to Him.

பூமேய

செம்மாதை நின்மார்பில் சேர்வித்து - (அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று Thiruvāimozhi 6-10-10) -- reference here to the time of churning of the ocean of milk for the nectar when the divine mother with a red complexion and all auspiciousness and seated on the lotus, far ever became resident in the divine heart of the Lord.

The Lord being the consort of Sri MahāLakshmi is exalted and therefore unreachable for the lowly unqualified self. At the same time, mother Lakshmi makes the Lord easily accessible thereby attracting the mind.

பாரிடந்த – reference here to Sri Varāha Avatāra (the incarnation of the Lord as the divine Boar) and the lifting of the submerged earth from underneath the deluging waters at the time of dissolution ("Pralaya"). This act is impossible for any human and indicates the all mightiness of the Lord, thereby implying that He is unattainable. At the same time the act of lifting, indicates the Lord's readiness to lift the downtrodden, thereby encouraging the mind to get near Him.

அருகும் சுவடும் தெரிவுணரோம், அன்பே  
பெருகு மிகவிதுவென் பேசீர் - பருகலாம்  
பண்புடையீர் பாராளந்தீர் பாவிபேம் கண் காண்பரிய  
நுண்புடையீர் நும்மை நுமக்கு 8

O'Lord! Thine attributes are sweet and nectarous. Thou strode the worlds! Thou art subtle and invisible for our gross eyes unrighteous as we are. We are unable to fathom or understand the approach or its means to Thee. We however have developed immense love towards Thee. Please pray tell the reason for this.

Although the Āzhwār feels unable to experience the Lord physically, he expresses his mental visualization of Him. This sprouts an immense love in him for the Lord. Thus the Lord appears both as unreachable and accessible. Āzhwār enquires the Lord the reason for this.

நும்மை அருகும் சுவடும் தெரிவுணரோம் ---

We are neither able to be near you nor enjoy your sweetness unlike Sri Seetha Dévi who was able to enjoy your company uninterrupted for 12 years in Ayōdhya.

(Alternately) we neither understand the approach nor the means to reach you.

நுமக்கு

அன்பே பெருகும் மிகவிதுவென் பேசீர் --

However we have developed immense love for you. Please pray tell me the reason.

பருகலாம் பண்புடையீர் --"தேனும் பாலும் நெய்யும் கன்னலும் அமுது  
மொத்தே" (Thiruvāimozhi 2-3-1)

Your *gunās* (attributes) are so sweet and inviting like delicious nectar for us to drink, absorb and enjoy.

பண்பு : refers to the easy accessibility of the Lord (*Saulabhya guna*)

பாராளந்தீர் -- You strode the worlds (referring to the *Trivikrama avathāram* ). This is an example of the Lord's easy accessibility to all beings.

Āzhwār states that the Lord was easily available for him to mentally experience Him. This is the reason for the immense love that sprang in Āzhwār's heart for the Lord.

பாவிடேம் கண் காண்பரிய

நுண்புடையீர் ---

Your nature is so subtle that it makes us unable to see you with our gross eyes, sinful as we are.

"நும்மை நுமக்கு" – These two words at the end are to be connected respectively as shown below

"நும்மை அருகும் சுவடும் தெரிவுணரோம்

நுமக்கு அன்பே பெருகும் மிக இது என் பேசீர் "

to get the meaning as explained by Pillai Thirunariyūr Araiyaar to Sri Nanjeer according to the commentator.

நுமக்கடியோமென்றென்றுநொந்துரைத்தேன், மாலார்  
தமக்கவர்தாம் சார்வரியரானால் -- எமக்கினி  
யாதானு மாகிடு காண் நெஞ்சே, அவர்திறத்தே  
யாதானும் சிந்தித்திரு

9

O' Mind! He (the Lord) is difficult to approach. What is the use of all the time repeatedly saying to the great Lord that we are His servants? From now on, let whatever may happen, let it be so for us (His possessions). Let you be thinking of something or the other about Him.

Āzhwār in this verse addresses his mind since his desire to see the Lord directly did not materialize. "What is the use of begging Him? He doesn't seem to want to bless us with His vision". After pondering for a little while, Āzhwār however feels that for this reason he cannot withdraw from the Lord. He then tells his mind, to think something or the other about Him, whether He fulfills his desire or not.

நுமக்கடியோம் என்றென்று– Saying even once that "I am Thy servant", is sufficient to bring His grace for reason of the eternal relationship. But saying the same repeatedly all the time may have caused pain to His divine heart.

மாலார் தமக்கு நொந்து உரைத்து என் – Saying this repeatedly for a long time to the Lord, desiring to see Him directly, is of no avail.

ஆர்த்தோ வா யதி<sup>3</sup> வா த்<sup>3</sup>ருப்த: பரேஷாம் ஸரணாக<sup>3</sup>த:



அரி: ப்ராணாந் பரித்யஜ்ய ரக்ஷிதவ்ய: க்ருதாத்மநா

(Srimad Rāmāyanam -YuddhaKādam 18-28)

The words uttered by the Lord in His avatāra as Sri Rāma, that "Enemy who has surrendered whole-heartedly in distress or half-heartedly in comfort, is fit to be protected by an evolved person even at the cost of his own life", have become untrue!

அவர்தாம் சார்வரியர் ஆனால் ---

Our Lord now has become inaccessible.

In the first half of the verse, Āzhwār concludes unless the Lord wills, these desires will not be fulfilled. The second half of the verse begins with the feeling, "May be we should withdraw from Him altogether". Once the desire to see Him with this physical body is not going to materialize, whether we attain Him or not attain Him, both are about the same. What is the use of food made available long after hunger is gone? - Sentiments similar to Sri Āndāl's, in her verses.

கொம்மை முலைகள் இடர் தீர் கோவிந்தற்கு ஓர் குற்றேவல்

இம்மைப் பிறவி செய்யாதே இனிப்போய் செய்யும் தவந்தானென்

(Nāchiyār Thirumozhi 13-9)

Why not wait until the Lord fulfills the desire? This is possible for only those who can bear the separation from the Lord. Sri Periya Vācchān Pillai draws here a parallel to the state of Sri Seethā Dévi when Sri Rāma (to fulfill the words of Dasarathā), decides to go to the forest alone leaving her behind.

ஈர்ஷ்யா ரோஷௌ ப்<sup>3</sup>ஹிஷ்க்ருத்ய பு<sup>4</sup>க்த ஸேஷமிவோத<sup>3</sup>கம்

நய மாம் வீர் விஸ்ரப்<sup>3</sup>தே<sup>4</sup> பாபம் மயி ந வித்<sup>3</sup>யதே

(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Ayōdhyā Kādam 27-8)

"O' The Valarous Lord! Giving up jealousy and anger, like leaving the left over water after drinking, trusting my words, take me along with you; for I have no fault that should be reason enough to cause separation from you".

Sri Seethā states thus, indicating that she would not live separated from her Lord, Sri Rāma. This is the reply of Sri Seethā when Sri Rāma refuses to take her with him to the forest citing that the jungle is home to wild animals and demons and therefore dreadful and she is too gentle and soft to tread the same. Being upset with Sri Rāma, out of love for Him, Sri Seethā makes this statement.

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai gives an expanded commentary here. Sri Seethā's reasoning is like this. If Sri Rāma were to let Sri Seethā accompany him to the forest she will also be glorified by the people of the world for her action. Sri Seethā is asking Sri Rāma whether her rise to fame makes him feel jealous and angry and whether that is the reason that he is against her accompanying him to the forest. She further implies Sri Rāma, being a disciple of the great Āchārya Sri Vasishta, should give up things that need to be given up

like jealousy and anger (ஈர்ஷ்யா ரோஷௌ ப<sup>3</sup>ஹிஷ்க்ருத்ய ப<sup>4</sup>க்த  
ஸோஷமிவோத<sup>3</sup>கம்)

நய மாம்: (Please take me) Meaning if jealousy and anger are given up, then the person will be able to work for the benefit of others.

வீர் - Because you are valorous, you will have no problem looking after me in the forest.

பாபம் மயி ந வித்யதே : "I have no sin" meaning that I have no fault that should be reason for separation from you since I will not live without you.

அவர்திறத்தே யாதானும் சிந்தித்திரு --

When Āzhwār's mind questions him as to whether he should consider both as the same whether we attain or not attain the Lord's vision for after all He is needed for our "being" (existence), Āzhwār concludes that we don't need to reach Him for our "being". Since we are His body, "if He is", "we are" also automatically. Āzhwār then directs his mind to think of something about the Lord to while away the time. Even if He says that He doesn't need us, by thinking of that always, we can still live.

Āzhwār states similarly in Thiruvāimozhi,

"பாவி நீ என்று ஒன்று சொல்லாய் பாவியேன் காணவந்தே"

(Thiruvāimozhi 4-1-3)

Similar sentiments by Sri Āndāl,

"ஒரு ஞான்று மெய்ம்மை சொல்லி முகம் நோக்கி விடை தான் தருமேல் மிக நன்றே"

(Nāchiyār Thirumozhi 13-9)

இருநால்வர் ஈரைந்தின் மேலோருவர் எட்டோ  
டொருநால்வ ரோரிருவரல்லால், திருமாற்கு  
யாமார் வணக்கமா ரேபாவம் நன்னெஞ்சே  
நாமா மிகவுடையோம் நாழ்

10

O' Good-natured mind! Who are we to reach the Lord of Sri Lakshmi, who can be obtained only by those who are exalted like the eight *Vasu* deities, the eleven *Rudrās*, the twelve *Ādityās*, and the twin *Aswins*? Of what value is our obeisance, arising from our little selves? Our loss is due to our demerits alone. Wonder indeed that we harbor such hopeless desires.

It is said that the reason for the sentiment expressed by the Āzhwār in this verse has been interpreted in three different ways by Sri Nampillai. Āzhwār withdraws from the Lord considering himself to be overly zealous without realizing his demerits being lowly and limited and feeling that the Lord is attainable only by celestial deities who are exalted on account of their knowledge and power. The second interpretation is that Āzhwār makes

the statement with some disgust in his mind that such grace will only befall the dévas who are after various material things from the Lord and not him desiring only the Lord. The third interpretation is that Azhwar makes similar statement with disgust in his mind that such grace will only befall dévas who adopt various other means to attain the same unlike himself who takes the Lord alone as the means.

இருநால்வர் ஈரைந்தின் மேலோருவர் எட்டோடு ஒருநால்வர் ஓரிருவர்— refer to the 33 *dévās* (celestial beings). எண்மர் பதினொருவர் ஈருவர் ஓரிருவர் (Sri Poikai Pirān's Mudal Thiruvandhādhī –52 ) as well as முப்பத்து மூவர் (Thiruppāvai –20).

த்ரயஸ்த்ரிம்ஸத்வை தே<sup>3</sup>வா: as also mentioned in the Védas

அல்லால் - Other than the 33 dévas who are exalted on account of their knowledge and power.

திருமாற்கு யாமார் வணக்கமார்-- To attain the Lord of Sri Lakshmi, how are we qualified? Only the exalted ones can attain Him. Of what use is our obeisance to Him?

ஏ பாவம்! - To lose Him even when He is so close, is solely due to our demerits. Even when He appeared in our hearts, not able to visualize Him directly is also because of our sins.

நன்னெஞ்சே - O' Good-natured mind!

நாம் மிக நாழ் உடையோம் -- We are overzealous and ambitious and harbor hopeless desires in vain. As in வளவேமூலகு (Thiruvāimozhi 1-5), Āzhwār considers himself not meritorious due to faults and therefore not fit to reach the Lord of Sri Lakshmi.

நாழாலமர் முயன்ற வல்லரக்க னின்னுயிரை

வாழா வகைவலிதல் நின்வலியே - ஆழாத

பாருநீ வானுநீ காலுநீ தீயுநீ

நீருநீ யாய் நின்ற நீ

11

O'Lord! Thou art the floating earth, Thou art the space, Thou art the wind, Thou art the fire and Thou art the water. Thou art the inner controller of all these primordial elements as well. Indeed, Thy valour took the sweet life out of the mighty demon *Rāvana*, who tried to battle with you on account of his ego.

Āzhwār, who tried to withdraw from the Lord citing his demerits, is enraptured by the Lord who showed His nature of being the underlying support of the entire cosmos and His might in destroying the demons. Āzhwār again begins to glorify the Lord attracted by His nature. Āzhwār feels as though the Lord's might that overpowered the demon *Rāvanā* is in some ways less striking than His might engulfing him.

நாழாலமர் முயன்ற வல்லரக்க னின்னுயிரை வாழா வகைவலிதல் நின்வலியே - Rāvana who caused Sri Rāma to be separated from Sri Seethā having forcefully abducted her, with heads swollen by ego being the king of the demons sought to battle Sri Rāma and lost his dear life. It feels for the Āzhwār as though the feat of destruction of that evil Rāvana is mighty small compared to the way that the Lord turned him around towards Him from retreating away considering himself to be not meritorious. Āzhwar also implies that those who withdraw from the Lord thinking that they are not meritorious are also like Rāvana, who separated the divine mother from the Lord.

ஆழாத பாரும் நீ வானும் நீ காலும் நீ தீயும்  
நீ நீரும் நீ ஆய் நின்ற நீ --- The five great elements themselves exhibit mutual incompatibility. For instance earth can dissolve in water and water can put out the fire. Yet the Lord who is the cause of these great elements make them function together, being Himself their inner controller. Āzhwār implies therefore what surprise is there in Lord being able to turn him around also.

நீயன்றே ஆழ்துயரில் வீழ்விப்பான் நின்றுமுன்றாய்  
போயொன்று சொல்லியென் போநெஞ்சே-நீயென்றும்  
காழ்த்துபதேசம் தரினும் கைக்கொள்ளாய் கண்ணன்தாள்  
வாழ்த்துவதே கண்டாய் வழக்கு 12

O' mind! You are the one striving forever to throw me into the depths of misery. What is the use of repeating the blame game? Let it go. Even when I instruct you about the easy accessible nature of the Lord, you don't accept it being upset with me. Understand that paying benediction on the lotus feet of Sri Krishna is the most appropriate action (for us).

Āzhwār feels sorry for all the lost time (despite the Lord being near), dislikes his mind for not preventing his withdrawal from the Lord.

நீயன்றே ஆழ்துயரில் வீழ்விப்பான் நின்றுமுன்றாய் –  
ஆழ்துயர் - The depths of misery arising from his withdrawal from the Lord considering himself to be not meritorious or arising from eternally indulging his senses in the mundane world.  
Āzhwār makes the mind as the reason for this.

His mind reminds him of all his own praises expressed in the earlier verses  
முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே! (1)  
யாமே சேயோம், என்னெஞ்சினார் சார்ந்தொழிந்தார் (7)

நன்னெஞ்சே (10).

போ ஒன்று சொல்லி என் போ நெஞ்சே- Āzhwār points out to his mind that it must have prevented him from falling into the depths of despair. He then tells the mind to let go this discussion of who is to blame.

உபதேசம் தரினும் நீ என்றும் காழ்த்துக் கைக்கொள்ளாய் – Āzhwār further says to his mind, "Do not think that the Lord's nature is only transcendental. Easy accessibility is also His nature. Even when I have instructed you thus, you have long ignored this, being angry with me".

கண்ணன் தாள் வாழ்த்துவதே வழக்கு கண்டாய் – "Since the Lord is ever ready to accept us, we should not withdraw from Him. Singing the praises of the lotus feet of the benevolent and the ever gracious Lord Sri Krishna is the most appropriate and right action for us".

வழக்கொடு மாறுகொள் அன்று அடியார் வேண்ட  
இழக்கவும் காண்டுமிறைவ - இழப்புண்டே  
எம்மாட்கொண்டாகிலுமாயான் வேண்ட என்கண்கள்  
தம்மால் காட்டு உன்மேனிச்சாய்

13

O' Lord! The humble request of mine is not unjust. (Even in this world), righteous masters are seen to fulfill the requests of their servants even if it entails some personal loss. O' Master! Fulfilling my request will cause no loss to you. Accept my humble request and take me as Thy servant and reveal the beauty of Thy divine Form.

In this verse, Āzhwār tells the Lord, that if He wouldn't let him withdraw from Him, then He should reveal His beautiful divine form to his eyes.

ஓடு வழக்கன்று மாறுகொள் வழக்கன்று – Taking *avatharās* in this mundane world of *Jīvās* who are of limited knowledge as well as instructing them to perform certain acts for certain results, do not help.

மாறு - return favor

அடியார் வேண்ட இழக்கவும் காண்டும் - Even in this world, righteous masters are seen to fulfill the requests of their servants even at the cost of some personal loss.

Feeling as if the Lord indicates at this point that this will be applicable to Him only when one becomes His servant, Āzhwār addresses the Lord as இறைவ – O' Master!.

Implying, thereby it is an irrefutable fact that the Lord is the Master for all. Āzhwār claims that all others automatically become His servants only.

Āzhwār further enquires,

இழப்புண்டே – "Would you ever want your devotees to suffer any loss?"

Feeling that the Lord wants him to show some semblance of service on his part, Āzhwār further states,

எம்மாட்கொண்டாகிலும் யான் வேண்ட – (ஆகிலும் யான் வேண்ட எம்மாட்கொண்டு) – "Treating my simple request as a complete act of service, you should fulfill my wishes".

என்கண்கள் தம்மால் உன்மேனிச்சாய் காட்டு - reveal the beauty of Thy divine Form.

Similar to the statement by Sri Seethā Dévi who wanted to embrace the Lord in the same place and form she was at the time instead of some other location and form --

யதா<sup>2</sup> தம் புருஷவ்யாக்<sup>4</sup>ரம் கா<sup>3</sup>த்தரை: ஸோகாபி<sup>4</sup> கர்ஸரிதை  
ஸம்ஸ்ப்ருஸேயம் ஸகாமாஹம் ததா<sup>2</sup> குரு த<sup>3</sup>யாம் மயி (Srimad Rāmāyanam - SundaraKāṇḍam 40- 3)

"Please show me your compassion so that I (who has immense love for Sri Rāma) with limbs wasted due to separation, become embraceable by that tiger among men".

கோவிந்தற்கோர் குற்றவேல் இம்மைப்பிறவி செய்யாதே இனிப்போய்ச்செய்யும்  
தவந்தானென்(Nāchiyār Thirumozhi 13-9)

Āzhwār doesn't want to wait until he gets to reach the eternal realm (*Parama Padam*)

சாயால் கரியானை உள்ளறியாராய் நெஞ்சே  
பேயார் முலை கொடுத்தார் பேயராய் - நீயார் போய்த்  
தேம் பூண் சுவைத்து ஊன் அறிந்தறிந்தும் தீவினையாம்  
பாம்பார்வாய் கைநீட்டல் பார்த்தி

14

O' mind! *Pūthanā*, ignorant of the real nature of the dark coloured infant Krishna, being a demoness, tried to kill him by feeding him with her breasts smeared with poison. You repeatedly indulge in self-degrading, sense oriented actions, even when you are fully aware of their effects. This is like sticking your hand into the mouth of the serpent like *Samsāra* which only leads to demerits. In comparison (to *Pūthanā*), you are even lower.



Āzhwār in the previous verse requested the Lord to show His beautiful form. When the Lord accedes to his request, Āzhwār feeling his lowly self to be unfit to receive such a divine sight, withdraws from the Lord, chiding his mind.

சாயால் கரியானை - dark hues Krishna

உள் அறியாராய் – unable to appreciate the fact that the transcendental Lord has come in the form of an infant child

நெஞ்சே பேயார் முலை கொடுத்தார் பேயராய் – O' mind! Pūthanā's deception was due to her demoness birth (her action befitting her birth)

நீயார் – In comparison, you appear even lower since you have been given a human birth and yet your actions are even more reprehensible.

தேம் பூண் சுவைத்து ஊன் அறிந்தறிந்தும் தீவினையாம்

பாம்பார்வாய் கைநீட்டல் பார்த்தி -- Even knowing that indulgence in sense oriented actions lead only to the destruction of the good of the self, you are repeatedly drawn towards them. Your action is similar to someone sticking their hand into the mouth of the venomous serpent fully aware of the implication of such act.

தேம் பூண் – refers to the sensory pleasures

பார்த்தோ ரெதிரிதா நெஞ்சே படுதுயரம்

பேர்த்தோதப் பீடழிவாம் பேச்சில்லை - ஆர்த்தோதம்

தம்மேனி (த்) தாள் தடவத் தாங்கிடந்து தம்முடைய

செம்மேனிக் கண்வளர்வார் சீர்

15

O' Mind! Ignoring all our misery, if we glorify the auspicious *gunās* of the Lord, who is in a state of meditative sleep, his beautiful red eyes closed, lying on the ocean with its roaring surging waves gently rubbing His divine body and the lotus feet, to say that it will somehow defame Him is not correct. Look directly and reflect on this.

Āzhwār in the previous verse, withdrew from the Lord thinking of the lowliness of his own mind. In this verse, he tells his mind that if it thinks of its actions, it is befitting to withdraw but if it thinks of the Lord's actions, it can approach Him.

நெஞ்சே எதிரிதா பார்த்து – O'mind, look directly and reflect on this.

ஓதம் ஆர்த்து – roaring surging ocean

தம்மேனி (த்) தாள் தடவத் – with the waves gently rubbing His divine body and holy feet

தாங்கிடந்து – lying on the ocean

தம்முடைய செம்மேனிக் கண்வளர்வார் - as if in a meditative sleep (*yōga nidrā*) with His beautiful red eyes closed.

The Lord lies on the ocean of milk making Himself, available for all His devotees.  
சீர் படுத்துயரம் பேர்த்து ஓதப் பீடழிவாம் பேச்சில்லை – If we were to glorify His auspicious attributes, there is no room for talk of destroying His greatness.

சீரால் பிறந்து சிறப்பால் வளராது  
பேர்வாமன் ஆகாக்கால் பேராளா - மார்பாரப்  
புல்கி நீயுண்டுமிழ்ந்த பூமிநீ ரேற்பரிதே  
சொல்லுநீ யாமறியச் சூழ்ந்து

16

O' Lord! If you had not been born poor and not been brought up in luxury and love and not taken the name and form of a "dwarf ", would you not be able to repossess this earth, - that you had as (the great *Varāha*) once embraced and lifted it out of deluging waters, protected the same from destruction during dissolution and brought it out during the time of creation? Please pray tell the reasons so that we can understand.

Āzhwār in the previous verse enjoyed the Lord lying on the ocean of milk in a meditative sleep wondering whether anyone would seek Him. In this verse, he is attracted by His *avatāra* as "Vāmana" (the divine Dwarf) for it shows how the Lord's willingness even to belittle Himself in order to receive His own possessions.

சீரால் பிறந்து --

மஹதா தபஸா ராம மஹதா சாபி கர்மணா

ராஜ்ஞா த<sup>3</sup>ஸரதே<sup>2</sup>நாஸி லப்<sup>3</sup>தோ<sup>4</sup>அம்ருதமிவாமரை (Srimad Rāmāyanam-  
ĀranyaKādam 66-3)

"O' Rāma, you have been obtained by great penances and deeds by the king Dasaratha, like the dévas obtaining the nectar".

Sri Vasudéva by observing many vows obtained Sri Krishna as his son.

"Your birth as "*Vāmana*" was nothing like this.

சிறப்பால் வளராது - you were not brought up in luxury with love and care by persons of the stature of Sri Sumitrā or Sage Vasishta.

பேர்வாமன் ஆகாக்கால் - You took an *avatāra* of a "dwarf" to be like the other "dwarfs" of the land.

பேராளா – O' loving Lord!

Before describing His actions, Āzhwār is drawn towards the "*sausheelya guna*" (gracious condescension) and *saualabhya guna* (easy accessibility) of the Lord. "எத்திறம்"

(Thiruvāimozhi 1-3-1).

மார்பாரப்

புல்கி நீயுண்டுமிழ்ந்த பூமிநீ ரேற்பரிதே - Āzhwār here is drawn by the Lord's love of His possessions. The earth is His possession. As the great Varāha, He lifted it out of deluging waters. Protected the same earth from destruction during "*pralaya*" (dissolution) by keeping it safe in His belly and allowed it to come out during "*srishṭi*" ("creation"). Āzhwār is asking the Lord whether He couldn't repossess the same earth from Mahābali without belittling Himself.

சொல்லுநீ யாமறியச் சூழ்ந்து - Unable to fathom the reasons, Āzhwār entreats the Lord to explain it Himself in detail.

"ஜநம் கர்ம ச மே தி<sup>3</sup>வ்யம் ஏவம் வேத்தி தத்வத:

த்யக்த்வா தே<sup>3</sup>ஹம் புனர்ஜநம் நைதி மாமேதி ஸோர்ஜூந" ( Geetha 4-9)

"O'Arjuna! Whoever understands in truth my divine non-material births and actions, leaving his body reaches Me and is never reborn".

Even in Geetha, the Lord only refers to the word, "தி<sup>3</sup>வ்யம்" but does not go into detail.

So also the Védas, states the அவதார ரஹஸ்யம் (the secret of the Lord's *avatāra* – divine descent) only as follows.

அஜாயமானோ ப<sup>3</sup>ஹுதா<sup>4</sup> விஜாயதே

தஸ்ய தீ<sup>4</sup>ரா: பரிஜாநந்தி யோநிம்

(Purusha Sūktham-27)

"Birthless, yet He is born as many. Only the wise understands His *avatārās*".

சூழ்ந்தடியார் வேண்டினக்கால் தோன்றாது விட்டாலும்  
வாழ்ந்திடுவர் பின்னும் தம் வாய் திறவார் - சூழ்ந்தெங்கும்  
வால்வரைகள் போலரக்கன் வன்தலைகள் தாமிடியத்  
தாள் வரைவில் ஏந்தினார் தாம்

17

The Lord who once felled the strong glittering mountain like heads of the demon *Rāvana* scattering them in all directions with the enormous bow, takes the various *avatārās* with the desire to reach His devotees. Even when none take to Him despite His efforts, He still remains fulfilled (after return

to His eternal realm) and will not openly speak about it (to the divine mother). OR

The true devotees of the Lord, even when He doesn't appear for them in person despite uninterrupted worship, will never hate nor speak ill of the Lord.

Āzhwār in this verse states that the Lord when He reaches out to the sentient beings for their emancipation, even when they ignore Him, He doesn't take this into His heart much.

தூழ்ந்தடியார் வேண்டினக்கால் தோன்றாது விட்டாலும்  
வாழ்ந்திடுவர் as in எதிர் தூழல் புக்கு (Thiruvāimozhi 2-7-6), The Lord takes various *avatārās* in order to emancipate the embodied beings. Despite this, if humans ignore Him and do not heed Him, He still remains satisfied that He had done His efforts.  
பின்னும் தம் வாய் திறவார் – Even when He is alone with Mother Lakshmi, He will not express His disappointment.

The *Sūtra* # 364 in the third *prakaranam* of Sri VachanaBhūshanam, "அறிவிக்க உரியவனகப்படவாய் திறவாதே ஸர்வஞ் விஷயங்களுக்கும் மறைக்குமென்னாநின்றதிரே" and its commentary by Sri Manavāla Māmunigal explain the meaning of this *pāsuram*.

The second meaning given for this by Sri Periyavācchān Pillai is in respect of the devotees of the Lord. தூழ்ந்தெங்கும் வால்வரைகள் போலரக்கன் வன்தலைகள் தாமிடியத்

தாள் வரைவில் ஏந்தினார் தாம் – The Lord who as Sri Rāma once felled the strong glittering mountain like heads of the demon Rāvanā scattering them in all directions with the enormous bow

அடியார் தூழ்ந்து வேண்டினக்கால் தோன்றாது விட்டாலும்  
வாழ்ந்திடுவர் - Even when the Lord who took *avatāra* as Sri Rāma doesn't give His vision to His devotees, true devotees, will console themselves saying that "we are His possessions and He is the Master and we should follow whatever He sanctions". They will not talk about this to anyone else either.

தாம்பாலாப் புண்டாலும் அத்தழும்பு தானிளகப்  
பாம்பாலாப் புண்டுபாடுற்றாலும் - சோம்பாதிப்  
பல்லுருவை யெல்லாம் படர்வித்த வித்தா உன்  
தொல்லுருவை யாரறிவார் சொல்லு

O' Lord! Despite sustaining bruises from being knotted around by the serpent, *Kāliya* which gave you marks that made the ones you sustained from being tied with a rope by mother Yashōda look small, unmindful of any of these hardships, you continue the acts of creating the various forms of the sentient beings allowing them to grow, remaining as the cause of the cosmos. Who can understand Thine ancient form? Please pray tell it yourself!

Āzhwār in the previous verse said that the Lord would not develop hatred even when the humans in this mundane world do not heed Him. In this verse, he further states that the Lord will never give up the *jīvās* (the sentient beings), even when they cause Him harm out of love or enmity.

தாம்பால் ஆப்புண்டாலும்

- Even when mother Yashōdā tied Him down with a rope wishing to discipline thinking that He is her child, the Lord joyfully accepted it.

அத்தமும்பு தானிளகப் பாம்பால் ஆப்புண்டு பாடுற்றாலும் - the marks from Yashōdā's rope seemed like nothing compared to the bruises caused by the large venomous serpent Kāliya. The Lord sustained them also without ever minding them.

சோம்பாது இப்பல்லுருவை யெல்லாம் படர்வித்த வித்தா -

The Lord despite being abused by the *jīvās* immersed in this mundane world goes on with His work and brings forth the entire cosmos with its various forms of life.

உன் தொல்லுருவை யாரறிவார் சொல்லு - Who can know (understand) Thine ancient form? Please pray tell yourself.

"The ancient form" means here the ancient relation between the Lord and the *jīvās*  
உடையவன் - the owner or the possessor and உடைமை - the possessions. The owner will not let go of his possessions.

சொல்லில் குறையில்லை சூதறியா நெஞ்சமே  
எல்லிபகல் என்னாநெப்போதும் - தொல்லைக்கண்  
மாத்தானைக் கெல்லாம் ஓர் ஐவரையே மாறாகக்  
காத்தானைக் காண்டும்நீகாண்

19

O' naive mind! If we begin to talk about His qualities, they are limitless. In this ancient land, during the great *Bhāratha* war, placing the five helpless

*Pāṇḍavās* as the enemies of the great army of the *Duryōdhanā*, did He not protect them day and night? See for yourself.

Āzhwār in the previous verse, described how the Lord protected the devotees in His youth as child Krishna. In this verse, Āzhwār describes how He sheltered His devotees when He grew up.

சொல்லில் குறையில்லை - The Lord's "gunās", (attributes) are limitless and difficult to describe.

தூதறியா நெஞ்சமே - O' naive mind! You don't know what is good and what is bad. ("desire towards the Lord is good" and needs to be developed "desire towards the rest is bad" and needs to be given up)

தொல்லைக்கண் மாத்தானைக் கெல்லாம் ஓர் ஐவரையே மாறாகக் காத்தானை - The Lord instead of getting rid of the burden on this ancient earth in the form of *Duryōdhanā* and his army by Himself, He placed the five *Pāṇḍavās* as their enemies and protected them day and night allowing them to become victorious.

காண்டும் நீ காண் - If you desire to see Him, you can see His real form.

காணப் புகிலறிவு கைக்கொண்ட நன்னெஞ்சம்  
நாணப்படுமன்றே நாம்பேசில் -- மாணி  
உருவாகிக் கொண்டுலகம் நீரேற்ற சீரான்  
திருவாகம் தீண்டிற்றுச் சென்று

20

If we wish to see the beautiful form or talk about the deeds of the gracious Lord who as a dwarf mendicant received as gift all the worlds (from the demon king *Mahābali*) and graced the same by pervading them (as *Trivikrama*), should not our good mind with intelligence feel ashamed?

Although in the previous verse, Āzhwār says to his mind "See", in this verse he points out that compared to the desire and the eternal efforts that the Lord takes to repossess the wayward *jīvās*, our desire to see Him or reach Him is so infinitely small and therefore should make our intelligent mind feel ashamed.

காணப் புகில் நாம்பேசில் அறிவு கைக்கொண்ட நன்னெஞ்சம்

நாணப்படும் அன்றே - If we desire to see and begin to talk about His resplendent form, our good mind bestowed with intelligence, must feel ashamed considering our own form and His gracious deeds.

மாணி உருவாகி நீரேற்று உலகம் கொண்ட சீரான் திருவாகம் சென்று தீண்டிற்று - As a dwarf mendicant (Vāmana celibate), the Lord graciously accepted the gift from Mahābali, and taking the giant form as Trivikrama , pervaded and graced all the worlds with His lotus feet.

The efforts that the jīva takes to reach the Paramātmā, are infinitely small compared to the eternal efforts mounted by the gracious Lord towards the jīvas.

"வளவேழமுகு" - (Thiruvāimozhi 1-5).

சென்றங்கு வெந்நரகில் சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு  
இன்றிங்கென் னெஞ்சாலிடுக்கொண்ட - அன்றங்குப்  
பாருருவும் பார்வளைத்த நீருருவும் கண்புதையக்  
காருருவன் தான் நிமிர்த்த கால்

21

The lotus feet of the Lord with the hue of the dark clouds, placed on the sacrificial land of *Mahābali*, at that time, grew and expanded, pervading all the worlds, making this earth and its surrounding oceans disappear from the sight. Today on this earth, the same divine lotus feet engulfed my mind to protect me from falling into the terrible hell (the mundane life - *Samsāra*).

Āzhwār in this verse expresses his wonderment as to how the divine lotus feet of the Lord that once spanned the worlds came to be entrapped in his mind. The main reason for this of course is the Lord's desire to protect the *jīvās* from the clutches of the *Samsāra* (the mundane life).

வெந்நரகு - means terrible hell. It is used here in two ways:

- i. the mundane life (*Samsāra*)
- ii. "Turning away from the Lord". For the wise, turning away from the Lord is like falling into the terrible hell.

சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு - to protect from falling into.

இன்று இங்குளன் நெஞ்சால் இடுக்கொண்ட - today, in this world itself, entrapped by my mind.



"In order to protect me from falling into the terrible hell, the divine lotus feet of the Lord entered my mind and became in turn entrapped".

கார் உருவன் தான் நிமிர்த்த கால் - The lotus feet of the Lord with the hue of the dark clouds

அன்றங்குப் பார் உருவும் பார்வளைத்த நீர் உருவும் கண்புதைய - at that time, grew and expanded, pervading all the worlds, making this earth and its surrounding oceans disappear from the sight.

கண்புதைய - disappear from the sight.

காலே பொதத்திரிந்து கத்துவராம் இனநாள்  
மாலார் குடிபுகுந்தார் என் மனத்தே - மேலால்  
தருக்குமிடம் பாட்டினோடும் வல்வினையார் தாம் வீற்  
றிருக்குமிடம் காணா திளைத்து

22

The sovereign Lord entered and engulfed my mind. All my unrighteous acts and their effects, which have been ruling over me with great pride from before and torturing me, unable to find space to subsist, appear to be screaming, weakened as they were from running here and there.

Āzhwār, in this verse, describes how all the unrighteous "*karmās*" and their effects automatically vanished once the Lord entered his mind.

மாலார் குடிபுகுந்தார் என் மனத்தே --

Similar to "அரவத்தமளியினோடும் அழகிய பாற்கடலோடும் அரவிந்தப் பாவையும் தானும் அகம்படி வந்து புகுந்து" (Peri Āzhwār Thirumozhi 5-2-10), The Sovereign Lord entered my mind with all His attendants.

வல்வினையார் - unrighteous acts and their effects

தருக்கும் - torturing, இடம் பாடு - pride of wealth

தருக்கும் இடம் பாட்டினோடும் - torturing with pride.

வீற்றிருக்கை is வீறு தோற்ற இருக்கை means ruling over

காலே பொதத்திரிந்து - running all over to the point of feet giving way

கத்துவராம்- screaming

இனநாள் - today.

இளைப்பாய் இளையாப்பாய் நெஞ்சமே சொன்னேன்  
இளைக்க நமன் தமர்கள் பற்றி - இளைப்பெய்த  
நாய்தந்து மோதாமல் நல்குவான் நல்காப்பான்  
தாய்தந்தை யெவ்வுயிர்க்கும்தான்

23

O' mind! (Not holding on to the Lord), may you be weak or (holding on to Him) may you be strong. I give you this invaluable teaching. The Lord is (truly) the mother and the father for all beings, whether He protects us or not from the weakening effects of the hard grips of the attendants of *Yama* (the deity of justice) and their unleashed dogs.

Āzhwār in this verse tells his mind that the Lord is the ultimate Saviour whether one holds on to Him or not, therefore its duty is to take Him as the refuge whether He protects or not.

இளைப்பாய் இளையாப்பாய் - Be weak not holding on to the Lord (and holding on to the material things) or be strong by holding on to Him (and not holding on to material things)

நெஞ்சமே சொன்னேன்: O' mind! I will tell you what is in your good interest. Whether the Lord protects us or not, He is the natural Saviour for everyone.

இளைக்க நமன் தமர்கள் பற்றி - When the attendants of Yama, the deity of justice, take the jīva to the abode of death, the jīva becomes weakened by their hard grip.

இளைப்பெய்த

நாய்தந்து மோதாமல் - Not allowing the dogs of the Yama's attendants from further weakening the jīva

நல்குவான் நல்காப்பான் - the Lord protects us or even if He does not

தாய்தந்தை யெவ்வுயிர்க்கும் தான் - He still remains as the mother and the father for all beings.

களைவாய் துன்பம் களையாதொழிவாய் களைகண் மற்றிலேன்  
(Thiruvāimozhi 5-8-8).

Whether one holds the Lord as the refuge or not, the Lord always remains the ultimate protector for all beings and therefore whether He does or not protect, we must take Him as our refuge.

தானே தனித்தோன்றல் தன்னளப்பொன் றில்லாதான்  
தானே பிறர்கட்கும் தற்றோன்றல் - தானே  
இளைக்கிற்பார் கீழ்மேலாம் மீண்டமைப்பா னானால்  
அளக்கிற்பார் பாரின்மே லார்

24

The Lord alone takes several peerless incarnations. He has no compeers. He also is the inner controller of all other beings. If He ever withdraws from His acts of protection even for a minute, the world will go upside down. After dissolution, when He brings forth again this entire creation out of compassion for the trapped *jīvās*, who on this earth can fathom all His deeds of protection?

Āzhwār in the last verse stated that the Lord alone should be taken as refuge because of our natural relationship to Him, whether He protects us or not. In this verse, Āzhwār by his arguments, proves that the Lord alone is the protector and therefore there is no question of Him not offering shelter.

தானே தனித்தோன்றல் - He alone takes several divine incarnations out of his own will, in order that the embodied sentient beings can be emancipated from the mundane life (*samsāra*). This action of the Lord itself is a proof that He is the shelter.

தன்னளப்பு ஒன்றில்லாதான் - There is no compeers (in this respect). That means that there is no one else who can be our refuge.

தானே பிறர்கட்கும் தற்றோன்றல் - He also is the inner controller of all other beings.

ஏஷ த ஆத்மா அந்தர்யாம்யம்ருத: (Brahadaranyaka Upanishad 5-7)

"This inner controller and eternal Paramapurusha is thine Self (Āthmā)".

Since all beings are under His control and will, what doubt can there be about Him being the protector?

தானே இளைக்கிற்பார் கீழ்மேலாம் - If He withdraws from His act of protection even for a minutest period, the worlds will go upside down. The very fact that the world is still stable, proves beyond any doubt, that He remains always steady in His acts of protection and by implication He is the protector for all.

மீண்டமைப்பான் ஆனால் - After *pralaya* (dissolution), when all the entrapped sentient beings remain indistinguishable from the non-sentient entities, the Lord out of compassion for them, brings forth this creation and carries out several acts all meant to help in the emancipation of the sentient beings (the *jīvās*). He remains as their inner controller all the time, provides Védas and scriptures, and also takes several incarnations to show them the way.

அளக்கிற்பார் பாரின்மேல் ஆர் - Who in this world can fully fathom these acts of the Lord? (None can).

ஆரானும் ஆதானும் செய்ய அகலிடத்தை

ஆராய்ந்து அதுதிருத்தலாவதே - சீரார்

மனத்தலைவன் துன்பத்தை மாற்றினேன் வானோர்

இனத்தலைவன் கண்ணனால் யான்

Let who ever do whatever. Will it ever be possible to search all over this large world and correct people's actions? (I am happy that) I got rid of the terrible owes of the mundane life from my mind, which has the wealth of being the residence of the Lord, due to the divine grace of the sovereign Lord of the eternal beings, who took birth as the loving Sri Krishna (Kannan Empirān).

Āzhwār in his previous work has tried to give advice and change the people of the world. வணங்கும் துறைகள் - நின் கண் வேட்கை எழுவிப்பனே (Thiruviruttham - 96). Some people began to question Āzhwār as to how far he succeeded in his efforts to change the world. In this verse, Āzhwār gives his reply.

In the last verse, Āzhwār stated that the Lord is the ultimate refuge and shelter for all. Despite this, since the Lord has given freedom in actions to the sentient beings, all His efforts do not always take effect in the majority of beings. Āzhwār also feels here that even if he tries to correct their ways, no one cares to listen. In this verse, he expresses his happiness, that the Lord's efforts have taken effect in his case.

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai compares Āzhwār's happiness to that of someone who escaped with his precious treasure from the way-side robbers.

ஆரானும் ஆதானும் செய்ய அகலிடத்தை

ஆராய்ந்து அதுதிருத்தலாவதே - Let who ever do whatever. It is not possible for us to search all over this large world and correct and change the actions of all beings.

Although Āzhwār had indulged in reformation of the world, had previously expressed his disappointment with these efforts in Thiruvāsiriyam,

ஓ ஓ உலகினதியல்வே - (Thiruvāsiriyam-6). "O' the nature of the world!"

Similar to his feelings expressed in the last verse of that work (which begins with "தளிர் மதிச்சடையனும்") that he was happy to escape from the worldliness,

"நாம் தப்பிப்பிழைத்தோம்", here also, Āzhwār expresses the same feeling.

வானோர்இனத்தலைவன் கண்ணனால் சீரார்

மனத்தலைவன் துன்பத்தை யான் மாற்றினேன் -

He who is the sovereign Lord of all the *Nityasūris* (eternal stars), made Himself easily accessible to all by taking birth among the humans as the loving Sri Krishna (கண்ணன் எம்பிரான்). I got rid of the terrible sorrows of the *samsāra* (mundane life) from my mind, which has the wealth of being the seat of the Lord, due to the divine grace of that easily accessible Lord Krishna.

யானும்என்னெஞ்சும்இசைத்தொழிந்தோம்

வல்வினையைக்

கானும் மலையும் புக்கடிவான் - தானோர்

இருளன்ன மாமேனி எம்மிறையார் தந்த

அருளென்னும் தண்டால் அடித்து

26

My self and my mind consented to have our terrible *karmās* chased out into the forests and the mountains, beaten by the rod of grace showered by our Lord with the great divine form with the hue of darkness itself.

Āzhwār in the previous verse, stated how he got rid of the terrible owes of the *samsāra*, with the help of the divine grace of Sri Kannan Empirān. In this verse, he states clearly that his contribution in this is one of merely consenting to the Lord's intervention.

யானும் என்னெஞ்சும் இசைத்தொழிந்தோம்:

Āzhwār indicates that both his self and his mind consented. What was obtained by this?

வல்வினையைக் கானும் மலையும் புக்கடிவான்: This resulted in the effects of both the righteous and the unrighteous actions (the terrible *karmās*), which kept him away from the Lord, were totally chased out (into the forests and the mountains).

Answering to the question as to whether the Āzhwār had anything to do with this, he replies next.

தானோர்இருளன்ன மாமேனி எம்மிறையார் தந்த

அருளென்னும் தண்டால் அடித்து - (There was nothing I did). All this happened merely by the divine grace of the Lord with the beautiful form of darkness itself- as if the grace came in the form of a stick and beat the *karmās* and chased them out - meaning that the *Upāya* (means) was merely the grace of the Lord.

அடியால் படிகடந்த முத்தோ அதன்றேல்

முடியால் விசம்பளந்த முத்தோ - நெடியாய்

செறிகழல்கள் தாள் நிமிர்த்துச் சென்றுலகமெல்லாம்

அறிகிலமால் நீயளந்த வன்று

27

O' Sovereign Lord! Your beautiful divine face brimmed with happiness, that time when you grew as *Trivikrama*, spreading your divine feet, adorned by the anklets, all over. Was your joy because thine divine feet measured this

earth or because your crown measured the space? We do not know! What a wonder!

Āzhwār in the previous verse by "இசைத்தொழிந்தோம்" indicated that he became blemishless and by "அருளென்னும் தண்டால்" indicated that this was achieved through His grace. Therefore, the only thing left now for the Āzhwār was to enjoy the Lord. He begins to enjoy the Lord in this verse.

அடியால் படிகடந்த முத்தோ அதன்றேல்

முடியால் விசம்பளந்த முத்தோ - If the Sanskrit word "मुक्<sup>3</sup>त<sup>4</sup>" ("child") is altered in Tamil to "முத்", the word " முக்<sup>3</sup>த<sup>4</sup>" which refers to a child, by implication can be taken to mean "beauty".

When Āzhwār said "யானும் என்னெஞ்சும் இசைத்தொழிந்தோம்", the Lord became extremely happy and his face brimmed with joy. Āzhwār here enjoys His beauty.

Āzhwār enquires the Lord whether the joy seen in His face is as a result of His divine feet which measured this earth or his crown which measured the space.

Alternately, முத்து can be taken to mean "pearls".

"செறிகழல்" and " நீண்முடி வெண்முத்தவாசிகைத்தாய்" (Thiruviruttham-50) Since both the divine ornaments (anklets and the Lord's crown) are said to contain "pearls", it can be read as follows "whether the pearls in the anklets measured this earth or the pearls in the crown measured the space?".

சிலம்பும் செறிகழலும் (Mūndrām Thiruvandhādhī – 90).

It will then indicate that the Āzhwār is enjoying the beauty of the divine ornaments.

Also, "முத்" in Sanskrit means "joy". It can also be taken to read as follows, "whether the joy brimming in your face is from measuring the earth with thine divine feet or measuring the space with thine divine crown?".

அறிகிலம்- We do not know. ஆல் what a wonder!

அன்றே நம் கண்காணும் ஆழியான் காருருவம்  
இன்றே நாம் காணாதிருப்பதுவும் - என்றேனும்  
கட்கண்ணால் காணாத வவ்வுருவை நெஞ்சென்னும்  
உட்கண்ணைல் காணுமுணர்ந்து

28

That divine form of the Lord, which cannot be seen by the physical outward eyes, if the inner mental eyes ever are able to understand and visualize, then

and there even the outward physical eyes will be able to see that divine dark form of the discus carrying Lord. We have not seen Him as yet today (for we haven't visualized Him with our inner mental eyes).

Āzhwār reminded of the beautiful divine form of the Lord (Trivikrama) who took the giant strides, wanted to visualize that form, but was unable to do so. Āzhwār after a moment of thought, states that the reason for our inability to see His divine form is our deficiency and not that of the Lord.

அன்றே நம் கண்காணும் ஆழியான் காருருவம்: Our physical outward eyes will see the divine dark form of the discus carrying Lord that day. Which day?

என்றேனும் கண் கண்ணால் காணாத அவ்வுருவை நெஞ்சென்னும்  
உள் கண் உணர்ந்து காணுமேல்: That day when the inner mental eyes understanding that divine form begin to visualize the same (then the physical outward eyes also will see that divine dark form of the discus carrying Lord).

இன்றே நாம் காணாதிருப்பதுவும்: Today we have not seen that divine form of the Lord (for our inner mental eyes have not understood and visualized that form)

Āzhwār had previously declared however, யானும் என்னெஞ்சும்  
இசைத்தொழிந்தோம் - "both myself and my mind consented". Then what is the meaning of him stating, "Today we have not seen that divine form of the Lord". Āzhwār implies here that only when a state of *Parama Bhakthi* (Peerless devotion) arises in the mind, when one is unable to bear the separation from the Lord (Paramātmā), then only even the physical outward eyes will be able to see the divine form of the Lord. Until then, this is very nigh impossible.

கட்கண் - refers to the physical outward eyes, which Sri PeriyāVācchān Pillai says are similar to the "eyes" seen on the peacock's wings ("பீலி போலேயான புறக்கண்") meaning they are "eyes" in name only.

உணர ஒருவர்க் கெளியனே செவ்வே  
இணரும் துழாய் அலங்கல் எந்தை - உணரத்  
தனக்கெளியர் எவ்வளவர் அவ்வளவரானால்  
எனக்கெளியன் எம்பெருமான் இங்கு

29

The nature of My Lord, who is adorned by garland of blossoming *Tulasi* flowers, is not easily knowable to everyone. He has love for His devotees to the extent of their love for Him. For my self, who have abundant love for

My supreme Lord, He will remain easily accessible and reveal His form even in this world.

Āzhwār in this verse, says that supreme peerless devotion (Parabhakthi) does not develop easily for everyone. Āzhwār says that since he has developed such a state of "Parabhakthi" for the Lord, the Lord will easily reveal Himself to him.

செவ்வே உணர ஒருவர்க்கு எளியனே - It is not possible ever for anyone to know the nature of the Lord or measure His greatness.

ஒருவர்க்கு: However much knowledge or power one has, it is not possible to know the Lord fully by one's own efforts.

யஸ்யாமதம் தஸ்யமதம் மதம் யஸ்ய ந வேத<sup>3</sup>ஸ:

அவிஜ்ஞாதம் விஜாநதாம் விஜ்ஞாதமவிஜாநதாம் (Kéna Upanishad 2-3)

"He who thinks that Brahman is not known, to him it is known; he who thinks that Brahman is known, to him, it is not known. It is unknown to those who know well and known to those who do not know".

Who is that Brahman? Āzhwār indicates the "Lakshanam" (the characteristic attribute or mark)

இணரும் துழாய் அலங்கல் எந்தை: "My Lord who is adorned by the garland of blossoming *Tulasi* flowers".

"நாறு இணர்த்துழாயோன் நல்கின் அல்லதை ஏறுதல் எளிதோ விற்பெறுதுறக்கம்" - (declare also the ancient authors of the *Pari Pādal* of *Sangam* Tamil literature) (meaning "unless bestowed by the Lord who is adorned by the garland of *Tulasi* flowers, reaching the eternal state of liberation is not easy")

இணரும்: will blossom (the *Tulasi* flowers as soon as adorned by the Lord, it will further bloom).

உணரத் தனக்கெளியர் எவ்வளவர் அவ்வளவர் - He is as accessible and easy as the extent of love, the devotees have for Him. The word "உணர" implies love based on knowledge of the Lord.

தேஷாம் ஜ்ஞாநீ நித்யயுக்த: ஏகப<sup>4</sup>க்திர் விஸிஷ்யதே

ப்ரியோ ஹி ஜ்ஞாநிநோ அத்யர்த்த<sup>2</sup>மஹம் ஸ ச மம ப்ரிய: (Geetha 7-17)

"He who is always with me and loves only Me, is the wise and is the best among the four of them. For such a wise man, is very attached to Me and I am also attached to Him".



தம்மையுட்கப்பாரைத் தாமுகப்பர்-  
(Nāchiyār Thirumozhi 11-10).

ஆனால் எனக்கெளியன் எம்பெருமான் இங்கு - for me (who has "Parabhakthi" supreme devotion for the Lord), my Lord will be easily accessible and reveal His form even in this world.

இங்கில்லை பண்டுபோல் வீற்றிருத்தல் என்னுடைய  
செங்கண்மால் சீர்க்கும் சிறிதுள்ளம் - அங்கே  
மடியடக்கி நிற்பதனில் வல்வினையார்தாம் மீண்டு  
அடி எடுப்பதன்றோ வழகு

30

Unlike the old days, there is no room in my mind for my unrighteous *karmās* to reside anymore. For my mind is small and is overfilled with the auspicious *gunās* of my Lord with the red eyes. It is better for my terrible unrighteous *karmās* (which ruled over my mind before), to step out and leave my mind than to hang on trying to squeeze into it.

Āzhwār in this verse says that there is no place anymore in his mind for the "karmās" that have been eternally causing harm and hindrance to attaining the Lord, now that the Lord's kalyāna *gunās* have taken hold of his mind since he has been contemplating on them.

இங்கில்லை பண்டுபோல் வீற்றிருத்தல்- Unlike the old days, *karmās* do not have any space in my mind for them to be seated and ruling over the same  
என்னுடைய செங்கண்மால் சீர்க்கும் சிறிதுள்ளம் - my mind is small and does not have enough space even for my master and the Lord with the red eyes.  
செங்கண்மால் - indicates that He is the Lord of all and also has enormous love for His devotees.

அங்கே மடியடக்கி நிற்பதனில் வல்வினையார்தாம் மீண்டு  
அடி எடுப்பதன்றோ வழகு - Instead of squeezing into a space once it ruled, it is better for the *karmās* to step out and leave which would be more befitting.  
வல்வினையார் - Āzhwār calls "the terrible *karmās*" in satire with a respectful term.  
மடியடக்கி - like folding the legs and tucking in one's skirt, meaning squishing oneself into the narrow space.

Contemplation of the auspicious *gunās* of the Lord, leads to the elimination of the unrighteous *karmās* (sins). This is the inner meaning of this verse.

அழகும் அறிவோமாய் வல்வினையைத் தீர்ப்பான்  
நிழலும் அடிதாறும் ஆனோம் - சுழலக்  
குடங்கள் தலைமீதெடுத்துக் கொண்டாடி அன்றத்  
தடங்கடலை மேயார் தமக்கு

31

(We) Have the beautiful knowledge (that the Lord is the means) for eliminating our terrible unrighteous actions. (Thus we) Have become the shadow and the foot creases (the servants) to the lotus feet of our Lord - who in the ages gone by (as Sri Krishna) danced circling around with the pots on his head and who later reclined and rested on the large ocean of milk.

Āzhwār in this verse says that with help of the same supreme Lord, he got rid of all his adversarial *karmās* as well obtained the grace of serving His divine lotus feet.

வல்வினையைத் தீர்ப்பான் அழகும் அறிவோமாய் நிழலும் அடிதாறும் ஆனோம்  
- Realizing our weakness and inabilities to get rid of our sins by our good actions, obtaining the beautiful knowledge that the Lord alone is the means, have become the servants to the lotus feet of our Lord, becoming like the shadow and the foot creases.  
அடிதாறு - means the foot wears or the creases on the sole of the feet.

Āzhwār explains also to whom we should be the servants.

சுழலக் குடங்கள் தலைமீதெடுத்துக் கொண்டாடி அன்றத்  
தடங்கடலை மேயார் தமக்கு - We became close like the shadow of the lotus feet of our Lord, who as Sri Kanna Pirān danced around with the pots on his head, who later went and reclined to rest on the ocean of milk. We also became His dear servants like His foot wear and the foot creases. This is compared by Sri PeriyāVācchān Pillai to the way Sri Lakshmanā served the Lord both in Ayōdhyā and in the forest.

தமக்கடிமை வேண்டுவார் தாமோதரனார்  
தமக்கடிமை செய்யென்றால் செய்யாது - எமக்கென்று  
தாம்செய்யும் தீவினைக்கே தாழ்வுறுவர் நெஞ்சினார்  
யாம்செய்வது இவ்விடத்திங்கியாது

32

The Lord *Dāmōdarā* (one with the imprints of the rope tied by the mother Yashōda on His waist) always wanted to be the servant. My great mind however, if instructed to serve, declaring that it will do only what is pleasing to itself, goes after its usual unrighteous actions descending to lowly state. What is to be done by us in this world?

Āzhwār in this verse says that even when he decides to be the servant of the Lord, his mind pulls him away entangled as it is with the physical body.

தமக்கடிமை வேண்டுவார் - The Lord always wants to serve His devotees. Sri Periya Vācchān Pillai compares this to some people who like "bitter things" and "sour things".

"கைத்தது உகப்பார் புளித்தது உகப்பார் என்னுமாபோலே"

This is referred to as "*āsriṭha Pārathanthrium*" ஆஸ்ரிதபாரதந்த்ரியம். Āzhwār says here that it is seen in Sri Krishna who became *Dāmōdarā*.

தாமோதரனார் - child Sri Krishna who willingly submits to his loving mother Yashōdā and allows himself to be tied to the mortar with a rope and punished for "stealing butter". The word *Dāmōdara* means "one whose waist is tied around by a rope". It refers to the subservient action.

தமக்கடிமை செய் என்றால் செய்யாது - My mind does not want to listen if instructed to serve Lord Sri Kannapirān who serves His own devotees.

எமக்கென்று

தாம்செய்யும் தீவினைக்கே தாழ்வுறுவர் - Saying that "I will do only what pleases me", the mind indulges in its usual lowly ways and unrighteous actions. தீவினைக்கே has the "ஏ" (ஏகாரம்) indicates that the mind will do this repeatedly.

நெஞ்சினார் - The term refers to the mind (but with respect here!), implying that "his great mind" will only go its way and will not heed any advice or instruction.

யாம் செய்வது இவ்விடத்து இங்கு யாது - The Lord wants to take hold of us and even serve us if only we show some devotion to Him, while the mind moves away from Him. Are we to listen to our mind, which is our possession or to our Lord who owns us?

யாதானும் ஒன்றறியில் தன் உகக்கில் என்கொலோ

யாதானும் நேர்ந்தணுகாவாறு தான் - யாதானும்

தேறுமா செய்யா அசுரர்களை நேமியால்

பாறு பாறாக்கினான் பால்

Shouldn't we offer something (even though nothing is ours and everything is His) and seek that Lord, who destroys our adversaries like He splits the demons, who do not show even one little act of gratitude towards Him, into pieces by His discus. Why can't we understand fully at least one thing that forms His body? Why can't we at least have love towards ourselves?

Āzhwār in this verse says that if we have any brains, must we not seek the Lord.

யாதானும் ஒன்றறியில் - Knowing anything,

Since the Lord is the "antaryāmi" (the inner controller), and the shining light behind all knowledge, the act of knowing anything means that one has connected to the Lord.

ஒண் தாமரையாள் கேள்வன் ஒருவனையே நோக்கும் உணர்வு -  
(Mudal Thiruvandhādhī- 67).

தன் உகக்கில் என்கொலோ - Why not love oneself?

Even if we do not have any interest other than ourselves, shouldn't we at least love ourselves? Loving one self will also result only in loving the Lord, since He is the *antaryāmi*.

என்கொலோ யாதானும் நேர்ந்து அணுகாவாறு தான் - How come we do not seek Him by offering some thing (even though nothing is ours and everything is His)?

நேர்ந்து - This adjective indicates as if the act is something great. The jīva is mesmerized into thinking that everything belongs to him even though nothing actually is his and everything is the Lord's. In addition the jīva considers himself independent. In that state of delusion ("māyā"), since he will be giving up something that he considers his, it is reasonable to use this adjective நேர்ந்து here.

Will the Lord be pleased by this deluded act of the jīva? Apparently yes by the words of the Āzhwār from Thiruvāimozhi.

தாள்களை எனக்கே தலைத்தலைச் சிறப்பத்தந்த பேருதவிக்கைம்மாறா

தோள்களை ஆரத்தமுவி என்னுயிரை அறவிலைசெய்தனன்சோதீ

(Thiruvāimozhi 8-1-10)

Sri NammĀzhwār here out of gratitude offers his own self "*ātmā*" (which is the possession of the Lord), as though it belongs to himself.

தோள்களாயிரத்தாய் முடிகளாயிரத்தாய் துணைமலர்க்கண்களாயிரத்தாய்  
(Thiruvāimozhi 8-1-10) - Hearing the words of the Āzhwār, the Lord reveals to Him the cosmic vision with thousands of arms, heads and eyes. This must imply that He must have been mighty pleased indeed.

The implication here is that we need to offer our own selves to the Lord even though the "*ātma vastu*" (the "*self*" entity) is really not ours.

யாதானும் தேறுமா செய்யா அசுரர்களை நேமியால்

பாறு பாறாக்கினான் பால் - The Lord carries the discus only to get rid of the adversaries of His devotees. Even when among the demons, if there should be someone like Prahlāda, He protects not only those devotees but also all their well wishers. He only gets rid of those demons, who never show any act of faith.

The implication here is that shouldn't we seek Him, who destroys our adversaries.

பாலாழி நீ கிடக்கும் பண்பை யாம் கேட்டேயும்  
காலாழும் நெஞ்சழியும் கண்கழலும் நீலாழிச்  
சோதியாய் ஆதியாய் தொல்வினையும் பாற்கடியும்  
நீதியாய் நற்சார்ந்து நின்று

34

O' Lord with the resplendent hue of the dark sea! The ancient cause! Your nature is to destroy all our sins from the eternal past. Seeking You and merely hearing about Your beauty, as you lie reclined on the ocean of milk, we become weak in our legs, begin to lose our hearts with eyes bedimmed (with tears).

Āzhwār stated in the previous verse that offering some thing or the other one needs to seek the Lord only. However, when he himself tries to do that his body and mind become so overcome with emotions and love that they do not function for him adequately. This verse describes Āzhwār's own state as well as the state of all the other Āzhwārs who are also immersed in the love of the Lord.

நீலாழிச் சோதியாய் பாலாழி நீ கிடக்கும் - The Lord looks like the dark ocean in the ocean of milk.

நீ கிடக்கும் பண்பை -

கிடந்ததோர் கிடக்கை - Sri Thondaradippodi Āzhwār in Thirumālai 23. The beauty of the reclining Lord

பண்பை யாம் கேட்டேயும் - Merely hearing about the beauty of the reclining Lord, makes the Āzhwār overcome by emotions to the point of inability to function normally. What would be their state if they actually visualize the Lord?

காலாழும் நெஞ்சழியும் கண்கழலும் - கால் represents here all the கர்மேந்திரியங்கள் ("karméndriyās") (organs of action)

கண் - represents all the ஜ்ஞானேந்திரியங்கள் ("*Jnanéndriyās*") (organs of perception)

காலுமெழா கண்ணநீரும் நில்லா உடல் சோர்ந்து நடுங்கிக் குரல் மேலுமெழா  
மயிர்க் கூச்சுமறா என தோல்களும் வீழ்வொழியா மாலுகளா நிற்கும் என்  
மனனே (PeriyĀzhwār Thirumozhi 5-3-5)

அரவணைத்துயிலுமா கண்டு உடலெனக்கு உருகுமாலோ (Thirumalāi 19)  
கண்ணனைக்கண்ட கண்கள் பனியரும்புதிருமாலோ (Thirumālai 18)

ஆதியாய் - As the ancient Cause (the Lord),

தொல்வினை எம்பால் கடியும் நீதியாய் - O'Lord, with the nature of destroying all  
my eternal sins.

நிற்சார்ந்து நின்று - Seeking Thee

நின்றும் இருந்தும் கிடந்தும் திரிதந்தும்  
ஒன்றுமோ வாற்றான் என்னெஞ்சகலான் - அன்றங்கை  
வன்புடையால்பொன்பெயரோன்வாய்தகர்த்து  
மார்விடந்தான்

அன்புடையன் அன்றே யவன்

35

Despite residing in many holy shrines, standing, sitting, reclining and moving about, the Lord feels as though He had not done anything! He never leaves my heart. At the time of His divine incarnation, as *Nrsimha*, with the blows of His beautiful hands, He crushed the mouth and tore the chest of the demon king *Hiranyakasipu*. My Lord has love for His devotees, indeed. Is that not so!

Āzhwār in the previous verse described his state on hearing about the Lord. In this verse, Āzhwār describes the efforts that the Lord makes on behalf of the devotees that lose their hearts in love of the divine.

நின்றும் இருந்தும் கிடந்தும் திரிதந்தும் - The reason the Lord chooses to reside in *divya désās* (holy places), in various modes such as standing, sitting, reclining as well as moving about, is to take hold of His devotees.

ஒன்றும் (ஓ) ஆற்றான் - Despite taking all the efforts, He however feels as if He had not done anything.

(ஓ) - Indicates wonder!

என் நெஞ்சு அகலான் - He never leaves my heart (as if everything outside Āzhwār's heart is like being in a forest fire).

Āzhwār answers as to who that loving Lord is, in the second half of the verse.

அன்று அம் கை வன்புடையால் பொன்பெயரோன் வாய்தகர்ந்து

மார்விடந்தான் அன்புடையன் அன்றே அவன் -

With His beautiful hands (that are soft even for the divine mother Lakshmi), the Lord delivered hard blows to the mouth of the demon king, which repudiated the sworn words of His devotee Prahāda who declared that "the Lord Kannapirān is omnipresent" and tore his chest apart. Does not that Lord of mine, have love for His devotees!

When his own father became his enemy, the Lord came closer even than his father, and helped His devotee Prahāda, thereby showing He indeed loves His devotees more than anyone else.

அவனாம் இவனாம் உவனாம் மற்று உம்பர்

அவனாம் அவன் என்றிராதே - அவனாம்

அவனே எனத்தெளிந்து கண்ணனுக்கே தீர்ந்தால்

அவனே எவனேலும் ஆம்

36

Is that Lord difficult to reach, or easily accessible or is He both? Is He transcendental and inaccessible for many? Giving up such doubtful thinking, if you understand that He always favors His devotees and become the true devotee of Sri Krishna, then He himself will become your shield in many ways.

Āzhwār says in this verse that since the Lord is all loving of His devotees, we should not have unnecessary doubts about His grace and refrain from Him.

அவன் அவனாம்?- Is our Lord, the Sovereign head of the ocean of milk and thus not easily accessible?

இவனாம்?- Or is He easily accessible, being the *Archa* Form?

உவனாம்?- Or being the *Antaryāmi* (inner controller), easily accessible for those adept in meditation (practice of Yōga) but unreachable to others?

The term அவன் - is used to indicate someone far and thus not easily accessible, இவன் - refers to someone near and therefore easily accessible and the term உவன் - refers to someone in between, thereby indicating accessible to some and not to others.

மற்று உம்பர் அவனாம்- Is He the transcendental reality and therefore unreachable for most people.

என்றிராதே - thinking like this do not immerse your self in doubt and stay away from our Lord.

அவனாம் அவனே எனத்தெளிந்து கண்ணனுக்கே தீர்ந்தால் -

ப<sup>4</sup>ரதஸ்ய வச: குர்வந் யாசமாநஸ்ய ராக<sup>4</sup> வ:

ஆத்மாநம் நாதிவர்த்தேதா<sup>2</sup>: ஸத்யத<sup>4</sup>ர்மபராக்ரம

(Srimad Rāmāyanam – Ayōdhyā kādam- 111-7)

"O'Rāghava, with true ethical conduct and valour, by acceding to the words of begging Bharatha, you will not violate your real nature of always favoring your dependents"

Thus understanding clearly that the real nature of the Lord is to be always favorable to His devotees, if we seek the easily accessible Sri Krishna, (for He allowed Himself to be punished and bound by a cow-herd lady)

அவனே எவனேலும் ஆம் - then He himself will shield His devotees in every way possible.

யஸ்ய மந்த்ரீ ச கோ<sup>3</sup>ப்தா ச ஸுஹ்ருசசைவ ஜநார்த<sup>3</sup>ந:

ஹரிஸ்த்ரைலோக்ய நாத<sup>2</sup>ஸ்ஸ கிந்நு தஸ்ய ந நிர்ஜிதம்

(Sri Mahā Bhāratham - vanaparvam (49-20) Sanjaya's words)

"What can not be won over by the son of Dharma, who has the Lord, the suzerain head of the three worlds, known as Janārdhana and Sri Hari Himself as his minister, protector and friend?"

ஆமாறு அறிவுடையார் ஆவதரிதன்றே

நாமே அதுவுடையோம் நன்னெஞ்சே - பூமேய்

மதுகரமே தண்டுழாய் மாலாரை வாழ்த்தாம்

அது கரமே அன்பால் அமை

37



O' Good mind! Is it not rare to come to possess intellect that has a right disposition? We fortunately seem to possess that right intellect. Praise with love the Lord who wears the cool *Tulasi* garland with flowers swarming with bees. Remain fixed with determination in that.

Āzhwār in this verse says that to be totally dedicated to the Lord is hard to come by for many but fortunately he is otherwise.

ஆறு ஆம் அறிவுடையார் ஆவது அரிதன்றே - It is hard to find people with intellect that is in the right direction

நாமே அது உடையோம் - we have been fortunate to possess such a right intellect  
நல் நெஞ்சே - O' good mind!

மந ஏவ மனுஷ்யாணாம் காரணம் ப்ந்த<sup>4</sup> மோக்ஷயோ  
ப்ந்தா<sup>4</sup>ய விஷயாஸங்கி<sup>4</sup> முக்த்யை நிர்விஷயம் மந:

(Vishnu Purānam 6-7-28)

For humans, mind is the reason for getting bound in mundane life as well as for liberation from it. Mind indulged in senses becomes the cause of entanglement in mundane life. Mind free of hankerings becomes the tool for liberation.

பூ மேய் மதுகரம் மே தண் துழாய் மாலாரை அன்பால் வாழ்த்து ஆம்  
அது கரமே அமை - Remain fixed and determined in singing benediction  
(பல்லாண்டு) to the Lord who wears cool *Tulasi* garland with flowers swarming with bees.  
கரம் - determination.

அமைக்கும் பொழுதுண்டே ஆராயில் நெஞ்சே  
இமைக்கும் பொழுதும் இடைச்சி குமைத்திறங்கள்  
ஏசியே யாயினும் ஈன்துழாய் மாயனையே  
பேசியே போக்காய் பிழை

38

O' Mind! If we analyze, being quiet and not talking about the Lord for even brief periods like blinking of the eyes is not right. You do not spend time in contemplation of the wonderful Lord with the sweet *Tulasi* flower garlands, even if it is for teasing about the ways in which the cowherd lady Yashoda awarded punishment to Him. That is wrong.

Finding his mind withdrawing from praising the Lord thinking about its own defects, Āzhwār tells his mind that it is wrong and admonishes to spend its time only in speaking about the glories of the Lord.

இமைக்கும் பொழுது அமைக்கும் பொழுதுண்டே ஆராயில் நெஞ்சே - O'mind! If you were to analyze deeply, it would be obvious that there is no room for not contemplating on the Lord even for brief periods.

As if his mind objects saying that it would be only possible for the residents of the eternal realm to visualize the Lord without any interruption, Āzhwār further says,

இடைச்சி குமைத்திறங்கள் ஏசியே ஆயினும் ஈன்துழாய் மாயனையே பேசியே போக்காய் - Just being a human being, one can spend time speaking about the ways in which the wonderful Lord adorned by cool *Tulasi* flowers was tied to the mortar and punished by mother Yashōda, during the *avathāra* as Sri Krishna.

பிழை - Not doing this is wrong, even if this amounts to teasing the Lord or mocking him

பிழைக்க முயன்றோமோ நெஞ்சமே பேசாய்  
தழைக்கும் துழாய் மார்வன் தன்னை- அழைத்தொருகால்  
போயுபகாரம் பொலியக்கொள்ளாது அவன் புகழே  
வாயுபகாரங்கொண்டவாய்ப்பு

39

O' Mind! Please pray tell whether it is wrong accepting as good deed for the tongue to sing the glories of that Lord with the chest that blossoms afresh even fading *Tulasi* flowers, here and now, instead of calling Him and awaiting for one day to reaching His eternal realm and serving Him there.

Listening to the Āzhwār, his mind followed his instruction of singing the glories of the Lord. It was found by the mind to be sweet and enjoyable. Āzhwār says to his mind in this verse, "See there was nothing wrong in what I had suggested".

தழைக்கும் துழாய் மார்வன் தன்னை - The Lord adorned by *Tulasi* flower garlands on His chest which blossoms afresh even when it had faded flowers.

அழைத்து ஒருகால் போய் உபகாரம் பொலியக்கொள்ளாது - not telling the mind, "O'mind! Let us call the Lord and after He arrives, let us go with Him to the eternal realm and enjoy the eternal happiness".

அவன் புகழே வாய் உபகாரங் கொண்ட வாய்ப்பு பிழைக்க முயன்றோமோ - Is this act of praising the Lord as though it is the reason for having been born with the mouth, wrong?

நெஞ்சமே பேசாய் - O' mind! Pray tell.

Āzhwār indicates here that when one has obtained the knowledge about the Lord, the attitude that service to the Lord can wait until the mortal coils fall is tantamount to not having any dedication to the Lord.

வாய்ப்போ இதுஒப்ப மற்றில்லை வாநெஞ்சே  
போய்ப்போய் வெந்நரகில் புவியேல் - தீப்பால  
பேய்த்தாய் உயிர் கலாய்ப்பாலுண்டு அவளுயிரை  
மாய்த்தானை வாழ்த்தே வலி

40

O'Mind! Please come, there is no time like now. Withdrawing further and further, do not immerse me in the terrible hell of separation. Praising the Lord who sucked the life along with the milk killing the deceitful demoness *Pūthanā*, who came in the form of a mother, alone will give us strength.

Āzhwār in order to prevent his mind from withdrawing again instructs the mind to cease the opportunity now and not let it go.

வாய்ப்போ இது ஒப்ப மற்றில்லை வா நெஞ்சே - O'Mind! Please come. There is no other time like the present which allows us to praise the Lord.

போய்ப்போய் வெந்நரகில் புவியேல் - Withdrawing repeatedly, do not immerse me in the terrible hell of separation

யஸ் த்வயா ஸஹ ஸ்வர்க்கோ<sup>3</sup> நிரயோ யஸ்த்வயா விநா

இதி ஜாநந் பராம் ப்ரீதிம் க<sup>3</sup>ச்ச<sup>2</sup> ராம மயா ஸஹ

(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Ayōdhya Kādam 30-18)

"O' Rāma ! Being with You is heaven for me and being separated from you is hell for me. Understanding my immense love for you thus, go to the forest along with me." Thus separation from the Lord is like hell, declares Sri Seethā Dévi also.

தீப்பால பேய்த்தாய் உயிர்கலாய்ப் பாலுண்டு அவள் உயிரை

மாய்த்தானை வாழ்த்தே வலி - Praising the Lord who sucked the life along with the milk out of the terrible demoness, who came in the form of a deceitful mother, alone will give us strength.

உயிர் பால் கலாய் உண்டு - sucking life along with milk

வாழ்த்தே வலி - (may also be taken to mean) - Be determined to sing the glories of the Lord.

வலியம் எனநினைந்து வந்தெதிர்ந்த மல்லர்  
வலிய முடியிடய வாங்கி - வலிய நின்  
பொன்னாழிக் கையால் புடைத்திடுதி கீளாதே  
பன்னாளும் நிற்கும் இப்பார்

41

Using your strong arms adorned by the beautiful discus, instead of simply severing the strong heads of the wrestlers *Chānūra* and *Mushtika* who came to fight against you thinking that they were the toughest, instead delivered painful blows to their heads and made them roll down. (Because of this alone), this earth will last for a long time.

In the previous verse, since reference was made to the incident of elimination of the demoness Pūthanā during Sri Krishna *avathāra*, Āzhwār continues to talk about the same *avathāra* now relating the elimination of the wrestlers that *Kamsa* had arranged to attack Sri Krishna, in the pretext of inviting him for the "bow-festival".

வலியம் எனநினைந்து வந்தெதிர்ந்த மல்லர்- The wrestlers who came to attack Sri Krishna, thinking that they were the toughest,

வலிய நின் பொன்னாழிக் கையால் கீளாதே - Using your strong arms adorned by the beautiful discus, instead of simply severing (their strong heads)

வலிய முடியிடய வாங்கி புடைத்திடுதி - consistent with pugilistic sport, delivered painful blows and made their heads roll down.

பல் நாளும் நிற்கும் இப்பார் - This earth will remain for ever as a witness to the way in which you killed the cruel wrestlers all by yourself.

It also means that because of the elimination of the cruel demons like Kamsa, this earth continues to exist safely. People of this world instead of giving up their lives, being unable to bear to see child Krishna fight with his soft hands with these cruel and tough wrestlers, they actually watched it. It is surprising that their lives actually extended despite this.

Here கீளாதே நிற்கும் - will not die (will last for a long time), பார் - the people of this earth

பூ<sup>4</sup>மௌ ஸ்தி<sup>2</sup>தஸ்ய ராமஸ்ய ரத<sup>2</sup>ஸ்த<sup>2</sup>ஸ்ய ச ராக்ஷஸ:

ந ஸமம் யுத்<sup>3</sup>த<sup>4</sup>ம் இத்யாஹூர் தேவ க<sup>3</sup>ந்த<sup>4</sup>ர்வகிந்நரா:

(Srimad Rāmāyanam - Yuddha Kādam 102-5)

"The battle between Rāma who is on the ground and the *Rākshasa* who is seated on the chariot is not equal" so declared the *Dévās*, *Gandharvās* and the *kinnarās*."

பாருண்டான் பாருமிழ்ந்தான் பாரிடந்தான் பாரளந்தான்

பாரிடம் முன்படைத்தான் என்பரால் - பாரிடம்

ஆவானும் தானானாலாரிடமே மற்றொருவர்க்கு

ஆவான்புகாவால் அவை

42

The Lord swallowed this earth and brought it out. He lifted this earth from the deluging waters and measured the same with His divine feet. The wise further declare that He created these worlds at the end of the great dissolution, Himself becoming all these. If so, who is the refuge for these worlds? They will not be dependent on anyone else.

Āzhwār in the previous verse, indicated that the earth became safe due to the intervention of the Lord, by which the demon kings were eliminated. In this verse, Āzhwār describes the various other protective deeds of the Lord. He further states that no one else can be the refuge for this earth.

பாருண்டான் - During the deluge of dissolution, the Lord protected all the beings of the worlds by swallowing them and keeping them safe in His stomach.

பாருமிழ்ந்தான் - He then brought them out after the deluge

பாரிடந்தான் - When the demon king Hiranyākshan hid the earth under the waters, the Lord took the form of the divine boar and lifted it out of the deluging waters and protected the same.

பாரளந்தான் - The Lord came in the form of the divine dwarf (Vāmana) to Mahābali's sacrificial hall, begging for three spaces from him and when granted, taking the giant form of Trivikrama measured all the worlds with His divine feet and repossessed all of them and granted the lost wealth to Indra.

பாரிடம் முன்படைத்தான் - Aeons ago, He created this world at the end of the great dissolution or *Pralaya*, meaning He provided physical forms to the sentient beings who had lost all of that, thereby providing them with the means of both enjoyment and liberation.

என்பரால் - Thus declare the Védas and the sages who had accepted them as valid means of knowledge (*Pramānam*).

பாரிடம் ஆவானும் தான் - He himself became the worlds. Here the unity is not in its real nature or form. In the previous words "பாருண்டான் பாருமிழ்ந்தான் பாரிடந்தான் பாரளந்தான்", what is being described, essentially the interrelationship between the Lord and the worlds. He is the protector and the world is the protected, He is the creator and the world is the created, He is the one who pervades the world and the world is pervaded. Basically these describe the ரக்ஷயரக்ஷக பா<sup>4</sup>வம், கார்யகாரண பா<sup>4</sup>வம், ஸரீர ஸரீரி பா<sup>4</sup>வம் (protected-protector, action-cause, body-soul relationships). Therefore they do not describe the unity in form or nature. ஸர்வம் க<sup>2</sup>ல்வித<sup>3</sup>ம் ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்ம தஜ்ஜலாநிதி ஸாந்த உபாஸீத (Chāndōgyam 3-14-1) "Because all these arise from Brahman, subsist in Brahman and dissolve in Brahman, one must peacefully worship all these as Brahman" declare the *Sruthi*.

ஸர்வம் க<sup>2</sup>ல்வித<sup>3</sup>ம் ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்ம - gives the unity between the cosmos and the Brahman  
தஜ்ஜலாநிதி - gives the reason.

ஆனால் ஆரிடமே - If He is in many ways related to the creation, then who is the refuge for the worlds?

மற்று ஒருவர்க்கு ஆவான் புகா அவை - The sentient beings in this world will not become the possessions of anyone else except the Lord.

அவை - refers to the sentient beings in the creation.

ஆல்- filler word with no meaning (பொருளற்ற அசை சொல்).

அவயம் எனநினைந்து வந்த சுரர் பாலே  
நவையை நளிர்விப்பான் தன்னை - கவையில்  
மனத்து உயரவைத்திருந்து வாழ்த்தாதார்க்குண்டோ  
மனத்துயரை மாய்க்கும் வகை

43

Is there any way of eliminating the mental distress for those who do not place the Lord high in their mind without any doubt and glorify Him steadily - the Lord who blows away the sorrows of the *dévas* who seek Him as their refuge?

Āzhwār in this verse says that there is no other way of eliminating mental anguish and distress arising from the worldly life except seeking refuge at the lotus feet of the Lord who removes all sorrows of all the sentient beings.

அவயம் என நினைந்து வந்த சுரர் பாலே நவையை நளிர்விப்பான் தன்னை

யதா<sup>2</sup>வத் கதி<sup>2</sup>தோ தே<sup>3</sup>வைர் ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மா ப்ராஹ் தத: ஸுராந்

பராவரேஸம் ஸரணம் வ்ரஜத்<sup>4</sup>வமஸுரார்த்த<sup>3</sup>நம் (Vishnu Purānam 1-9-35)

"Brahmā who was informed by *dēvas* about all of their distresses, advised them to seek the refuge of the Lord who was the Master of all and who is the enemy of the demons"

அவயம் - அப<sup>4</sup>யம் - One who blows away all the difficulties of the celestials when they seek Him as their shield.

நவை - refers to distress.

கவையில் மனத்து உயரவைத்திருந்து வாழ்த்தாதார்க்குண்டோ  
மனத்துயரை மாய்க்கும் வகை -

கவை - refers to doubts that may linger in the minds of the sentient beings namely whether to seek sense oriented activities or seek the Lord, as well whether to seek the Lord or stay away from Him thinking that one is not fit to seek Him.

கவையில் மனம்- mind without any doubt, steady mind

மனத்து உயரவைத்திருந்து - This refers to the thought of holding the Lord alone as ப்ராப்யம் - the goal, ப்ராபகம் - the means, தா<sup>4</sup>ரகம் போஷகம் - the basis of all sustenance and போ<sup>4</sup>க்<sup>3</sup>யம் - enjoyment.

வகைசேர்ந்த நன்னெஞ்சம் நாவுடைய வாயும்  
மிகவாய்ந்து வீழா எனிலும் - மிகவாய்ந்து  
மாலைத்தாம் வாழ்த்தாது இருப்பர் இதுவன்றே  
மேலைத்தாம் செய்யும் வினை

44

Embodied beings despite having the good mind as the tool for the use of knowledge, and having the mouth with the tongue (meant for glorifying the Lord), do not show great interest in reaching the Lord. Mounting great efforts, they live without singing the benediction on the sovereign Lord. Is it not the effect of their previous unrighteous actions?

Āzhwār in the previous verse referred to the people of the world. In this verse, he says that the reason why people in the mundane world do not sing benediction on the Lord is the effect of their unrighteous actions.

This verse has been explained in two different ways by Sri Parāśara Bhattar and Pillai Thirunaraiyur araiyar. According to Bhattar's explanation,

வகைசேர்ந்த நன்னெஞ்சம் - The embodied self is bestowed with the instrument of mind which is the way for knowledge

நாவுடைய வாயும் - Embodied beings are also bestowed with the mouth together with the tongue (meant for glorifying the Lord)

மிகவாய்ந்து வீழா எனிலும் - While they are all subjected to the three *gunās*, *Satvam*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, because of the predominance of *Rajas* and *Tamas* in them, they are not turned towards the Lord

மிகவாய்ந்து மாலைத்தாம் வாழ்த்தாது இருப்பர் -

ஸத்த்வாத் ஸஞ்ஜாயதே ஜ்ஞானம் ரஜஸோ லோப<sup>4</sup> ஏவ ச  
ப்ரமாத<sup>3</sup> மோஹௌ தமஸோ ப<sup>4</sup>வதோ அஜ்ஞாந மேவ ச (Geetha 14-17)

"Knowledge rises from *Satva gunam*. From *Rajas* arises, desire for heavens and similar material things. From *Tamas* arises, carelessness, indulgence in unwise actions, altered understanding and ignorance".

One needs to cultivate *satva gunam* by consuming only *Sātvic* food and seeking the company of *Sātvic* people. With the wisdom that will ensue because of the *satva* quality, a wise person should give up *rajas* and *tamas*, and sing the Lord's praises. However, most people do not live this way.

இதுவன்றே மேலைத்தாம் செய்யும் வினை - These actions of theirs keep them immersed in this worldly life even in the future.

The interpretation according to Pillai Thirunaraiyur araiyar is as follows.

வகைசேர்ந்த நன்னெஞ்சம் நாவுடைய வாயும் - The good mind that is attracted by one of the attributes of the Lord alone and the tongue that praises the same attribute

மிக வாய்ந்து வீழா எனிலும் - even if that mind and the tongue do not indulge in the other *gunās* of the Lord

மிகவாய்ந்து மாலைத்தாம் வாழ்த்தாது இருப்பர் - Wise man should think of all the great attributes of the Lord and worship Him; however for most people this is not possible.

இதுவன்றோ மேலைத்தாம் செய்யும் வினை - The reason for the inability of our mind and tongue to appreciate all the great auspicious attributes of the Lord is the result of our unrighteous actions in our previous births.

மேலைத்தாம் செய்யும் வினை - This was taken by *araiyar* as the unrighteous actions of the past, In the previous interpretation of Sri Bhattar, it refers to the unrighteous actions of the future.



வினையார் தரமுயலும் வெம்மையை (யே) அஞ்சித்  
தினையாம் சிறிதளவும் செல்ல - நினையாது  
வாசகத்தால் ஏத்தினேன் வானோர் தொழுதிறைஞ்சும்  
நாயகத்தான் பொன்னடிக்கள் நான்

45

Afraid of the terrible owes that arise from separation from the Lord (caused by the strength of the *karmās*) and not thinking of indulging in anything other than the Lord even for a short period of time, I glorified the resplendent golden feet of the suzerain Lord worshipped in mind, words and body by the *Nityasūris* (the eternal attendants).

In the previous verse, Āzhwār said that the people of the world do not seek the Lord due to their unrighteous actions carried out in their previous births. To answer the question as to what he did, Āzhwār says in this verse, that he worshiped the lotus feet of the Lord remembering the sorrows that befall when separated from the Lord.

வினையார் தரமுயலும் வெம்மையை (யே) அஞ்சி - Afraid of the owes that follow separation caused by the strength of the unrighteous actions  
தினையாம் சிறிதளவும் செல்ல நினையாது - and not wanting to leave Him for even short period of time,  
வாசகத்தால் ஏத்தினேன் - I worshipped the Lord with my tongue  
Since Āzhwār declares in verse #30, "இங்கில்லை", that there was no space for sins in his heart and also in verse #54, "வானோ மறிகடலோ" that sins ran away from him, therefore here the term வினையார் will not indicate sins, it would mean the separation from the Lord as a result of the previous *karmās* only.

செல்ல நினையாது will not indulge in anything other than the Lord

வாசகம் - refers to the tongue (speech)

வானோர் தொழுதிறைஞ்சும் - served (by all three organs of action namely மனம், மொழி, மெய் mind, words and body), glorified and worshipped by the eternal attendants (*Nityasūris*).

தொழுது - refers to worshipping by body and mind

இறைஞ்சும்- refers to glorifying in words

நாயகத்தான் - the sovereign Lord

பொன்னடிக்கள் - the resplendent golden feet (resplendent like gold both as the goal and the means - *Prāpyam* - ப்ராப்யம் and *Prāpakam* - ப்ராபகம்

நான்கூறும் கூற்றாவது இத்தனையே நாணாளும்  
தேங்கோத நீருருவன் செங்கண்மால் - நீங்காத  
மாகதியாம் வெந்நரகில் சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு  
நீகதியா நெஞ்சே நினை

46

The Lord who has the hue of the waters of the ocean and who has the beautiful red eyes is the eternal beatitude. He is also the means of protection against descending into the terrible *samsāra*. O' mind, you remember this. I who have known this, also tell you these words only daily.

In the previous verse, Āzhwār said that his pastime was essentially the worship of the Lord. In this verse, he tells his mind to remember that "the Lord is both the goal and the means".

நான்கூறும் கூற்றாவது இத்தனையே- What I can tell you, is only this.

நாணாளும்- these words are not for one day or one occasion. It is for all times.

தேங்கோத நீர் உருவன் செங்கண்மால் நீங்காத  
மாகதியாம் - The Lord who has the hue of the ocean with the eyes that are red like the lotus indicating that "He is the sovereign Lord". He is the eternal goal.

நீங்காத - indicates unlike the worldly fruits which come and go, this is eternal and permanent without any return.

வெந்நரகில் சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு கதியாம் He is also the means of protecting against return to the worldly life *samsāra*.

நெஞ்சே நீ நினை - O' Mind, you remember this.

நினைத்திறைஞ்சி மானிடவர் ஒன்றிரப்பர் என்றே  
நினைத்திடவும் வேண்டா நீ நேரே - நினைத்திறைஞ்ச  
எவ்வளவர் எவ்விடத்தோர் மாலே! அது தானும்  
எவ்வளவும் உண்டோ எமக்கு

47

O' Lord! Please do not frown at the people of the world since they will worship you only to fulfill some small desires, for they do not have the wisdom of considering you alone as the refuge and the goal. In this world such wisdom does not arise that easily. For us who has obtained your grace however, the conduct of the worldly will not arise even little.

The Lord points out to the Āzhwār that people of the world unlike him are always worshipping him to fulfill some of their small desires. Āzhwār in this verse requests the Lord not to get upset with them saying that it is only with His grace that the true knowledge of Him being both the way and the goal arises. For such beings, this conduct of the worldly will not arise even little.

நினைத்திறைஞ்சி மானிடவர் ஒன்றிரப்பர் என்றே நீ

நினைத்திடவும் வேண்டா - Please do not wonder why the people of the world fall at your feet and worship you asking for small and material things instead of considering you alone as the means and the goal.

நேரே நினைத்திறைஞ்ச எவ்வளவர் எவ்விடத்தோர் - How is it possible for the worldly to know that you are the true refuge and the means (ப்ராப்யமும் ப்ராபகமும்)? meaning that this is only possible for all the eternal attendants and the liberated beings.

மாலே! - O' Almighty! (This indicates that the people of the world are small in their knowledge and therefore will be unable to understand the greatness of the Lord in full measure)

அது தானும் எவ்வளவும் உண்டோ எமக்கு - For all those like me who had Thine grace, there is no such association with such petty desires.

எமக்குயாம் விண்ணாட்டுக் குச்சமதாம் வீட்டை

அமைத்திருந்தோம்அஃதன்றே ஆமாறு? அமைப்பொலிந்த

மென்தோளி காரணமா வெங்கோட்டேறேழுடனே

கொன்றானையே மனத்துக்கொண்டு

48

Contemplating on Sri Krishna who killed the seven bulls with the terrible horns all at once for the sake of *Nappinai pirātti* with arms soft and tender like the bamboo, we were fixed on the eternal realm beyond all the heavens for ourselves. That is "the way", is it not?

In this verse, Āzhwār says how he would overcome all obstacles in reaching his goal. Āzhwār answers the question by saying that the Lord who overcame the obstacles, which were in the way for the wedding of Nappinnai Piratti, would eliminate these as well.

Āzhwār who has been reveling in the thoughts of the Lord, says that he does not desire even the eternal realm beyond all the heavens.

எமக்கு யாம் விண்ணாட்டுக்கு உச்சமதாம் வீட்டை

அமைத்திருந்தோம் - For us, we had desired the eternal realm beyond the worlds of the celestials such as those of Brahmā, Rudrā, Indrā and others.

அஃதன்றே ஆமாறு? - That should be our desired path, is it not?

The question then will arise, for such desires, there would be obstacles and how could they be overcome?

Āzhwār answers the question by saying that the Lord who overcame the obstacles, which were in the way for the wedding of *Nappinnai Pirātti*, would eliminate these as well.

அமைப்பொலிந்த மென்தோளி காரணமா வெங்கோட்டு ஏறேழுடனே

கொன்றானையே மனத்துக்கொண்டு - Since we hold Lord Krishna, in our minds all the time, these obstacles will be blown away like the seven bulls with the terrible horns which were in the way of the wedding of *Nappinnai piratti* with arms soft and tender like the bamboo.

அமைத்திருந்தோம் may also be taken to mean "kept them away from our desires"

விண்ணாட்டுக்கு உச்சமதாம் வீடு - May be taken to mean "*kaivalya mōksham*", which is however devoid of "ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத<sup>3</sup>னுபவம்"

Interpreted this way, it can also be taken to mean that the Āzhwār like Sri Hanumān (who turned down the eternal realm as he was drawn by the auspicious attributes of Sri Rāma and had been embraced by Sri Rāma himself) turns down even the eternal realm since Lord Krishna, the consort of Sri *Nappinnai pirātti*, is ever held close in his own heart.

இச்சுவைவிர யான்போய் இந்திரலோகமாளும் அச்சுவைபெறினும்  
வேண்டேன் அரங்க மா நகருளானே - (Thirumālai-2) so declared Sri Thondaradippodi Āzhwār.

கொண்டல்தான்மால்வரைதான்மாகடல்தான்கூரிருள்தான்  
வண்டறாப்புவைதான் மற்றுத்தான் - கண்டநாள்  
காருருவங் காண்டோறு(ம்) நெஞ்சோடும் கண்ணனார்  
பேருருவென்றெம்மைப் பிரிந்து

49

My mind, looking at the clouds, the dark mountains, the wide ocean, the dense darkness of the night, the Pūvai trees, which the bees don't seem to want to leave and everything else that is black in color, at the time of their sighting, thinking that they are the beautiful form of the Lord Krishna, wandered away from me.

In the last verse, Āzhwār established that the Lord Himself is the means for getting rid of all obstacles and for attaining the eternal beatitude. In this verse, he indicates, the ways to spend the time (for those who are so determined) until the mortal coil falls.

கொண்டல்தான் மால்வரைதான் மாகடல்தான் கூறிருள்தான்  
வண்டறாப்புவைதான் காண்தோறு - seeing objects such as the dark clouds, the dark mountains, the blue sea, the dense darkness, the bee laden dark flowers of the Pūvai tree, மற்றும் காருருவம் தான் கண்டநாள் - and every time seeing all other objects, not mentioned, but black in color  
காண்தோறும் - at every moment of sighting them  
கண்ணனார் பேர் உருவென்று - thinking they are the form of the beautiful Lord Kannapirān (Sri Krishna)  
எம்மைப் பிரிந்து நெஞ்சு ஓடும் - my mind runs away toward them.

பிரிந்தொன்று நோக்காது தம்முடைய பின்னே  
திரிந்துழலும் சிந்தனையார் தம்மைப் - புரிந்தொருகால்  
ஆவா! என இரங்கார் அந்தோ! வலிதேகொல்  
மாவாய் பிளந்தார் மனம்

50

He does not show lovingly, even once His compassion and grace pitying the mind of mine, which feverishly follows Him around, thinking of nothing other. O' how stone hearted is the Lord, who split the mouth of the demon in the form of the horse *Kéśi*!

In this verse, Āzhwār complains that the Lord is not coming forward to show His grace towards his mind which thinks of Him alone even when looking at all things black resembling His color. As declared in எதிர்துழல்புக்கு எனைத்தோர் பிறப்பும் (Thiruvāimozhi- 2-7-6), he does not think of all the efforts, the Lord has taken to receive him in all his previous births. With the physical body bestowed by Him and by His efforts, when finally desires are turned towards Him, if He shows even a little delay that appears as a fault of the Lord. However bad the child might have behaved, if the mother does not feed the hungry child, the mother will always be faulted.

பிரிந்து ஒன்று நோக்காது தம்முடைய பின்னே திரிந்து உழலும் - Without paying attention to anything else but following feverishly (only the Lord),

சிந்தனையார் தம்மைப்பறிந்து ஒருகால், ஆ, ஆ! என இரங்கார் - Even once He does not take pity and show His compassion and grace understanding that this mind of the Āzhwār has no others except Him

சிந்தனையார் - Āzhwār refers to His mind (with respect)

அந்தோ! வலிதேகொல் மாவாய் பிளந்தார் மனம் - O! No! How stone hearted has He become now, He who once for the sake of the devotees, split the mouth of the demon *Kéśi*, who came in the form of a horse.

மனம் ஆளும் ஓர் ஐவர் வன்குறும்பர்தம்மை  
சினம் மாள்வித்து ஓரிடத்தே சேர்த்து - புனமேய  
தண்டுழாயான் அடியைத் தாங்காணும் அஃதன்றே  
வண்துழாம் சீரார்க்கு மாண்பு

51

The mark of true devotees with broad minds and admirable qualities, consists in winning over the five sense organs that make the mind go astray thereby eliminating the resulting anger, and directing them instead towards the Lord adorned with garlands of freshly blossomed *Tulasi* flowers and having the vision of His divine feet. Is it not?

In the previous verse, Āzhwār complained that the Lord was not coming forward to show His grace. In this verse he says that true servant of the Lord should accept and abide by the will of the Lord and to express otherwise is wrong.

மனம் ஆளும்

Instead of the *ātmā* (self), being the servant of the Lord and controlling the mind and the mind in turn the five senses, the way of the senses taking control over the mind.

ஓர் ஐவர் வன்குறும்பர் - the five senses are described like the five strong and bad fellows, since they are capable of pulling the mind in their directions. The Āchārya here compares them to those who control the government by bribing the officers. The words of the Āchārya here are - "இன்னதனைத்<sup>3</sup>ரவ்யத்துக்கு அரசுசெய்வாரைக் கிடைக்கும்" என்னும் வன்னியரைப்போலே",

த்<sup>4</sup>யாயதோ விஷயாந் பும்ஸஸ் ஸங்க<sup>3</sup>ஸ்தேஷௌ பஜாயதே  
ஸங்கா<sup>3</sup>த் ஸஞ்ஜாயதே காம: காமாத் க்ரோதோ<sup>4</sup>பிஜாயதே (Geetha 2-62)

"For the person whose mind is fixed on material things attractive to the senses, there develops a bond with them. Out of that bond arises passion. Out of the passion arises anger."

Excepting the experience of things connected with the divine, all other experiences directed towards material things, do not satisfy the senses and therefore only lead to more passionate desires and anger.

Āzhwār refers to elsewhere about how the indulgences in material things only result in fleeting little pleasures and how they will lead only to the growth of passion and anger resulting in the destruction of one's own *self*. "இன்னம் கெடுப்பாயோ"

(Thiruvāimozhi 6-9-8), "பாவியேனைப் பல நீ காட்டிப்படுப்பாயோ (Thiruvāimozhi 6-9-9), "சிற்றின்பம்" (Thiruvāimozhi 6-9-9),

Further Āzhwār shows that the senses when directed towards the Lord, the resulting sweetness will be unlimited.

புனமேய தண்டுழாயான் அடியை - the lotus feet of the Lord adorned with garlands of *Tulasi* flowers which remain freshly blossomed (as if they are still on their own terrain)

வண்துழாம் சீரார்க்கு மாண்பு - that, which will add to the glory of the true Sri Vaishnavās with good and strong qualities, is (மனம் ஆளும் ஓர் ஐவர் வன்குறும்பர் தம்மைச் சினம் ஆள்வித்து ஓர் இடத்தே சேர்த்துப் - புனமேய

தண் துழாயான் அடியைத் தான் காணும் அஃதன்றே), winning over the senses that drag the mind towards the material things, getting rid of the anger and to direct all of the senses towards the Lord and enjoy the sight of the divine feet adorned by the freshly blossomed *Tulasi* flowers.

மாண்பாவித்து அஞ்ஞான்று மண்ணிரந்தான் மாயவன்  
நஞ்சுண்பாவித்து உண்டானது ஒருருவம் -காண்பான் நம்  
கண்ணவா மற்றொன்று காணுறா சீர்பரவாது  
உண்ணவாய் தானுறுமோ ஒன்று

52

Once taking the form of a dwarf celibate, He begged for three feet space of this earth. As Sri Krishna, pretending to drink milk from the poisoned breasts of the demoness *Pūthanā*, He sucked her life away. Our eyes desire only to see the peerless form of that Lord alone and nothing else. Will (my) tongue ever crave for anything else but sing the auspicious glories of that Lord?

Āzhwār in this verse, says that what he said in general for all Sri Vaishnavās actually materialized for him.

மாண் பாவித்து - Taking the real form of a dwarf (*Vāmana*) celibate. For His form actually made Mahābali to say "why don't you ask for more, I will give" To this the *Vāmana* replied that He did not need more than what He asked for.

பாவித்து - although may be interpreted as "pretending to take the form, like dressing up in acting ", here it means that He actually took the real form of a dwarf celibate.

மாயவள் நஞ்சு ஊண்பாவித்து உண்டான் - Just as the demoness *Pūthanā* took the form of a mother saying that she would not bear to live without suckling baby Krishna with poisoned breasts, Sri Krishna also took to her breasts as though He could not bear to live without it. Expressing here, the same as Sri Poikai Pirān - பேய்முலை நஞ்சு ஊணாக உண்டான் (Mudal Thiruvandhādi- 11).

உண்டானது ஓர் உருவம் காண்பான் நம் கண்ணவா - The desire of our eyes is to see only that matchless form of that Lord who suckled from the breasts of that demoness *Pūthanā*.

மற்றொன்று காணுறா - "Eyes will not see anything else at that time" (meaning "will see with determination". If the eyes were to begin to focus elsewhere, because of bashfulness, they would be unable to see other things also.

சீர்பரவாது உண்ணவாய் தான் உறுமோ ஒன்று - my tongue will only indulge in (singing) the glorious and auspicious attributes of that Lord and will not crave for anything else.

ஒன்றுண்டுசெங்கண்மால்!யானுரைப்பது உன்னடியார்க்கு  
என் செய்வன் என்றே இருத்தி நீ - நின் புகழில்  
வைகும் தம் சிந்தையிலும் மற்றினிதோ! நீ அவர்க்கு  
வைகுந்தம் என்றருளும் வான்

53

O'Lord, with beautiful divine red eyes, partial to thine devotees! I must tell you one thing. You always are thinking of what more you can do for your desire-less devotees. However for them, the eternal abode of *Vaikuntam*, which you want to bestow upon, will it be ever sweeter than the joy that their minds feel from reveling in your auspicious attributes?

Āzhwār in the last verse told the Lord that all his senses were reveling in His bliss. The Lord then reveals His intention of taking the Āzhwār to His eternal abode, *Vaikuntam*. Āzhwār states that *Vaikuntam* does not appeal to him as much as delighting in the thoughts of the Lord here on this earth.



செங்கண்மால்! ஒன்றுண்டு யானுரைப்பது - " O' Lord with beautiful divine red eyes, partial to thine devotees! I must tell you one thing".

The Lord is omniscient and how come Āzhwār states that he would like to let Him know one thing? Here Swami Sri Periyavācchān Pillai's words in the commentary are interesting with the *Pramānam*.

"ஆரேனுமாகத் தெளிந்தார் கலங்கினார்க்குச் சொல்லக்கடவதிறே". Āzhwār says to the Lord, "Your eyes are red and bedimmed with overflowing affection and compassion for your devotees. I must therefore tell you this one thing".

செங்கண்மால் உன்னடியார்க்கு என் செய்வன் என்றே இருத்தி நீ - Towards your desire-less devotees, You always are thinking of what more you can do for them, feeling always not satisfied with what you have showered on them

கோ<sup>3</sup>விந்தே<sup>3</sup>தி யதா<sup>2</sup>க்ரந்தத் க்ருஷ்ணாமாம் தூ<sup>3</sup>ரவாஸிநம்

ருணம் ப்ரவ்ருத்<sup>3</sup>த<sup>4</sup>மிவ மேஹ்ருத்<sup>3</sup>யாந் நாபஸர்ப்பதே (Mahā Bhāratham - Udyōga 47-22)

"The words of *Draupadhi*, who yelled for Me from afar "O'Govinda!" have not left my heart like a debt overgrown with the interest".

These were the words of Sri Krishna long after the Pāndavās regained their kingdom and *Draupadhi* herself fulfilled her vows. The Lord had a special attachment and compassion to *Draupadhi* for she uttered His name when her own consorts were fully present, whom she did not consider as her protector. This is a testament to the Lord's overflowing affection for His devotees, which make Him feel ever unsatisfied.

நின் புகழில் வைகும் தம் சிந்தையிலும் மற்றினிதோ! நீ அவர்க்கு

வைகுந்தம் என்றருளும் வான் "Your bestowing at a later time, *Vaikuntam*, your eternal abode for them as great gift, will it ever become equal to the joy that their minds derive now from reveling in Your *kalyāna gunās*". Āchārya's words here are of interest also -

"ஸித்<sup>3</sup>த<sup>3</sup>த்துக்கு எடைநிற்குமோ ஸாத்<sup>3</sup>யம்" -

That which is to be attained sometime in the future, will it match the joyous experience of the present.

"இதுக்கது உக்திஸாரமே காரணம்"-

Swami Sri Krishnaswami Iyengar notes here that the clear meaning of these latter words of Āchārya's (ஸ்ரீஸூக்தி) is not available. It may possibly mean the following - "The joyous experience derived now from indulging and reveling in the *kalyāna gunās* of the Lord, currently at hand is better than the joy of the eternal abode that may materialize sometime in the future being assured of the same from scriptural statements".

வானோ மறிகடலோ மாருதமோ தீயகமோ  
கானோ ஒருங்கிற்றும் கண்டிலமால் - ஆனீன்ற  
கன்றுயரத் தாம் எறிந்து காய் உதிர்த்தார் தாள்

பணிந்தோம்

வந்துயரை ஆவா மருங்கு

54

We bowed to the holy divine feet of the Lord, who lifted and hurled the demon (*Vatsāsura*), who came as a newborn calf in the air and brought down the wood apple tree and its fruits, where another demon *Kapittāsura* was hiding. Lo! What a wonder! We cannot see the terrible sins anywhere near us! Did they vanish into the skies? Did they become immersed in the wavy sea? Did they blow away with the wind? Did they burn up in the fire? Did they hide in the forest?

When Āzhwār states that his current state of bliss being immersed in the *kalyāna gunās* of the Lord is better than anything that the future may bring, the Lord seems to ask Āzhwār what happened to all the obstacles in the way of this experience in the form of all unrighteous actions. To that query of the Lord, Āzhwār replies in this verse, that he is not able to discern where they seem to have disappeared.

வானோ மறிகடலோ மாருதமோ தீயகமோ கானோ ஒருங்கிற்று (வான் ஒருங்கிற்றோ, மறிகடல் ஒருங்கிற்றோ மாருதம் ஒருங்கிற்றோ தீயகம் ஒருங்கிற்றோ கான் ஒருங்கிற்றோ - Where did my sins disappear? Did they vanish into the skies? Did they get immersed in the sea? Did they blow away with the wind? Did they burn up in the fire? Did they go to the forest?

வந்துயரை மருங்கும் கண்டிலமால் - The sins are not seen even near us. (The "உம்" from the word "ஒருங்கிற்றும்" must be joined with "மருங்கு").

The reason as to why the sins vanished into thin air, is explained by the first part of the verse.

ஆன் ஈன்ற கன்று உயரத் தாம் எறிந்து காய் உதிர்த்தார் தாள் பணிந்தோம் - We bowed to the holy feet of that Lord (Sri Krishna) who showed by his actions that He would get rid of all obstacles, like the way he destroyed two demons at the same time, by hurling and throwing the *Vatsāsura* who came as a newborn calf towards the wood apple tree and brought down the *Kapittāsura* who came in the form of the wood apple fruits. That is the reason why our sins vanished.

Āzhwār uses the word "துயர்" (meaning, "sorrows") to refer to "sins" (unrighteous actions) since the latter is the cause of sorrows and misery.

மருங்கோத மோதும் மணி நாகணையார்  
 மருங்கே வர அரியரேலும் - ஒருங்கே  
 எமக்கவரைக் காணலாம் எப்பொழுதும் உள்ளால்  
 மனக்கவலை தீர்ப்பார் வரவு

55

The Lord by His appearance removes all mental agony. While it is hard for us to go near the Lord, who lies reclined on the bed of *ādhi Sésha*, the serpent studded with gems in the ocean (of milk) with the surging waves, we can always fully visualize Him in our minds.

Āzhwār in this verse says that since all his *karmās* which were like obstacles vanished, he is able to actually visualize the Lord.

வரவு மனக்கவலை தீர்ப்பார் - By His appearance, (the Lord) removes all mental anguish. This implies that the Lord on His own had come to receive the Āzhwār.  
 மருங்கு ஓதம் மோதும் மணி நாகணையார்- The Lord who lies reclined on the gem studded serpent, *ādhi Sésha* in the ocean of milk with the surging waves nearby, as if practicing His "Yōga nidrā", with the intention of obtaining the Āzhwār.

மருங்கே வர அரியரேலும் - Although it is hard for us to reach near Him  
 எமக்கு ஒருங்கே உள்ளால் அவரை எப்பொழுதும் காணலாம் - Since He resides always in our hearts, we can always actually visualize Him in our minds  
 ப்ரஜாபதிஸ் த்வம் வேத<sup>3</sup> ப்ரஜாபதிம் த்வோ வேத<sup>3</sup> யம் ப்ரஜாபதிர் வேத<sup>3</sup>  
 ஸ புண்யோ ப<sup>4</sup>வதி (Yajur Kan 1 pra 6) - "The Lord chooses a person. And a person chooses the Lord. He whom the Lord Himself had chosen without any doubt would reach the Lord."

This verse clearly shows that the Āzhwār was clearly a person chosen by the Lord as indicated in this Védic statement.

வரவா றொன்றில்லையால் வாழ்வு இனிதால் \* எல்லே  
 ஒருவாறு ஒருவன் புகாவாறு - உருமாறும்  
 ஆயவர்தாம் சேயவர்தாம் அன்றுலகம் தாயவர்தாம்  
 மாயவர்தாம் காட்டும் வழி

56

The Lord by Himself seems to have taken abode in my mind even without any obvious means adopted by me. My life however is sweet. What a

wonder this is! In order to bestow His grace to all beings, Lord Krishna Himself hiding His own true nature, form and attributes carries out their tasks without any need for them to resort to any other means. The same Lord remains far away unreachable to the demoniac beings. In ancient days, He himself strode over all the worlds. The means that wondrous Lord showed and how that came about, no one would know.

Āzhwār in this verse says that he also does not know why the Lord, Who is not easily attained for many, became so accessible to him.

வரவாறொன்றில்லையால் - No means exist in me to have the Lord reside in my mind always and yet

வாழ்வு இனிதால் - my life however is sweet. எல்லே - What wonder this is!

ஒருவாறு ஒருவன் புகாவாறு உருமாறும் - The Lord incarnates descending into this world changing His nature, form and attributes so that no being needs to look for any other means. For did He not say "giving up all other means, take Me alone as your refuge" in the charama slōkam in Geetha.

ஆயவர்தாம் சேயவர்தாம் - The same Lord who told Arjuna "giving up all other means, take me as your refuge" became the charioteer for Arjuna, and stayed away from Duryōdhana, causing the destruction of his army from the arrows of Arjuna.

அன்று உலகம் தாயவர்தாம் - However at His own desire, would come down to grace everyone like He did when He strode over all the worlds with His lotus feet.

மாயவர்தாம் காட்டும் வழி - the means that wondrous Lord showed (join this to "வரவாறொன்றில்லையால்" and how that came about, no one would know)

வழித்தங்கு வல்வினையை மாற்றானோ நெஞ்சே  
தழீக்கொண்டு போரவுணன் தன்னைச் சுழித்தெங்கும்  
தாழ்விடங்கள் பற்றிப் புலால்வெள்ளம் தானுகள  
வாழ்வடங்க மார்விடந்தமால்

57

O' my mind! Won't the Lord not eliminate the ignorance and the desires in indulging in various things arising as a result of the invincible effects (both meritorious and otherwise) of our previous *karmās* from the ancient days, the Lord holding down the demon *Hiranyan* in the battle, tore his heart apart allowing his blood to flow, flooding all the lower grounds and put down his life and ego of his material wealth?

Āzhwār in this verse, replies the query of his own mind which was asking him how to get rid of the ignorance and the desires in various material things which had co-existed in us from the ancient days, saying the Lord who destroyed the demon Hiranyan, alone would also eliminate these.

வழித்தங்கு வல்வினையை மாற்றானோ நெஞ்சே -

O' my mind! Won't the Lord not eliminate the ignorance and the desires in indulging in various material things arising as a result of the invincible effects of our previous actions (both "*punya* and *pāpa*" merits and sins), which have been with us from eternity? He would certainly do so. Is this a big effort for One, Who eliminated the demon *Hiranyan*?

தழீக்கொண்டு போரவுணன் தன்னைச் சுழித்தெங்கும்  
தாழ்விடங்கள் பற்றிப் புலால்வெள்ளம் தானுகள  
வாழ்வடங்க மார்விடந்த மால் -

the Lord holding down the demon *Hiranyan* in the battle, tore his heart apart allowing his blood to flow, flooding all the lower grounds and put down his life and ego arising from his material wealth?

Sri Thirumangai Āzhwār also expresses the same in his Periyathirumozhi.  
வளையுகிராளிமொய்ம்பின் மறவோனதாகம் மதியாது சென்றொருகிரால்  
பிளவெழவிட்டகுட்டமது வையமுடு பெருநீரின் மும்மை பெரிதே  
(Periyathirumozhi 11-4-4)

மாலே! படிச்சோதி மாற்றேல் இனி உனது  
பாலே போற் சீரில் பழுத்தொழிந்தேன் - மேலால்  
பிறப்பின்மை பெற்றடிக்கீழ்க் குற்றேவல் அன்று  
மறப்பின்மை யான்வேண்டும் மாடு

58

O'Lord with the divine resplendent form! I had lost myself immersed in thy pure sweet auspicious *gunās*. Please do not change that experience ever from now on. In the days ahead for me, the wealth that I besiege of you is not to do service at your divine lotus feet after attaining *mōksha* but merely not to ever forget thine divine feet.

Āzhwār in this verse, tells the Lord that he does not want from Him the *kainkaryam* of serving His lotus feet at the eternal abode after release from the mundane world, but all that he wants of Him is to be able to never ever forget His divine lotus feet.

மாலே! படிச்சோதி - O' Suzerain Lord! The One with the divine auspicious resplendent non-material form.

மாலே - also can be taken to mean, One who is all loving for even those with miniscule devotion towards Him.

படிச்சோதி - The one with attributes consistent with both "*Paratvam*" (transcendental nature) and "*Saulabhyam*" (easy accessible nature) consistent with His love towards the devotees as well as all the *gunās* consistent with the "*divya mangala vigraham*" (the resplendent divine non-material form)

மாற்றேல் இனி - Do not change that experience which you had showered on me unconditionally (similar to having a tax free land) ever (from now on)

உனது பாலே போல் சீரில் பழுத்தொழிந்தேன் - I had become fully ripe immersed in your milk like sweet auspicious attributes. (Please do not change this experience which you gifted me unconditionally)

மேலால் பிறப்பின்மை பெற்று அடிக்கீழ்க் குற்றேவல் அன்று - For the days ahead for me, I do not seek from you wealth of serving your divine lotus feet after attaining liberation from this earthly life.

மறப்பின்மை யான் வேண்டும் மாடு - I seek from you the wealth of not forgetting ever thy divine lotus feet during the time ahead.

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai comments here that Āzhwār by this request also ensured His attaining the eternal beatitude. He compares this to the legendary story of *Sāvithri* and how she got her husband *Satyavān's* life back by asking the deity of death (*Yama*) for a child through her husband. The deity *Yama* turned down her initial request to give her husband's life back saying that it was his duty to take away the life of all beings when their allotted time of life runs out on this earth but he did tell her to ask him of something else. So she modified her request which *Yama* could not refuse.

Will there be ever a question of forgetting about the Lord in the case of Āzhwār who considered everything as Krishna உண்ணும் சோறு பருகும் நீர் தின்னும் வெற்றிலையும் எல்லாம் கண்ணன் (Thiruvāimizhi 6-7-1). The words of the Āchārya here are of interest.

"இவர்க்கு மறப்புத்தானுண்டோ" என்னில் "ப்ரக்ருதி ஸம்ப<sup>3</sup>ந்த<sup>4</sup>ம்முடையார்க்கு வருமது நமக்கும் வாராதோ" என்று ப<sup>4</sup>யப்படுகிறார். ஊரடைய வெந்து கொண்டுவாராநின்றால், "நம்மகமொன்றும்பிழைக்கும்" என்று பயங்கெட்டிருப்பாருண்டோ?

Since everyone who is in the physical world with body has the limitation of forgetfulness, Āzhwār is afraid that even his lot may be similar to them. Āchārya draws a parallel here

to the feeling of Āzhwār to that of a house owner whose house is in the midst of all houses in the town being consumed by raging fire.

மாடே வரப்பெறுவராம் என்றே வல்வினையார்  
காடானும் ஆதானும் கைக்கொள்ளார் - ஊடேபோய்ப்  
பேரோதம் சிந்து திரைக்கண் வளரும் பேராளன்  
பேர் ஓதச் சிந்திக்கப்பேர்ந்து 59

The waves of the wide ocean surge and splash near the great Lord who lies in it in a meditative sleep. The moment we begin to think of His glorious names, the powerful effects of all our unrighteous actions, should leave us and reach the forest or other regions. Why is the delay in their leaving us? Do they wish to return to us?

Āzhwār in this verse speaks with joy since he had made sure of attaining Mōksha. He says that "*pāpa*" (sins) can not near him anymore.

ஊடேபோய்ப் பேரோதம் சிந்து திரைக் கண்வளரும் பேராளன்  
பேர் ஓதச் சிந்திக்கப் பேர்ந்து - வல்வினையார்  
காடானும் ஆதானும் கைக்கொள்ளார் மாடே வரப்பெறுவராம் என்றே

The great Lord lies in meditative sleep over the wide ocean as if its surging waves massage His divine feet as they splash near Him. Since He is partial to His devotees, the moment we recall His glorious names with a view to chant, our sins should run away from us and reach the forests or other regions. Āzhwār says that the delay in them leaving us, make us wonder, whether they actually wish to return to us.

பேர்ந்தொன்று நோக்காது பின்னிற்பாய் நில்லாப்பாய்  
ஈன் துழாய் மாயனையே என் நெஞ்சே - பேர்ந்தெங்கும்  
தொல்லைமா வெந்நரகில் சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு  
இல்லை காண் மற்றோர் இறை 60

O' my mind! There is no other saviour wherever you may want to search, who will protect you from falling into this eternal, big and terrible hell of this material mundane life. Without looking elsewhere away from Him,

follow that wondrous Lord who is adorned with garland of sweet *Tulasi* flowers. Otherwise follow your evil ways.

Āzhwār in this verse addresses and instructs his mind and fearing that it might fail to turn towards the Lord due to the influence of the tendencies from its previous experiences.

பேர்ந்தொன்று நோக்காது ஈன் துழாய் மாயனையே மின்னிற்பாய்  
நில்லாப்பாய் : "Follow the wondrous Lord adorned with the sweet *Tulasi* flower  
garlands without looking elsewhere or follow your own ways of independence  
("swātantaryam") indulging in the depths of material experience and destroy yourself.  
Before you decide to choose one of these two paths, listen carefully to what I have to  
say" declares the Āzhwār.

என் நெஞ்சே! தொல்லைமா வெந்நரகில் சேராமல் காப்பதற்கு எங்கும்  
பேர்ந்து மற்றோர் இறை இல்லை காண்:  
"O'mind! Wherever you may look, you will find no other saviour from this terrible and  
huge hell of this endless and eternal cycles of this mundane life ("*samsāra*"), except that  
wondrous Lord, adorned with the garland of sweet *Tulasi* flowers.

இறைமுறையான் சேவடிமேல் மண்ணளந்த அந்நாள்  
மறைமுறையால் வானாடர் கூடி- முறைமுறையின்  
தாதிலகு பூத்தெளித்தால் ஒவ்வாதே - தாழ்விசும்பின்  
மீதிலகித் தான் கிடக்கும் மீன்

61

The glowing stars spread over the spacious skies, look like flowers with a variety of bright colored pollens thrown over the divine feet of the Lord of the universe when He measured the earth, by the various *dēvās* in their turn one by one as per the respective *Vēdic* rites.

Having obtained what he desired, Āzhwār began to look at the stars in the spacious skies and they appeared to him like flowers strewn by the *dēvās* over the divine lotus feet of the Lord when He took the giant strides over the three worlds as *Trivikrama*.

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai in his commentary of this verse, says that when Āzhwārs indulge in the worldly aspects, they see them only through their divine experiences. He further refers to the following, incident when an *Āchārya* by name *Siriyācchān* said the following to *Sri NamPillai*, "Just as we cannot forget the material things even when we try to think of the divine, Āzhwārs cannot forget the Lord even when they look at the world".



சிறியாச்சான், "ஸப்தாதி விஷயங்களில் நின்றும் நாம் மீளமாட்டாதாற்போலே ஆழ்வார்கள் ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத்விஷயத்தில் நின்றும் மீளமாட்டார்கள்" என்று பிள்ளைக்குப் பணித்தான்.

இறை முறையான் மண்ணளந்த சேவடிமேல் - To establish and demonstrate to everyone that He is the ultimate owner of this universe, the Lord took the *Trivikrama avathāram* and measured the same with His divine feet.

In this verse, Āzhwār describes how the *Brahmā* and the other *dēvās* experienced the *Trivikrama avathāram*.

அந்நாள் வானாடர் கூடி முறைமுறையின் மறைமுறையால் -  
தாதிலகு பூத்தெளித்தால் ஒவ்வாதே தாழ்விசம்பின் மீது  
இலகிக் கிடக்கும் மீன் தான்

At that time when the Lord took His giant strides, all the *dēvās* including *Brahmā*, *Siva*, *Indra* and others respectively paid homage to those divine feet, following the *Vēdic* rites, The glowing stars in the spacious skies (known as *Vishnu Padam*) look like flowers with a variety of bright colored pollens thrown over the divine feet of the Lord by the *dēvās* at that time.

மீனென்னும் கம்பில் வெறியென்னும் வெள்ளிவேய்  
வானென்னும் கேடிலா வான் குடைக்குத் - தானோர்  
மணிக்காம்பு போல் நிமிர்ந்து மண்ணளந்தான் நங்கள்  
பிணிக்காம் பெருமருந்து பின்

62

The Lord who came as *Trivikrama* and who grew high and measured the worlds like the central stick made of blue stone holding up the huge umbrella of the spacious skies, with the studded stars like the tips of the spokes and the moon, the king of the stars and the bright venus forming the connecting hollow rods, the same Lord is our medicine for our ills, the *samsāra*.

Āzhwār continues to enjoy the *Trivikrama avathāram* in this verse also.  
மீன் என்னும் கம்பில் - Āzhwār uses a simile here to describe the *Trivikrama avathāram*. For an umbrella, there should be tips of spokes (கம்புகள்) spreading at the top and a central stick (காம்பு) for holding it. There should be rods connecting the two.

Āzhwār compares the spacious skies as the umbrella. The studded stars are likened to the tips of the spokes.

வெறி வெள்ளி என்னும் வேய் - The moon (வெறி) who is the king of the stars and venus (வெள்ளி), are the connecting rods வேய் (hollow bamboo stems).

வானென்னும் கேடிலா வான் குடைக்கு - For the huge umbrella, the ever-lasting and almost eternal skies (which is for ever until final dissolution),

தானோர்

மணிக்காம்பு போல் நிமிர்ந்து மண்ணளந்தான் - The Lord grew like a large central stick made of blue stone for this huge umbrella (the skies) and measured the worlds.

பின் நங்கள் பிணிக்கு பெருமருந்து ஆம் -

Like in the bygone age, He relieved the sufferings of the *dēvās* by measuring the worlds, in this age, He is the medicine for all our ills, the *samsāra* (the birth and death cycles of the mundane life).

பின் துரக்கும் காற்றிழந்த சூல்கொண்டல் பேர்ந்தும்போய்  
வந்திரைக்கண் வந்தணைந்த வாய்மைத்தே - அன்று  
திருச்செய்ய நேமியான் தீயரக்கி மூக்கும்  
பருச்செவியும் ஈர்ந்த பரன்

63

In that bygone age of the incarnation of Sri Rāma, the valiant and victorious Lord with the fiery red discus, chopped away the nose and the large ears of that terrible demoness *Sūrpanakhā* and returned back to His abode in the ocean of milk with the surging waves similar to the water laden dark clouds moving away from the blowing winds, settle back in the sea with the powerful waves.

Āzhwār in the previous verse sang the glory of the Lord in His *Trivikrama avathāram*. In this verse he speaks about Sri Rāma, who got rid of the demons.

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai's commentary of this verse, indicates that there were two methods of prose ordering this verse to get the meaning, used by the *Pūrva Āchāryas* (the Masters of the past). These were taught to Sri Nampillai by Sri Nanjeer. Since both ways of interpretation had some deficiencies, Sri Nampillai apparently gave a third method of interpretation without those deficiencies.

Both of the older teachings kept the first two lines of the verse as the simile to which Sri Rāma is being compared. This required either a change of the word "வாய்மைத்து" to

"வாய்மையன்" or add a new word "படி" at the end of the verse after the word "பரன்". In both the ways, the resulting meaning would be that the Lord Sri Rāma's action of getting rid of the demons and returning back to the ocean of milk is like that of the water laden dark clouds settling back in the seas. But these two ways of prose ordering the verse need to either change the word or bring in a new word.

Sri Nampillai on the other hand gave a different way which required no such interpositions. He chose to make the first two lines of the verse as the "உபமேயம்", the subject of comparison and the second two lines of the verse as the "உபமானம்", (the simile). In other words, the action of the dark water laden clouds is like that of the action of Sri Rāma. This is similar to the 61st verse where Āzhwār looking at the star studded skies was reminded of the Lord's, *Trivikrama avathāram*. In this verse also, Āzhwār looking at the dark clouds moving in the skies breaking away from the winds settling back in the seas, is reminded of the deeds of the Lord as Sri Rāma.

பின் துரக்கும் காற்று - the blowing winds make the clouds move around in the skies. This is similar to Lord Rāma's *avathāram* taking place due to the prayers of the *dēvās*. After He fulfills their wishes, He also returns back to the ocean of milk like the clouds that moved away from the winds settle back in the seas.

தூல்கொண்டலாய் - like the dark water laden clouds, Sri Rāma also is full of flowing compassion

In this verse, dismembering of the demoness *Sūrpanakhā* stands for all of Sri Rāma's actions of destroying all of the *rākshasās* including *Rāvana*.

பரனாம் அவனாதல் பாவிப்பாராகில்  
உரனால் ஒரு மூன்று போதும் மரம் ஏழ் அன்று  
எய்தானைப் புள்ளின்வாய் கீண்டானையே அமரர்  
கைதான் தொழாவே கலந்து

64

If only the *dēvās* realize in their hearts, that in the bygone age, Sri Rāma who threw the arrow piercing through the seven *sāla* trees and Sri Krishna who split the mouth of the demon *Bakāsura* who came in the form of a bird are in fact the same transcendental Lord, wouldn't their clasped hands worship Him thrice a day?

In the previous verses, the Lord's incarnations were talked about. In this verse Āzhwār feels sorry for the *dévās* since they do not recognize the transcendental nature of the Lord although He exhibited this by His actions in the *avathārams* of Sri Rāma and Sri Krishna.

பரன் - the transcendental Lord,

உரன் - (ம்) - heart (thoughts)

உரனால் அவன் பரனாதல் பாவிப்பாராகில் -if they realize in their hearts that He is the transcendental Lord

அன்று மரம் ஏழ் எய்தானைப் புள்ளின்வாய் கீண்டானையே - in that bygone age, the one who pierced with the arrow the seven trees as Sri Rāma and split the mouth of the demon bird as Sri Krishna

ஒரு மூன்று போதும் அமரர் கைதான் தொழாவே கலந்து – Wouldn't the *dévās* worship Him with their clasped hands, three times a day?

They do not, since they egotistically consider Him as one among them.

கலந்து நலியும் கடுந்துயரை நெஞ்சே

மலங்க அடித்து மடிப்பான் - விலங்கல்போல்

தொன்மாலைக் கேசவனை நாரணனை மாதவனைச்

சொல்மாலை எப்பொழுதும் சூட்டு

65

O' mind! He will destroy the effects of our unrighteous *karmās* preventing them from causing misery and chase them away. Always deck that ancient and loving Lord, who is majestic and invincible like the mountain and who is known as *Késhava*, *Nārāyana* and *Mādhava*, with garlands of words

In this verse, Āzhwār addresses his mind saying that it does not matter if the *dévās* do not serve the Lord and instructs his mind to serve Him forever.

நெஞ்சே! - O' mind!

கலந்து நலியும் கடுந்துயர் -

The effects of unrighteous actions that are with us, which cause terrible misery

மலங்க அடித்து மடிப்பான் - Will make them tremble and run away

விலங்கல்போல் தொன்மால் - majestic and invincible like the mountain, ancient and loving Lord

கேசவனை - the Lord with lovely locks of hair, (also the transcendental Lord who is God even for *Brahmā*, the creator and *Siva*, the destroyer)

நாரணனை - the abode and the Lord of the hosts of souls.

மாதவனை - the Lord of Sri MahaLakshmi.

சொல்மாலை எப்பொழுதும் தூட்டு - always adore the Lord with the garlands of words.

A question may arise as to how it will be possible for us who are so low to reach that transcendental supreme Lord and garland Him? It is possible for He has divine mother in His chest and He also is *Nārāyana*. He is compassionate and loving for He is the abode of the hosts of all souls.

தூட்டாய நேமியான் தொல்லரக்கன் இன்னுயிரை  
மாட்டே துயரிழைத்த மாயவனை ஈட்ட  
வெறிகொண்ட தண்டுழாய் வேதியனை நெஞ்சே  
அறிகண்டாய் சொன்னேன் அது

66

O' mind! Understand the Sovereign Lord, who carries the divine discus as an ornament, He is the wondrous Lord, who vanquished the ancient demon *Rāvana* staying close and causing havoc on his dear life and He wears the cool garland of *Tulasi* full of nice fragrance, who is glorified in the *Védās*. I have taught this to you.

In the last verse, Āzhwār told his mind to serve the Lord for ever. In this verse, he instructs his mind to understand that He is the wondrous Lord who vanquished the ancient demon *Ravana* (and therefore He will destroy all our adversaries), He is sweet (for He wears the cool fragrant *Tulasi*) and He is the Supreme (for He is glorified as such in the *Védās*).

தூட்டாய நேமியான் - The Lord carries the ornamental divine discus which is capable of destroying the adversaries

தொல்லரக்கன் இன்னுயிரை மாட்டே துயரிழைத்த மாயவனை -

He is the wondrous Lord who vanquished the ancient demon *Rāvana*, staying close to him and causing havoc on his dear life.

ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மத<sup>3</sup>ண்ட<sup>3</sup> ப்<sup>3</sup>ரகாஸாநாம் வித்<sup>3</sup>யுத்சத்<sup>3</sup>ருஸ வர்ச்சஸாம்

ஸ்மரந் ராக<sup>4</sup>வபா<sup>3</sup>ணானாம் விவ்யதே<sup>2</sup> ராக்ஷஸேஸ்வர: - ( Srimad Rāmāyanam-Yuddha Kādam 60-3)

"The king of the demons, *Rāvana*, was immersed in sorrow thinking of the missiles of Sri *Rāma*, which were shining as lightning and resplendent like the *Brahmādandam* (*Brahmā's* weapon)".

ஈட்ட வெறிகொண்ட தண்டுழாய் வேதியனை - the Lord who wears the cool garland of *Tulasi* full of nice fragrance and who is glorified in the *Védās*

நெஞ்சே! அறிகண்டாய் சொன்னேன் அது - O' Mind! I have taught you this, which is not understood easily by others.

The destruction of the demon king *Rāvana* reveals that our adversaries and obstacles will also be destroyed. The reference to the Lord wearing the cool fragrant *Tulasi* garland indicates that He is sweet and finally He is glorified in the *Védās* and therefore He is the supreme Lord of all. Not everyone can understand this.

அதுவோ நன்றென்று அங்கமருலகோ வேண்டில்  
அதுவோ பொருளில்லை யன்றே - அது வொழிந்து  
மண் நின்று ஆள்வேன் எனிலும் கூடும் மடநெஞ்சே  
கண்ணன் தாள் வாழ்த்துவதே கல்

67

Understanding, that enjoying the Lord in the eternal world to be a good thing, if you wished for the same it would not be unobtainable. (On the other hand) giving that up, if you preferred to stay in this world and enjoy all the wordly pleasures, it would still be possible. O' my dear mind! Learn to sing benediction to the divine holy feet of the Lord Sri Krishna.

In this verse, knowing Him to be the sweet and most desirable and also as the supreme ruler, Āzhwār instructs his mind to sing the glories of benediction on the divine feet of the Lord Sri Krishna instead of seeking from Him, the eternal world or some other material things.

அதுவோ நன்று என்று அங்கு அமருலகோ வேண்டில்

அதுவோபொருளில்லை யன்றே -

Understanding that the experience of the Lord in the eternal world (*Sri Vaikuntam*) to be a good thing, if one wished for the same, it would not be impossible to obtain (from the Lord)

அமருலகு - அமரர் உலகு- வானவர் நாடு (Thiruvāimozhi 3-9-9) -

The eternal realm has been the world for the eternal attendants of the Lord (*Nitya Sūris*).

வேண்டில் -

நின் புகழில் வைகும் தம் சிந்தையிலும் மற்றினிதோ நீ அவர்க்கு வைகுந்தம் என்றருளும் வான் (53rd verse), Since one can enjoy the Lord even in this world, developing a desire for the eternal world leaving this world will in fact be rare.

Knowing that this worldly experience is transient and therefore if one desired to obtain the eternal world, even then

அதுவோ பொருளில்லை - it is not outside the possibility of what the Lord can bestow.

நின்னடியார்க்கு என் செய்வனென்றே இருத்தி நீ (53rd verse). He for ever wants to grace His devotees, therefore it is not beyond His dispensations.

அன்றே அது ஒழிந்து

மண் நின்று ஆள்வேன் எனிலும் கூடும் - Giving up the desire for the eternal realm, if one wished to stay in this world and enjoy the worldly pleasures, it will also be possible since the Lord will bestow them as well.

மடநெஞ்சே - Dear mind! Bestowing joys of the world or the liberation from it all, is not outside the range of what the Lord will bestow but developing love towards Him is hard. You are turned towards Him.

Āzhwār's mind then asks him as to what it should do, to which the Āzhwār then answers

கண்ணன் தாள் வாழ்த்துவதே கல் - Giving up desires for the joys of the world as well as for liberation, learn to sing benediction (பல்லாண்டு) to the holy divine feet of the Lord Sri Krishna.

கல்லும் கனைகடலும் வைகுந்த வானாடும்  
புல்லென்றொழிந்தனகொல் ஏபாவம் - வெல்ல  
நெடியான் நிறங்கறியான் உள்புகுந்து நீங்கான்  
அடியேனது உள்ளத்தகம்

68

The Lord who is great (with no compeers) and who has a beautiful dark hue entered me and will not leave my heart. (Therefore), the *Thirumalai*, the chattering ocean of milk and the eternal abode *Sri Vaikuntam* all have become small for Him. What a pity!

In the previous verse, Āzhwār stated that he did not desire anything other than singing benediction to the divine holy feet of the Lord. This verse describes how the Lord giving up all His other abodes, took up Āzhwār's heart as His choicest abode.

கல் - refers to the holy hill of *Thiruvénkatam*. The usage indicates the closeness the Āzhwārs feel for the Lord. This is also illustrated by some of the other words used by the Āzhwārs. தம் பாம்பு refers to *Sri Ananathāzhwān* or *Sri ādhi Sésha*. (Nāchiyār Thirumozhi 10-3).

மாணியாய் மண்ணளந்தாய் - referring to the Lord as *Brahmāchāri* or celebrate. All these expressions indicate the close relationship with the Lord.

கல்லும் கனைகடலும் வைகுந்த வான் நாடும்

புல் என்று ஒழிந்தன கொல் - Considering the great attachment that the Lord shows for the Āzhwār's heart, it appears to Āzhwār as though the rest of His abodes like the *Thirumalai*, among the *archa sthalams*, the ocean of milk among His *Vyūha* abodes as well as the *Vaikuntam* among His *divya désams* have become all small and inconsequential in comparison. It appears as though they are almost extinct with overgrown weeds.

ஏபாவம் - what a pity!

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai compares the Āzhwār's feeling here to those of the 50 royal princesses who married the sage *Sowbhari*. Āchāryā's words here are:

ஸௌப<sup>4</sup>ரி ஐம்பது பெண்களோடே கலந்து போருகிறவிடத்தில் தன் மக்களைத்தனித்தனியே, பிதா, "உனக்கு குறையில்லையே" என்று கேட்க , "என்னுடன் பிறந்தாரை ஒருத்தரையும் அறியாதே எப்போதும் என்னோடேயிருக்கும் இதுவே வெறுப்பு, வேறொரு குறையில்லை" என்று சொன்னாற்போலே -

Apparently this sage *Sowbhari* with his yōgic powers took 50 physical bodies and married 50 princesses. But each one of the princesses felt sorry for their other siblings thinking that they were not getting the same attention and love as they themselves were getting from their husband. When enquired by their father whether they had any complaint, each one of them had replied that their only unhappiness was that their husband never would go to any of their siblings' homes and pretty much spent all of the time only in their company.

வெல்ல நெடியான் - indicates overwhelming and matchless greatness

நிறங்கறியான் - of beautiful dark hue

உள்புகுந்து நீங்கான் அடியேனது உள்ளத்தகம் - Having entered me, will not leave my heart. (Knowing that Āzhwār could not bear the separation from the Lord, the Lord had taken permanent residence in Āzhwār's heart and would not leave).

அகம் சிவந்த கண்ணினராய் வல்வினையர் ஆவார்  
முகம் சிதைவராம் அன்றே முக்கி - மிகுந்திருமால்  
சீர்கடலை உள்பொதிந்த சிந்தனையேன் தன்னை  
ஆர்க்கடலாம் செவ்வே யடர்த்து

69

The effects of all the terrible unrighteous actions appear like someone with sorrowful red eyes and grieving face. Who can get near me and squeeze to cause any harm to me since my mind has engulfed the deep and the vast ocean of the auspicious *gunās* of the great Lord, the consort of Lakshmi?

In this verse, Āzhwār states that all his unrighteous actions which are the cause of the repeat birth, have all vanished due to the love and affection of the Lord towards him.

வல்வினையர் ஆவார் அகம் சிவந்த கண்ணினராய் முக்கி முகம் சிதைவராம் அன்றே - Āzhwār here feels elated about his victory over the effects of all unrighteous



*karmās* (sins), refers to them figuratively, as a person with form and feelings. They feel as someone, who has been dethroned from ruler-ship and therefore feel sorrowful with grieving face and red eyes.

முக்கி - mumbling and moaning because of grief

மிகும் திருமால் சீர்கடலை உள்பொதிந்த சிந்தனையேன் தன்னை

ஆர்க்கடலாம் செவ்வே யடர்த்து

தா<sup>4</sup>தூநாமிவ ஸைலேந்த்<sup>3</sup>ரோ கு<sup>3</sup>ணாநாமாகரோ மஹாந் ( Srimad Rāmāyanam - Kishkinda Kāndam 15-21 - *Tāra's* words)

"Like a mountain full of all medicinal herbs, Sri Rāma is the abode of all auspicious *gunās*.

Similarly, who can get near and cause harm to me, whose mind has engulfed the deep and the vast ocean of the auspicious *gunās* of the Lord, the consort of *Sri Lakshmi*.

சீர்கடலை உள்பொதிந்த -

Āzhwār says that his mind had engulfed and become full with the limitless glories of the Lord.

ஆர்க்கடலாம் செவ்வே அடர்த்து -

Who then with limited abilities can even come near him to cause any harm.

அடர்பொன் முடியானை ஆயிரம் பேராணைச்

சுடர்கொள் சுடர் ஆழியானை - இடர்கடியும்

மாதாபிதுவாக வைத்தேன் எனதுள்ளே

யாதாகில் யாதே இனி

70

I have taken into my heart the Lord, who is adorned with the radiant golden crown, who is known by the thousand names and who carries the resplendent discus which shines as though it has engulfed the splendor of all shining things, as the mother and the father who will drive away all (my) distress. It does not matter anymore whatever happens.

In the previous verse, Āzhwār talked about his victory over the effects of all the unrighteous *karmās* (sins). In this verse, Āzhwār says that it matters very little to him even if he were to experience the effects of these *karmās*, since he has taken the Lord as his mother and as his father.

அடர்பொன் முடியானை - The gold crown capable of causing the destruction of all adversaries, radiant and beautiful and revealing at once that He is the supreme sovereign Lord of all the worlds.

ஆயிரம் பேராணை - the Lord with a thousand names that sing His beauty and glories  
சுடர்கொள் சுடர் ஆழியாணை - the Lord adorned with the resplendent discus (*Sri Sudarsana Chakra*), whose splendor looks as if it has swallowed the brilliance of all shining things.

இடர்கடியும் மாதாபிதுவாக வைத்தேன் எனதுள்ளே - I kept the Lord in my heart as the mother and the father who will get rid of all (my) distress

"இடர்கடியும்" - The qualifying word used here by Āzhwār, is meant to indicate that the worldly parents become actually the cause of his distress, since they give him a physical body and rear the same and make it grow, which eventually leads him to experience all the *samsāric* distress. On the other hand the Lord removes and gets rid of all those distress and misery.

யாதாகில் யாதே இனி - what does it matter whether I experience misery or not?

இனிநின்று நின் பெருமை யானுரைப்பது என்னே  
தனிநின்ற சார்விலா மூர்த்தி - பனிநீர்  
அகத்துலவு செஞ்சடையான் ஆகத்தான் நான்கு  
முகத்தான் நின்உந்தி முதல்

71

O'Lord, who remained all alone as the causeless cause at the end of dissolution! *Siva* with the matted red locks soaked with the cool waters of *Gangā* resides in the right side of your body (while), - the four faced *Brahmā* has his origin in your navel lotus. How can I even begin to describe your greatness?

In this verse, Āzhwār says that the Lord whom he has taken as his mother and his father is actually the ancient cause of even *Brahmā* and *Siva*.

இனி நின்று நின் பெருமை யான் உரைப்பது என்னே - How can I describe your greatness or your glories?

தனி நின்ற சார்விலா மூர்த்தி - O' Lord! You remain all alone at the end of the great dissolution (மஹாப்ரளய காலம்), when names and forms of all things are destroyed, retaining all in the causative state in your causeless Self.

சார்வு - refuge .

பதில் விஸ்வஸ்யாத்மேஸ்வரம் ஸாஸ்வதம் ஸிவ-மச்யுதம்

(Taittiriya Upanishad Nārāyana Sūkhtham -11)

“ O" Nārāyana ! You are the sovereign Lord of the cosmos, the Lord of self, the eternal, the ever auspicious and the one who does not let down the devotees.”

சார்வு also means compeer - சார்விலா - Peerless or with no compeers.

ருத்<sup>3</sup>ரம் ஸமாஸ்ரிதா தே<sup>3</sup>வா ருத்<sup>3</sup>ரோ ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மாணமாஸ்ரிதா  
ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மா மாமாஸ்ரிதோ ராஜந் நாஹம் சஞ்சிது<sup>3</sup>பாஸ்ரித:  
(Mahā Bhāratham Āch- 118- 37)

"O'King! *Dévās* take refuge in *Rudra*. *Rudra* in turn seeks refuge in *Brahmā*. *Brahmā* is dependent on my self. I am not dependent on anyone""

பனிநீர் அகத்துலவு செஞ்சடையான் ஆகத்தான் - *Rudra* with the red matted locks soaked in the cool waters of *Gangā*, resides in your body.  
வலத்தனன் திரிபுரம் எரித்தவன் (Thiruvāimozhi 1-3-9) - *Siva* resides on the right side of the body of *Nārāyana*.

நான்கு முகத்தான் நின் உந்தி முதல் - the four faced *Brahmā*, the creator, has His origin in your navel lotus.

முதலாம் திருவுருவம் மூன்றென்பர் ஒன்றே  
முதலாகும் மூன்றுக்கும் என்பர் - முதல்வா  
நிகரிலகு கார் உருவா நின்னகத்த தன்றே  
புகரிலகு தாமரையின் பூ

72

Some will state that the trinity of *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Siva* with the three beautiful forms are the first cause of the cosmos. Yet some others will state that only one is the cause of even the trinity. O' Lord! The ancient cause, with the hue of the dark clouds! Did not the resplendent lotus (the splendor arising from being the origin of the creator and the creation), sprout from your divine body?

In the previous verse, Āzhwār stated that Lord *Nārāyana* is the source and refuge of all including *Brahmā* and *Rudra*. Since some people consider *Rudra* and *Brahmā* to be equal to *Nārāyana* and state that they can be sought as the sole refuge, Āzhwār in this verse establishes his statement and exposes the fallacy in their arguments.

முதலாம் திருவுருவம் மூன்று என்பர் - some will state that the trinity with the three beautiful forms of *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Siva* are the cause of the creation. They are called த்ரிமூர்த்தி ஸாம்யவாதிகள். "*Trimūrthy Sāmyavādhies*"

ஒன்றே முதலாகும் மூன்றுக்கும் என்பர் - Some will state that there is a fourth entity superior to the trinity which is the cause of all things. This is the position of the த்ரிமூர்த்தி உத்தீர்ணவாதிகள் "*Trimūrthy uttīrnavādhies*".

The word “ "என்பர்" occurs in both indicating that Āzhwār's position (*Siddhāntham*) is different from both. Talking about these two, also is உபலக்ஷணம் (example) for the position of த்ரிமூர்த்தையக்யம் "*Trimūrthy Aikyam*" (unity of trinity). In the second half of the verse Āzhwār indicates the fallacy of these arguments.

முதல்வா – O'Ancient and the first cause!

கார் நிகர் இலகு உருவா - with the divine form of the hue similar to that of the dark clouds (implying here two auspicious attributes of the Lord, namely the form that is refreshing and providing grace unconditionally like the rain clouds giving refreshing showers)

ஒருருவம் பொன்னுருவம் ஒன்று செந்தீ, ஒன்று மாகடலுருவம் ஒத்துநின்ற முவுருவுங்கண்டபோது ஒன்று ஆஞ்சோதி முகிலுருவம் எம்மடிகளுருவந்தானே (Thirunedunthāndakam -2) is Sri Thirumangai Āzhwār's exposition of “ *Para tatvam* (the transcendental reality).

நின்னகத்தன்றே புகரிலகு தாமரையின் பூ- the lotus with the fame of being the origin of *Brahmā*, is in fact from the navel of Lord Nārāyana. Here Āzhwār shows that *Brahmā* who was created by Lord Nārāyana, and *Siva* who was created in turn by *Brahmā*, are therefore not the source. He establishes clearly the *paratvam* of Lord Nārāyana thereby eliminating all the foregoing claims of others.

ஸ்ருஷ்டிஸ்தி<sup>2</sup>தயந்தகரணீம் ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்மவிஷ்ணு ஸிவாத்மிகாம்  
ஸ ஸம்ஜ்ஞாம் யாதி ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வாநேக ஏவ ஜநார்த்<sup>3</sup>ந: (Vishnu Purānam 1-2-66)

"The Lord *Janārdhana* attains the names of *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Siva* carrying out the acts of creation, sustenance and destruction"

ப்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ்ம விஷ்ணுருத்<sup>3</sup>ரேந்த்<sup>3</sup>ராஸ் தே ஸர்வே ஸம்ப்ரஸூயந்தே - (Atharva Sikha 1-2-15)

"*Brahmā*, *Vishnu*, *Rudrā* and *Indrā* and the *dévās* are born". While this *Védic* statement indicates birth for *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Siva*, when taken with other *Védic* statements, it would become clear that *Vishnu* has birth of incarnations whereas the other two of the trinity, the birth is based on actions.

மத்<sup>4</sup>யே விரிஞ்சகி<sup>3</sup>ரிஸம் ப்ரத<sup>2</sup>மாவதார:  
தத்ஸாம்யத: ஸ்த<sup>2</sup>க<sup>3</sup>யிதும் தவ சேத் ஸ்வரூபம்  
கிம் தே பரத்வ பிஸூநைரிஹ ரங்க<sup>3</sup>தா<sup>4</sup>மந்

ஸத்வ ப்ரவர்த்தநக்ருபா பரிபாலநாத்<sup>3</sup>யை: (Sri Ranga Rājasthavam 2-51)

"O' Lord Sriranganātha! If your first *avathāram* among *Brahmā* and *Siva*, is to show that that you are one with them at the same time concealing your real form, what is the real meaning of your attributes of being pure *satva*, and your gracious actions of protection of everyone including *Brahmā* and *Rudra*? "

Sri Parāsara Bhattar gives the following expanded meaning of this verse.

த்ரயோ தே<sup>3</sup>வாஸ்துல்யா: த்ரிதயமித<sup>3</sup>மத்<sup>3</sup>வைதம் அதி<sup>4</sup>கம்  
த்ரிகாத்<sup>3</sup>ஸ்மாத் தத்த்வம் பரமிதி விதர்க்காந் விக<sup>4</sup>டயந்  
விபோ<sup>4</sup>ர் நாபீ<sup>4</sup>பத்<sup>3</sup>மோ விதி<sup>4</sup>ஸ்ரிவநிதா<sup>3</sup>நம் ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத:  
தத்<sup>3</sup>நயத் ப்<sup>4</sup>ருப<sup>4</sup>ங்க்கீ<sup>3</sup> பரவதி<sup>3</sup>தி ஸித்<sup>3</sup>தா<sup>4</sup>ந்தயதி ந:

(Sri Rangarājasthavam Pūrvashatakam 116)

"The Lord's navel lotus being the origin of *Brahmā* and therefore of *Rudra*, shows that all of the cosmos is infact under His sole control and totally eliminates the arguments that claim equality of all the three *mūrthies* (*Brahmā*, *Vishnu*, and *Siva*), the oneness of all three of them and the suggestion of a transcendental reality above and beyond all three *mūrthies*".

பூவையும் காயாவும் நீலமும் பூக்கின்ற  
காவி மலர் என்றும் காண்தோறும் - பாவியேன்  
மெல்லாவி மெய்மிகவே பூரிக்கும் அவ்வவை  
எல்லாம் பிரானுருவே என்று

73

Whenever the *Pūvai* flower, the *Kāyām* flower, the blue water lilly and the fresh blossoms of *Senkazhunīr* flowers, were sighted, at that time, the soft mind and the body of this lowly self of mine, thinking that all of them are in fact my Lord's divine form, become very elated.

In the previous verse, Āzhwār established that Lord *Nārāyana* alone is to be sought. In this verse, Āzhwār enjoys the Lord in all His glorious forms.

பூவையும் காயாவும் நீலமும் பூக்கின்ற காவி மலர் என்றும் காண்தோறும் -  
Whenever, the *Pūvai* flower, the *Kāyām* flower, the blue water lilly and the fresh blossoms of *Senkazhunīr* flowers, (the dark colour of these various flowers) were sighted, at that time

பாவிபேன் மெல்லாவி மெய்மிகவே பூரிக்கும் அவ்வவை எல்லாம் பிரான் உருவே என்று - the soft mind and the body of this lowly self of mine, thinking that all of them are in fact my Lord's divine form, become elated.

பாவிபேன் - lowly sinful self unfortunate to see the real form of the Lord. Here Āzhwār may also mean the opposite namely, the fortunate lowly self of mine (for āzhwār's mind and body both get elated merely by looking at the flowers with the hue of the Lord)

ஆவி - refers to the mind

Not only the mind which is the residence of knowledge gets very elated but even the body not endowed with that knowledge becomes elated. Āzhwār appears to be surprised at this.

என்றும் ஒருநாள் ஒழியாமை யான் இரந்தால்  
ஒன்றும் இரங்கார் உருக்காட்டார் - குன்று  
குடையாக ஆகாத்த கோவலனார் நெஞ்சே  
புடைதான் பெரிதே புவி

74

Although I have been begging all the time not even failing a single day, the Lord *Gōpāla*, who protected the cows by lifting the *Gōvardhana* mountain, does not show His grace (to me). O' mind! This place (where I am), appears to be high ground for the stream of His grace to reach.

Āzhwār in the previous verse felt elated because of the mental experience of the Lord. In this verse, he expresses his sadness at not being able to see the divine form of the Lord even though he thinks of Him all the time. While love of the Lord and desire to see Him arise only after taking a physical body, Āzhwār feels as if he has been wanting to see the Lord forever.

என்றும் ஒருநாள் ஒழியாமை யான் இரந்தால் ஒன்றும் இரங்கார் உருக்காட்டார் - I have been begging Him all the time desirous to see Him. He on the other hand, does neither show His grace nor reveal His form.

குன்று குடையாக ஆகாத்த கோவலனார் - He is the Lord Krishna who lifted the *Gōvardhana* mountain and shielded the cows from the onslaught of the torrential rains. While He revealed His form to the cows, he does not want to reveal Himself and show His grace to me.

நெஞ்சே - O' mind! "புடைதான் பெரிதே புவி -

Sri Periyavācchān Pillai's words here are of interest "அவர்க்கு நீர்மையில்லை என்னப் போகாதினே. அவர்நீர்மை ஏறிப்பாயாததோரிடந்தேடி எங்கே கிடந்தோம்?"

"Since the Lord protected the cows, He cannot be without magnanimity and graciousness, unconditional love. I must be seated in a place too much of a high ground for the stream of His grace to flow and reach".

புவியும் இருவிசும்பும் நின்னகத்த நீ என்  
செவியின் வழிபுகுந்து என்னுள்ளாய் - அவிவின்றி  
யான்பெரியன் நீ பெரியை என்பதனை யார் அறிவார்  
ஊன்பருகு நேமியா உள்ளு

75

O'Lord with the discus capable of engulfing blood of all adversaries! This world as well as the eternal realm is under your will. Such as you are, have come in through my ears and have stayed inside me uninterruptedly. Among us two, who can decidedly know whether I am the great one or you are the great one. Please think!

Āzhwār in the previous verse expressed his sadness that the Lord did not show His grace and did not reveal His form. Āzhwār noticing that the Lord Himself was feeling bad for making him feel so let down, Āzhwār feels ecstatic and claims that there is no compeer to himself.

புவியும் இருவிசும்பும் நின்னகத்த - The earth (*Leela vibhūthi* - the sporting cosmic realm) and the eternal realm (*Nitya vibhūthi*) exist because of your will.

நீ என் செவியின் வழிபுகுந்து அவிவின்றி என் உள்ளாய் - You, the Lord of both the realms have come through my ears and have taken abode permanently inside me.

யான் பெரியன் நீ பெரியை என்பதனை யார் அறிவார் - Who knows among the two of us who is great, whether you who have the two *vibhūthies* inside yourself or me, who has taken you, who created the two *vibhūthies* inside me permanently.

ஊன் பருகு நேமியா உள்ளு - Since you carry the discus which is capable of engulfing the flesh of all adversaries, therefore one with unlimited power, you please think and tell me.

Since Āzhwār calls himself “ யான் பெரியன் - another interpretation given by admirers of Āzhwār, is that Āzhwār is infact the Great. In Āzhwār Thirunagari, the birth place of

Sri Nammāzhwār, Āzhwār has been referred to as “ "பெரியன்" ("Periyan") meaning the Great). In addition, this Thiruvandhādhi, even though is the shortest of all Thiruvandhādhies among the Nālāyiram” with only 87 verses, has been called *Periya Thiruvandhādhi*, meaning "Great Thiruvandhādhi"

உள்ளிலும் உள்ளம் தடிக்கும் வினைப்படலம்  
விள்ள விழித்துன்னை மெய்யுற்றால் - உள்ள  
உலகளவும் யானும் உளனாவன் என் கொலோ  
உலகளந்த மூர்த்தி உரை

76

O' Lord who strode all the worlds! When I think of Thee, my mind expands (with joy). If Thy vision actualizes and the loads of my sins vanish with Thine grace, I feel as if that I also will pervade all the worlds. How is that? Please pray tell.

Āzhwār in the previous verse expressed what he learnt by listening (செவியின் வழி புகுந்து). In this verse he refers to knowledge that arises from contemplation and meditation.

உள்ளிலும் உள்ளம் தடிக்கும் - When I think of you, my (formless) mind expands (with joy) (like the physical body with form)  
வினைப்படலம் விள்ள விழித்து உன்னை மெய்யுற்றால் - If Thy vision actualizes and the loads of my sins vanish with Thine grace

உள்ள உலகளவும் யானும் உளனாவன் என் கொலோ - It feels as if that I also will pervade all the worlds.

It must be noted here that all pervasiveness of the Lord is natural to His *Vibhutvam*, but the atomic nature of the "self " implies all pervasiveness for Āzhwār is in the form of knowledge (*Dharmabhūta Jnana* - த<sup>4</sup>ர்மபூ<sup>4</sup>தஞானம்).

உலகளந்த மூர்த்தி உரை - With the divine dwarf form, you strode all the worlds. Please tell me about this all pervasiveness.



உரைக்கில் ஓர் சுற்றத்தார் உற்றார் என்றாரே  
இரைக்கும் கடர்கிடந்த எந்தாய் - உரைப்பெல்லாம்  
நின்னன்றி மற்றிலேன் கண்டாய் எனதுயிர்க்கோர்  
சொன்னன்றி யாகும் துணை

77

O' Lord who reclines (on the serpent bed) in the noisy ocean! If I were to state, what family or friend is there (for me) excepting You? Without You, I do not see any other so called relative or friend that represents the good for the self of mine, the unmatched word, support and all stated relationships.

Āzhwār in the previous verse, addressing the Lord, "உலகளந்த மூர்த்தி" (The Lord who strode the worlds), indicated that for all beings the Lord is the only true relative. In this verse, Āzhwār asks the Lord whether there is any true relative for him except the Lord. He further indicates that in this world our so called relatives are taken as relatives because of our delution. True and everlasting relationship for us is really with the Lord.

உரைக்கில் ஓர் சுற்றத்தார் உற்றார் என்றாரே - what family or friend is there (for me) excepting You? The rhetorical question indicates that the answer is actually "none". It appears as if Āzhwār, would like to hear the Lord say so.

இரைக்கும் கடர்கிடந்த எந்தாய் - Āzhwār addresses the Lord who has taken His abode on the noisy ocean of milk reclined on His serpent bed (awaiting expectantly some *jīvas* from the *Līlā Vibhūthi* to seek Him).

உரைப்பெல்லாம் நின்னன்றி மற்றிலேன் கண்டாய் - There is no other so called relative or friend except you for me

எனதுயிர்க்கோர் சொல் நன்றி யாகும் துணை - for the self of mine, there is no other support like you and your word "மாஸூச:" ("Do not grieve") (Geetha Charama ślōkam) (see commentary of verse 6 ).

துணைநாள் பெருங்கிளையும் தொல்குலமும் சுற்றத்து  
இணைநாளும் இன்புடைத்தாம் ஏலும் கணைநாணில்  
ஓவாத் தொழில் சார்ங்கன் தொல்சீரை நன்னெஞ்சே  
ஓவாத ஊணாக உண்

78

O' my good mind! Even if friends, life, large clan of relatives, birth in renowned and old family and their associations provide some happiness, (do not get attached to them). Always delight in the experience of the eternal auspicious attributes of the Lord (Sri Rāma ), who incessantly carries the *Sārnga* bow armed with the arrows ready for discharge (for the protection of the devotees), considering them as the best food for your eternal enjoyment.

Āzhwār in the previous verse stated that there is no other relative or friend for him except the Lord. In this verse, Āzhwār tells his mind that although there might be some good relatives and friends in life and the life in this mundane world may itself be pleasant, the real joy is actually the experience of the Lord alone.

துணைநாள் பெருங்கிளையும் தொல்குலமும் சுற்றத்து

இணைநாளும் இன்புடைத்தாம் ஏலும் - Even if the friends, the life, the large clan of relatives, birth in renowned and old family, and the associations (with all of them) provide some happiness

கணைநாணில் ஓவாத் தொழில் சார்ங்கன் தொல்சீரை - (consider) the eternal and the auspicious attributes of the Lord Sri Rāma with the *Sārnga* bow always strung ready with the arrows for discharge (for the protection of His devotees)

நல் நெஞ்சே - O' my good mind! (you can discriminate between the artificial and the true natural relative!)

ஓவாத ஊணாக உண் - consider (them) as your best food for your eternal enjoyment.

உண்ணாட்டுத் தேசன்றே ஊழ்வினையை அஞ்சுமே  
விண்ணாட்டை ஒன்றாக மெச்சுமே - மண்ணாட்டில்  
ஆராகி எவ்விழிவிற்று ஆனாலும் ஆழி அங்கைப்  
பேராயற் காளாம் பிறப்பு

79

In this earth, whoever it might be, from whatever class they may be from, even if they were engaged in the most degraded avocation, if they are the devoted servants of the sovereign Lord Krishna with the (*Sri Sudarsana*) discus in His hands, they attain the brilliance shining ever more resplendent than that of the eternal realm. Will they ever fear the unlimited accumulated *karmās*? Will they ever consider the heavens even as a worthy goal?

Āzhwār in the previous verse, advised his mind to enjoy always the auspicious attributes of the Lord (ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத் கு<sup>3</sup>ணானுப<sup>4</sup>வம்). In this verse, he speaks about the glories of those who are immersed in ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத் கு<sup>3</sup>ணானுப<sup>4</sup>வம்.

ஆழி அங்கைப் பேராயற்கு ஆளாம் பிறப்பு உள் நாட்டுத் தேசு அன்றே - The birth if it is involved in the devoted service of the Lord who carries *Sri Sudarsana* discus in His hands and who was born among the cowherds, it attains the brilliance (ever more resplendent than that of the eternal realm), even in this realm (*Leela vibhūthi*).

Here it is of interest to remind ourselves of the *vyākhyānam* of Sri Manavāḷa Māmuni in Āchārya Hridayam 81st Chūrnikai “ பண்டை நாளிற் பிறவி உண்ணாட்டுத் தேசிறே -

"ஆழி அங்கைப் பேராயற்கு ஆளாம் பிறப்பு உள் நாட்டுத் தேசு அன்றே - என்கிறபடியே ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத்<sup>3</sup> விமுக<sup>2</sup>ப் ப்ரசுரமாகையாலே புறநாடான லீலாவிபூ<sup>4</sup>தி போலன்றிக்கே ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வதா<sup>3</sup>நுகூலையக போ<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>ரஸத்திலே நெருங்கி போ<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup> விபூ<sup>4</sup>தியாய் அவனுக்கு அந்தரங்கமாயிருக்கிற பரமபத<sup>3</sup>த்தில் வர்த்திக்கிற தேஜஸ்ஸையுடையதினே என்கை. பரமபத<sup>3</sup>த்தில் ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத்<sup>3</sup> கைங்கர்யாநுகு<sup>3</sup>ணமாகப் பரிக்<sup>3</sup>ரஹிக்கும் தே<sup>3</sup>ஹத்தோபாதி ஸேஷ வஸ்துவான ஆத்மாவுக்கு இதுவும் தேஜஸ்கரமென்று கருத்து".

பேராயன் - The great cowherd, Sri Krishna, the adjective usage almost suggests that the rest of the cowherds are the eternal attendants (Nitya Sūris)

ஊழ்வினையை அஞ்சுமே - such devoted servants of the Lord will they ever be afraid of their unrighteous deeds? (rhetorical, indicating the answer that they will not be)  
விண்ணாட்டை ஒன்றாக மெச்சுமே - Will they consider the realms of the various *dévās* including *Brahmā*, as worthy? (rhetorical - meaning that they will not)

யத்தூ<sup>3</sup>ரே மனஸோயதே<sup>3</sup>வ தமஸ:பாரேயத<sup>3</sup>த்யத<sup>3</sup>பு<sup>4</sup>தம்  
யத் காலாத் அபசேளிமம் ஸுரபுரீ யத் க<sup>3</sup>ச்ச<sup>2</sup>தோ து<sup>3</sup>ர்க<sup>3</sup>தி:  
ஸாயஜ்யஸ்ய யதே<sup>3</sup>வ ஸூதிரத<sup>2</sup>வா யத்<sup>3</sup>து<sup>3</sup>ர்க<sup>3</sup>ரஹம் மத்<sup>3</sup>கி<sup>3</sup>ராம்  
தத்<sup>3</sup> விஷ்ணோ: பரமம் பத<sup>3</sup>ம் தவ க்ருதே மாத: ஸமாம்நாஸிஷு:  
(Sri Guna ratna kōsham 21)

"O' Divine Mother! The realm of Sri Vishnu, declares the *Védas*, shines ever for you - the realm that is beyond the mind, beyond all the material worlds, which is wonderous and ever unchanging, which makes those who seek the same, consider the celestial abode as worthless goal, which is capable of providing *sāyujyam*, and which is beyond my speech."

Thus seeking the abode of the *dévās* is not considered a worthy goal.

ந தே<sup>3</sup>வலோகாக்ரமணம் நாமரத்வமஹம் வருணே  
ஐஸ்வர்யம் வா஽பி லோகாநாம் காமயே ந த்வயா விநா (Srimad Rāmāyanam-  
Ayōdhyā Kādam- 3-5) -

"Without you, I do not desire life in the eternal realm *Sri Vaikuntam*, *kaivalyam*, and all the wealth in the world." declares Sri Lakshmana.

வாஸுதே<sup>3</sup>வே மநோ யஸ்ய ஜபஹோமார்ச்சநாதி<sup>3</sup>ஷ  
தஸ்யாந்தராயோ மைத்ரேய! தே<sup>3</sup>வேந்த்<sup>3</sup>ரத்வாதி<sup>3</sup>கம் ப<sup>2</sup>த<sup>3</sup>லம் (Vishnu Purānam  
2-6-41)

"O' Maitréya! For one whose mind is engrossed in Sri Vāsudéva, while chanting (the holy names), offering oblations into the fire and while worshipping with flower petals, even obtaining the rulership of the head of the *dévās* (Indra), becomes only a hindrance".

விண்ணாட்டை ஒன்றாக மெச்சுமே – If "உள்நாடு" is taken to mean Leela vibhūthi, then, "விண்ணாடு", must be taken to mean the eternal realm பரம பத<sup>3</sup>ம்  
Such devotees will consider even reaching *Sri Vaikuntam* not as desirable as doing loving service to the Lord here in this world.

மண்ணாட்டில் ஆராகி எவ்விழிவிற்று ஆனாலும் - Even if born in this mundane world and in the lowest of the classes in knowledge, practice and discipline, being a devoted servant of the Lord is the most important. Knowledge, practice and discipline are waste when they are not accompanied by devoted loving service to the Lord.

பிறப்பிறப்பு மூப்புப் பிணி துறந்து பின்னும்  
இறக்கவும் இன்புடைத்தாம் ஏலும் - மறப்பெல்லாம்  
ஏதமே என்றல்லால் எண்ணுவனே மண்ணளந்தான்  
பாதமே ஏத்தாப் பகல்

80

Giving up birth, death, aging, and disease and going beyond all these, even if I were to obtain limitless bliss in the form of *kaivalya mōksham*, all of that time, being oblivious of the Lord and unaccompanied by worship of the divine feet of the Lord who measured the earth, will I ever consider that as anything other than misery?

Āzhwār in the previous verse said that even if born in the lowest of classes in this world, if it was characterized by loving devoted service to the Lord, then such a birth is the best

of all. In this verse, Āzhwār declares that even if he gets "*kaivalya mōksham*", if it were without any thought of the Lord, will only mean misery to him.

பிறப்பு இறப்பு மூப்பு பிணி துறந்து பின்னும்  
இறக்கவும் இன்பு உடைத்தாம் ஏலும் -

Even if I were to get liberated from birth, death and aging that are usually associated with this *samsāra mandalam*" (the material world) and going beyond these and attain limitless joy of "*self realization*" (*kaivalya mōksham*)

ஜராமரண மோக்ஷாய (Geetha 7-29)

பிறவித் துயரற (Thiruvai mozhi 1-7-11)

மரணம் தோற்றம் வான்பிணி மூப்பென்றிவை மாய்த்தோம் (Thiruvāimozhi 8-3-2)

குறுகாநீளா இறுதிகூடா எனையுழி

சிறுகா பெருகா அளவிலின்பம் சேர்ந்தாலும்

மறுகாலின்றி மாயோன்! உனக்கேயாளாகும்

சிறுகாலத்தையுறுமோ? அந்தோ! தெரியிலே (Thiruvāimozhi 6-9-10)

In all these instances, reference is made to ஆத்மாநுப<sup>4</sup>வருபமான கைவல்ய மோக்ஷம் "*kaivalya mōksham*" (*āthmānubhavam*), which is what Āzhwār refers to here.

மண்ணளந்தான் பாதமே ஏத்தாப் பகல் மறப்பெல்லாம் ஏதமே என்றல்லால்  
எண்ணுவனே - Will consider the joy that is experienced at that time, when the divine feet of the Lord who measured this earth is not worshipped and being oblivious of the Lord, only as misery.

பகல் இரா என்பதுவும் பாவியாது எம்மை

இகல் செய்து இருபொழுதும் ஆள்வர் - தகவாத்

தொழும்பர் இவர் சீர்க்கும் துணையிலர் என்றோரார்

செழும் பரவை மேயார் தெரிந்து

81

The thoughtful Lord, who reclines in the ocean of milk in meditative sleep (on the serpent bed), not noticing that this person (Āzhwār) is lowly and unfit for His grace, incapable and helpless to think of His auspicious

attributes, and not even bothering to note whether it is day or night, has forcefully submerged me both times in His auspicious *gunās*.

Āzhwār in the previous verse stated that the time when the Lord is forgotten, even if it is a state of liberation from the embodied life in this material world, is only misery. In this verse, Āzhwār speaks about the fact that the Lord has indulged him in the experience of all His auspicious attributes day in day out.

செழும் பரவை மேயார் தெரிந்து

பகல் இரா என்பதுவும் பாவியாது எம்மை இகல் செய்து இருபொழுதும் ஆள்வர்  
- Without minding whether it is day time (fit for work) or night time (time of rest), the Lord has forcefully subjected me in His *kalyāna gunās*, providing joy when the *gunās* were fully experienced and making me sad when such experience was not available. There is medicine for the wound caused by the arrows while there is no medicine for the wound arising from the indulgence in the *gunās*.

இகல் செய்து - subjecting forcefully

என்று ஓரார் - He does not notice

தகவாத் தொழும்பர் இவர் - this person is lowly and unfit for His grace

சீர்க்கும் துணையிலர் - and that he has no helper or associate to discuss about His *gunās* for mutual comfort and respite

மச்சித்தா மத்<sup>3</sup>க<sup>3</sup>தப்ராணா போ<sup>3</sup>த<sup>4</sup>யந்த: பரஸ்பரம்

கத<sup>2</sup>யந்தஸ்ச மாம் நித்யம் துஷ்யந்தி ச ரமந்தி ச (Geetha 10-9).

"With their minds fully engrossed in Me, with their life force fully set in Me, discussing mutually about My auspicious attributes, talking about Me always, they rejoice and delight"

தெரிந்துணர்வொன்றின்மையால் தீவினையேன் வாளா  
இருந்தொழிந்தேன் கீழ்நாள்களெல்லாம் - கரந்துருவின்  
அம்மானை அந்நான்று பின்தொடர்ந்த ஆழியங்கை  
அம்மானை ஏத்தாது அயர்த்து

82

In the aeons gone by, I who had no true knowledge and full of unrighteous *karmās*, wasted all that time in ignorance, failing to worship Lord Sri Rāma adorned by the beautiful ring in his hand, who followed the magical deer (deceitful demon in disguise).

Āzhwār in the previous verse stated how he obtained unending experience of the Lord's *gunās* day in day out. In this verse, he expresses his sorrow for the lack of that experience in the ages gone by.

தெரிந்து உணர்வு ஒன்று இன்மையால் - Since there was no true knowledge. There was only knowledge like being able to distinguish, "that is ten" and "this is eight", but no discriminatory intellect to dwell in the Lord (*Bhagavat Vishayam*)

ஸம்ஜ்ஞாயதே யேந தத்<sup>3</sup>ஸ்ததோ<sup>3</sup>ஹம்  
ஸுத்<sup>3</sup>த<sup>4</sup>ம் பரம நிர்மலமேகரூபம்  
ஸந்த்<sup>3</sup>ருஸ்யதே வாபயதி<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>ம்யதே வா  
தத் ஜ்ஞாநமஜ்ஞாநமதோ<sup>5</sup>ந்யது<sup>3</sup>க்தம் (Vishnu Purānam 6-5-87)

"That by which the faultless, the pure, the immaculate, the one and only transcendental principle is apprehended, visualized and reached that alone is true knowledge. The rest is mere ignorance".

தத் கர்ம யந்ந ப்<sup>3</sup>ந்தா<sup>4</sup>ய் ஸா வித்<sup>3</sup>யா யா விமுத்தயே  
ஆயாஸாயாபரம் கர்ம வித்<sup>3</sup>யாந்யா ஸில்பநைபுணம் (Vishnu Purānam 1-19-41)  
"That action which is not binding, that alone is true action. That which is the cause of liberation that alone is true learning. All the other actions are only trouble. The rest of all learning is only like mastery of the art of sculpture".

These statements reinforce the idea that knowledge about *Bhagavat Vishayam* alone is true knowledge and all the rest just equals ignorance.

தீவினையேன் - one who had accumulated effects of unrighteous actions  
by wasting all the time that could have been spent in the experience of the Lord's *gunās*,

வாளா இருந்தொழிந்தேன் கீழ்நாள்களெல்லாம் - wasted all those days during the *Vibhava avathāram* of the Lord, when even small effort would have brought forth His full grace. The words of the Achāryā are of interest here, "குனியக்குறுணி பற்றுங்காலமெல்லாம் வ்யர்த்த<sup>2</sup>மேயிருந்தேன் " Sri PeriyāVācchān Pillai here compares those days to the time when one can simply bend and obtain a large measure full of paddy during the time of the harvest in the rice fields.

கரந்துருவின் அம்மாணை ஏத்தாது அயர்த்து - Not worshipping and serving the Lord who took the *Vibhava Avathāram* and came in the form of man as Sri Rāma and who followed the deceitful demon who came, disguised as a deer. At that time, even Sri Lakshmana (இளைய பெருமாள்) was not with the Lord to help. Āzhwār feels he should have served the Lord then.

ஆழியங்கை அம்மான் - refers to the Lord adorned by the ring "கணையாழி" in his hand. When Lord Sri Rāma went to the forest according to the wishes of *Kaikeyi*, the Lord had left behind all His royal ornaments except the ring in his hand which became famous when it was sent to the divine mother *Seethā* through Sri Hanumān. Āzhwār on account of the latter incidence, describes here "ஆழியங்கை அம்மான்".

ஏத்துதல் - means worshipping as well as serving.

Here the Āchārya, in his Vyākhyānam, refers to the incident as to how Sri Rāmānuja (Sri Emperumānār) also wanted to serve the Lord like Āzhwār.

To quote the Āchārya here,

"பெருமாள் மாய மாணையெய்து மீண்டெழுந்தருளுகிறபோது அடிக்கொதித்து நடக்கமாட்டாமை தளர்களை முறித்திட்டு அதின்மேலே எழுந்தருளினார் என்று ஒருவன் கவிபாடவும்" எம்பருமானார் கேட்டருளி," மாறியிடுகிற திருவடிகளிலே என் தலையை வைக்கப்பெற்றிலேன் என்றருளிச்செய்தார்".

Apparently a poet described this incidence of the Rāmāyanam in the following words, When the Lord was returning after killing the deer in disguise, with his feet being burnt by the hot sun and unable to put his feet on the ground directly was breaking the tender shoots of the trees in the forest and throwing them as cover and walked over them". Listening to these words, Sri Emperumānār apparently remarked, "I did not attain the fortune of keeping my head under the alternating divine footsteps of the Lord".

அயர்ப்பாய் அயராப்பாய் நெஞ்சமே! சொன்னேன்  
உயப்போம் நெறி இதுவே கண்டாய் - செயற்பால  
அல்லவே செய்கிறுதி நெஞ்சமே! அஞ்சினேன்  
மல்லர்நாள் வவ்வினைனை வாழ்த்து

83

O' my Mind! I fear that you indulge in things that should not be indulged in. Praise the Lord, who as Sri Krishna got rid of the lives of the (demoniac) wrestlers. Note this is the only way for safe conduct in life. O' Mind! Forgetting this advice of mine, destroy yourself or remembering the same, save yourself. I spoke to you (for your own good).

Āzhwār in this verse, recalling how his mind had been for ages, admonishes and advises his mind against such a state.



அயர்ப்பாய் அயராப்பாய் - Like the old days forgetting Him, destroy yourself and die or remembering Him, save yourself and live.

நெஞ்சமே! சொன்னேன் - If someone was in a state of almost falling into a well, a bystander should caution the former against the danger. Āzhwār advises his mind like cautioning someone who was about to fall into a well.

உயப்போம் நெறி இதுவே கண்டாய் - What I am about to say is the only way for your safety. All the rest is only doomed for destruction.

செயற்பால அல்லவே செய்கிறுதி - For ages you have been indulging in limitless unworthy acts.

Actions which should have been avoided as unworthy are - indulging in material things, worshipping the other deities, and (அயோக்<sup>3</sup>யன் என்று அகலுகை) even now retracting from the Lord by saying that I am unfit.

நெஞ்சமே! அஞ்சினேன் - O' mind, I fear.

Āzhwār refers to his mind retracting from praising the Lord considering himself unfit to glorify the Lord. This thought was expressed in verse 2, புகழ்வோம் பழிப்போம். Here Āzhwār, refers to this continued behaviour of his mind in this fashion. He says that he is fearful of this behaviour of his mind.

மல்லர்நாள் வவ்வினனை வாழ்த்து - (Even though we have several faults which make us unfit and cause obstacles to reach Him), The Lord as Sri Krishna destroyed the lives of the demoniac wrestlers like *Chānūra* and *Mushtika*. Will our faults exceed the strength of those invincible wrestlers? To get rid of our faults, praise the Lord who got rid of the lives of those terrible wrestlers.

வாழ்த்தி அவனடியைப் பூப்புனைந்து நின்தலையைத்  
தாழ்த்திருகை கூப்பென்றால் கூப்பாத - பாழ்த்தவிதி  
எங்குற்றாய் என்றவனை ஏத்தாதென் நெஞ்சமே  
தங்கத்தானாமேலும் தங்கு

84

O' my Mind! You do not praise the divine feet of that Lord, offering flowers, with bent head and with your hands in worshipful clasp even when asked to do so. You do not lovingly glorify Him asking Him where He had gone. Stay put if you can still bear this. Oh! Terrible indeed is the burden of the effects of *karmā*.

Āzhwār in this verse further admonishes his mind.

என் நெஞ்சமே - Āzhwār remembering the old days from eternity when his mind was not immersed in the Lord's *gunās* (Bhagavat Vishayam), the state it was in, ie., before his mind got ahead of him (முந்துற்ற நெஞ்சே- Periya Thiruvandhādhi verse - 1)

வாழ்த்தி அவனடியைப் பூப்புனைந்து நின்தலையைத் தாழ்த்து இருகை கூப்பென்றால் கூப்பாத என் நெஞ்சமே - O' my mind, even when asked to clasp your hands in worshipful prayer, praising the Lord, throwing flowers and placing the bent head at His divine feet, you don't.

அவனை எங்குற்றாய் என்று ஏத்தாது தங்கத்தானாமேலும் தங்கு -  
If you like to stay put in a place without any great interest or desire to go and see Him and glorify Him anywhere, bear it.  
எங்கு சென்றாகிலும் கண்டு (Thiruvāimozhi 6-8-5)

பாழ்த்தவிதி - What a terrible burden of the effects of *karmā*? The three things that Āzhwār pointed out in the previous verse apply here also. They are: indulging in material things, worshipping the other deities, and (அயோக்<sup>3</sup>யன் என்று அகலுகை) mind retracting from Āzhwār saying that it is unfit.

வாழ்த்தி ஏத்தாது - refers to uttering benedictory praises and glorifying by words  
பூப்புனைந்து and தலையைத் தாழ்த்து” - refer to the physical actions of the body of throwing flowers with bent head. The mind is being addressed by Āzhwār.  
By this, Āzhwār expresses his inability to bear not indulging in the Lord's *gunās* (ப<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>வத்<sup>3</sup>விஷயம்) by all three organs of action namely, mind, speech and his body. (மனோவாக்காயங்களாகிற முக்கரணங்கள்).

தங்கா முயற்றியவாய்த் தாழ்விசம்பின் மீது பாய்ந்து  
எங்கேபுக்கு எத்தவம் செய்திட்டனகொல் - பொங்கோதத்  
தண்ணம் பால் வேலைவாய்க் கண்வளரும் என்னுடைய  
கண்ணன் பால் நன்னிறம் கொள் கார் 85

Where did the clouds, with the beautiful color of my Lord, who sleeps reposed on the cool beautiful ocean of milk with surging waves, wandering over the spacious skies go and observe what kind of austerities with such relentless efforts to obtain the color?

Āzhwār, who has been sad until now alternating between feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in relation to his experience of the Lord, looks at the world. Looking at the

rain bearing dark clouds in the skies, Āzhwār expresses his wonderment in this verse as to what kind of austerities these clouds observed to obtain the color of the Lord.

தங்கா முயற்றியவாய்த் தாழ்விசும்பின் மீது பாய்ந்து  
எங்கேபுக்கு எத்தவம் செய்திட்டனகொல் - with such ceaseless efforts, wandering all  
over the spacious skies, which holy place did the clouds enter and observe what kind of  
austerities?

The reason for this doubt is explained in the second part of the verse.

பொங்கு ஓதம் தண் அம்பால் வேலைவாய்க் கண்வளரும் என்னுடைய  
கண்ணன் பால் நன்னிறம் கொள் கார் - these clouds which have the lovely dark  
color of my Lord who reposes on the cool beautiful ocean of milk with surging waves,  
(where did they go and observe what kind of austerities?)

The same idea is expressed in Thiruviruttham verse 32, by Āzhwār.

Asking the question of the clouds as to how they obtained the color of the Lord,

"மேகங்களோ உரையீர் - திருமால் திருமேனியொக்கும்

யோகங்கள் உங்களுக்கு எவ்வாறு பெற்றீர்?".

Āzhwār answers as follows,

"உயிரளிப்பான் மாகங்கெல்லாம் திரிந்து நன்னீர்கள் சுமந்து நுந்தம்

ஆகங்கள் நோவ வருந்தும் தவமாம் அருள் பெற்றதே", -

"May be it is the result of the grace that you obtained by your grueling physical efforts of  
bearing the water, wandering all over the world and providing rain showers to all beings  
thereby protecting them without any expectations in return".

கார்கலந்த மேனியான் கைகலந்த ஆழியான்  
பார்கலந்த வல்வயிற்றான் பாம்பணையான் - சீர்கலந்த  
சொல்நினைந்துபோக்காரேல் சூழ்வினையின் ஆழ்துயரை  
என்நினைந்து போக்குவர் இப்போது 86

The people of the world do not seem to get rid of the terrible distress arising  
from all the unrighteous actions, meditating on the holy words glorifying all  
the auspicious attributes of the Lord, Who has the form with the hue of the  
dark clouds, with the arm adorned by the divine discus, with the divine  
stomach strong and spacious to hold the worlds at the time of dissolution and  
Who reclines on *Sri Anantha*, the serpent bed. Thinking of what else, can  
they even spend the time?

Āzhwār, in the 84<sup>th</sup> verse, expressed that he could not live without dwelling on the Lord with all three kinds of action involving his mind, speech and his body. In the 85<sup>th</sup> verse, looking at the world, the dark clouds reminded him of the beautiful dark hue of the Lord. In this verse, he states that it will be difficult to live without immersing on the auspicious *gunās* of the beautiful Lord and furthermore it will not be possible even to pass the time.

கார்கலந்த மேனியான் - The Lord with the form with the hue of the dark clouds (perfectly matching).

கைகலந்த ஆழியான் - with the divine arm adorned by the holy discus

கைகலந்த - describes fitting match (as if it were a tree well rooted on the ground or as it were a flower on the branch of a tree)

பார்கலந்த வல்வயிற்றான் - With the divine stomach into which all the worlds were withdrawn during the state of dissolution of the universe.

பார்கலந்த - indicates that the well protected state of the worlds even from the deluging waters of dissolution

வல்வயிற்றான் - indicates the strength and spaciousness of the stomach which could protect every thing and every one with no exception including Lord Siva - like in நளிர் மதிச்சடையனும் (Thiruvāsirium 7).

பாம்பணையான் - One who reclines on the serpent, *Sri Ananthāzhwān*,

சீர்கலந்த சொல் - indicates *Bhagavat Vishayam* (the *Itihāsās*, the *Purānās* and the *Āzhwārs'* *divya pāsuras*)

சீர்கலந்த - Well made (and strung like a garland of a variety of flowers with different colors and nice fragrances), by the various auspicious *gunās* of the Lord themselves

சொல் - works containing *Bhagavat Vishayam* (matters of the Lord), like the *Itihāsās*, the *Purānās* and the divine *pāsuras* of the *Āzhwārs*.

கார்கலந்த மேனியான் சொல் - *Srimad Rāmāyanam* which talks about Sri Rāma, as மேக<sup>4</sup> ஸ்யாமம் மஹாபா<sup>3</sup>ஹும் (dark like the rain clouds with long arms)

கைகலந்த ஆழியான் சொல் - *Sri MahāBhāratham*, *Sri Vishnu Purānam* and *Srimad Bhāgavatham* which describe the glories of Lord Krishna, who was born holding the discus and the conch in His arms.

பார்கலந்த வல்வயிற்றான் சீர்கலந்த சொல் - the *Purānās* that describe the glories of the Lord who protects the worlds in his stomach during dissolution or *pralaya*.

பாம்பணையான் சீர்கலந்த சொல் - *Āzhwārs'* *aruliccheyal* *pāsuras* which describe the limitless glories of "*Periya Perumāḷ*" (the Lord of Srirangam who is of the hue of the dark clouds - முகில்வண்ணன் - reclining on the serpent bed of *Sri Ananthāzhwān*)

சொல் - also refers to the glorious names of the Lord (திருநாமங்கள்)

சொல் நினைந்து துழ்வினையின் ஆழ்துயரை போக்காரேல் - it is reasonable if one wants to get rid of one's distress arising from the effects of all unrighteous *karmās* by

remembering the glorious names describing the *kalyāna gunās* of the Lord. Even if one does not do that, let it be.

என்றினைந்து போக்குவர் இப்போது - Even if one does not have the interest in getting rid of one's sins, thinking of the afore-mentioned "சொல்", how will they even pass the time (in this world) thinking of what. Āzhwār describes in this way since he considers the people of the world to be like him.

இப்போதும் இன்னும் இனிச்சிறிது நின்றாலும்  
எப்போதும் ஈதேசொல் என்னெஞ்சே - எப்போதும்  
கைகழலா நேமியான் நம்மேல் வினைகடிவான்  
மொய்கழலே ஏத்த முயல்

87

O' my good mind! Always try to sing the glories of the beautiful lotus feet of the Lord whose divine arms never ever remain bare of the divine discus, in order to get rid of the effects of all our unrighteous actions. Sing the glories of the auspicious names of the Lord, at the present time as well as in the future and also all times to come.

Recalling what Āzhwār says in the previous verse, wondering how the people of the world will pass even the time, (என்றினைந்து போக்குவர் இப்போது), Āzhwār's mind points out to him that the people of the world, pass their times in various ways after all. To this Āzhwār advises his mind to dwell always and all the time in the names of the Lord describing His limitless auspicious *gunās*, and be unmindful of others.

இப்போதும் இன்னும் இனிச்சிறிது நின்றாலும் எப்போதும் -  
at present time, in future as well as all times to come and always

ஈதே சொல் - spend time singing the glories of the auspicious names of the Lord.

என் நெஞ்சே - O' my good mind! (implying here that the mind which has failed to obey his wishes in the old days not taking part in singing the names of the Lord or paying salutations to Him, now has become more obedient and favorable following his wishes completely).

எப்போதும் கைகழலா நேமியான் - The Lord with the divine arms never ever bare of the divine discus (The Lord's divine arms always carry the divine discus)

நம்மேல் வினைகடிவான் - The Lord carries the divine discus in His arms always mainly to rid us of all the obstacles as well as the effects of all our unrighteous past actions.

மொய்கழலே ஏத்த முயல் - try and sing the glories of the beautiful divine feet of the Lord.

மொய் - also indicates the divine feet that are strong and will not let go those who surrender to them.

## ஸ்ரீ நம்மாழ்வாரின் வாழி திருநாமங்கள்:

திருக்குருகைப் பெருமாள் தன் திருத்தாள்கள் வாழியே  
திருவான திருமுகத்துச் செவ்வியென்றும் வாழியே  
இருக்கு மொழி யென்னெஞ்சில் தேக்கினான் வாழியே  
எந்தையெதி ராசர்க் கிறைவனார் வாழியே  
கருக்குழியில் புகாவண்ணம் காத்தருள்வோன் வாழியே  
காசினியில் ஆரியனாய்க் காட்டினான் வாழியே  
வருத்தமற வந்தென்னை வாழ்வித்தான் வாழியே  
மதுரகவி நம்பிரான் வாழி வாழி வாழியே.

1

ஆன திருவிருத்தம் நூறுமருளினான் வாழியே  
ஆசிரிய மேழுபாட்டளித்த பிரான் வாழியே  
ஈனமற அந்தாதி எண்பத்தே ழீந்தான் வாழியே  
இலங்குதிரு வாய்மொழி ஆயிரத்தொருநூற்றிரண்டுரைத்தான்  
வாழியே

வானணியும் மாமாடக் குருகைமன்னன் வாழியே  
வைகாசி விசாகத்தில் வந்துதித்தான் வாழியே  
சேனையர்கோன் அவதாரஞ் செய்தவள்ளல் வாழியே  
திருக்குருகை சடகோபன் திருவடிகள் வாழியே.

2

மேதினியில் வைகாசி விசாகத்தோன் வாழியே  
வேதத்தைச் செந்தமிழால் விரித்துரைத்தான் வாழியே  
ஆதிருவாய்ப் புவனியில் அவதரித்தான் வாழியே  
அனவரதம் சேனையர்கோன் அடிதொழுவோன் வாழியே  
நாதனுக்கு நாலாயிரம் உரைத்த பிரான் வாழியே  
நம்மதுரகவி வணங்கும் நாவீரன் வாழியே  
மாதவன் பொற் பாதுகையாய் வளர்ந்தருள்வோன் வாழியே.  
மகிழ்மாறன் சடகோபன் வையகத்தில் வாழியே.

3

## Benedictory Verses on Sri Sri Nammāzhwār

Long live the divine feet of the Thirukkurukai Pirān  
Long live the beauty of (His) divine presence  
Long live the one who enlightened my mind about the meaning of the *Védic* hymns  
Long live the leader of our father Srī Yatirājar (Srī Rāmānuja)  
Long live the one who will protect us from falling into the darkhole of *Samsāra*  
Long live the teacher that showed (me) the way in this world  
Long live the one who came and protected me, removing (my) suffering  
Long live indeed the benefactor of our Srī Madhurakavi. 1

Long live the one who graced us with the hundred verses of *Thiruviruttham*  
Long live the benefactor who gave us the seven verses of *Thiruvāsiriyam*  
Long live the one who bestowed the eighty seven verses of *Thiruvandhādhi* to rid of (our) base nature  
Long live the one who uttered the shining *Thiruvāimozhi* of one thousand one hundred and two verses  
Long live the king of *Thirukkurukai* with tall towers reaching out to the skies  
Long live the one who appeared on *Vishākam* (star) of the *Vaikāsi* (month)  
Long live the benevolent one who took the incarnation of Srī Vishvaksénar (the commander)  
Long live the holy feet of Srī Satakōpan of *Thirukkurukai*. 2

Long live the one who was born on *Vaikāsi Vishākam* on this earth  
Long live the one who gave clear exposition of the *Védās* through *Tamizh*  
Long live the one who descended on this earth as the ancient teacher (*guru*)  
Long live the one who worships *Srī Vishvaksénar* all the time  
Long live the benefactor who bestowed the four thousand (verses of the *āzhwārs*) to Srī Nātha Muni.  
Long live the one who excels in speech and who is worshipped by our Madhurakavi  
Long live the one who as the golden sandals of *Srī Mādhava*, continues to grace (us)  
Long live Srī Satakōpan who is adorned with blossoms of *Maghizham* flowers, on this earth. 3



ஸ்ரீ திருக்குருகை பிரான் திருவடிகளே சரணம்  
ஸ்ரீ எம்பெருமானார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்  
ஸ்ரீ பெரியவாச்சான்பிள்ளை திருவடிகளே சரணம்

I surrender to the divine feet of Sri Nammāzhwār  
I surrender to the divine feet of Sri Emperumānār  
I surrender to the divine feet of Sri Periyavācchān Pillai

