

Adiyongal Thirumadal

ISSUE 7

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Welcome to the SEVENTH issue of Adiyongal Thirumadal.

Koodaraivalli (GGG) utsavam and Aandal Thirukalyanam will be celebrated at SVT on the 16th and 17th of January as both actual Koodaraivalli and Boghi falls on weekdays.

For GGG utsavam we are seeking people who wants to cook in the temple the akkara adisil. As you would all know there are many who are keen but we will try to offer to people who haven't taken part last year on first come best dressed basis



The families who volunteer to prepare akkara adisil need to do the following:

Contribute \$ 30 for provisions

Bring their own gas stove (the one used for parties costing < \$ 20)

Be there on time

The ingredients and recipe will be provided along with plenty of assistance, guidance and satsang through chanting etc. A task list will be sent out closer to the utsavams.

If you have any queries/suggestions please feel free to send an email to sydney.andal@gmail.com



Note the date in Dec:

Dec 21 – Vaikunta Ekadasi



“Or Oruvam Or Naamam Illaadhaanukku
Aiyram Thiru Naamam Paado Thellaeram Kotteno”

Rightly said there are several incarnations of Sri Maha Vishnu and is known by thousands of names. Srimad Bhagavatham talks about 24 incarnations of Sri Vishnu and out of these Mohini avatar is the only female avatar of Sri Maha Vishnu. His incarnations are classified as “Saakshaaty” (direct) and “Avesa” (indirect). Saakshaaty further classified into Purna Avatar such as Lord Rama and Lord Krishna and Amsa roopa avatar such as Matsya, Kurma etc.

Many of us are aware that Sri Maha Vishnu took Mohini avatar when Devas and Asuras fought for the Amrith that came out of churning of the Milky Ocean (Samudra Manthan). But some of us wouldn't be aware of the reason behind the ocean churning event.

One day, Sage Durvaasa, the well-known short tempered muni while wandering the earth came across a divine beauty wearing a very beautiful garland. Convincing her to part with the beautiful garland, he wore it on his head and continued to wander; soon it was gifted to Indra who in turn put it on Airaavat's head. However, Airaavat wanted to get rid of that garland, so it pulled it with its trunk and smashed the garland on the ground. Seeing this, the short tempered muni cursed Indra to lose all his wealth for insulting muni's humble gift. Though Indra begged the muni for forgiveness, the muni did not heed to Indra's request. Eventually Indra due to his curse lost all his wealth and all the verdancy on earth began to wane. People gave up pious virtues and Lakshmi moved to the depth of the sea. Indra along with other gods sought Lord Vishnu's intervention to recover the situation. Bhagavan Vishnu decided to help them regain splendour.

He ordered devas to reconcile with the demons to carry out the churning of the sea to retrieve the wealth back to earth. So Devas along with Asuras used Vasuki as the rope and Mandaraachal as the churner to churn the milky ocean. Bhagavan incarnated as Kurma bore Mandaraachal on his back to prevent it from sinking. Eventually out of the churning emerged 14 ratnas, including Kamadhenu, MahaLakshmi, Kalpavruksh, Moon as well as Dhanvantri with the precious pot of Amrit. As we all know, Devas and Asuras fought for the Elixir (Amrit) which would give them immortality. Bhagavan worried about the prospect of Asuras becoming immortal, took the form of an enchanting woman “Mohini” whose beauty perplexed one and all and “SHE” calmed the rivals and volunteered to distribute the Elixir equally to all of the Devas and the Asuras. Using Her charm, she tricked the demons and distributed the Amrit to devas. As promised by Sri Krishna, whenever the Adharma overpowers Dharma, Bhagavan comes to the rescue.

Naachiaar Thirukolam of Namperumal is a widely talked about event. Usually on the 10th day of Pagal Pathu Utsavam, Namperumal gives darshan in the form of Naachiaar, adorning Thaayar's alankaram, dressed in White silk saree with Blue zari, golden anklets adding beauty to the exposed feet of Naachiyar, coral and emerald and diamond ornaments dangling from His neck, Raakudi, vangli to name a few of and the gem studded parrot on his right hand which is believed to be an antharanga messenger of Perumal informing him of his visitors. *Beauty of Sri Rangan's Naachiyar kolam cannot be expressed by words.*

Naachiaar Thirukkolam (contd)

Parasara Bhattar who was brought up Divya dampathis was asked by Namperumal on one such Naachiyar thirukolam event whether HE looked like SriRanga Naachiyar and Bhattar replied that Swami looked like a beautiful young lady and his dressings would put any lady to shame,,, however, his eyes could not match the Karunai seen in the eyes of Sri Ranga Naachiyaar.

In Thirumala on the 5th day of Bramhotsavam, Perumal gives darshan in Naachiyaar Thirukolam. HE being the richest perumal, is adorned with emeralds and diamonds. Interesting fact on Thiruveedi purappadu on this day is, HE is accompanied by Narthana Navaneetha Krishnan. There is an interesting story behind this ritual. Bhashyakarar established the rituals in Thirumala based on Vaikanasa Agama.



Mohini Avatharam along with Sri Navaneetha Krishnan at Helensburgh Brahmotsavam

He introduced Mohini Avatara thirukolam on one of the days of Brahmotsavam. When the Vedacharya did the alankaram for perumal, Raamanuja fell in love with the beauty of perumal and ordered a special kaapu and pallakku for HER. He also asked one of the parichaaraka to decorate the Navaneetha Krishnan in a separate chaparam, When Raamanuja was questioned about it, he said , "how can such a beautiful woman with the costliest ornaments go alone on the streets? Also, SHE would feel embarrassed in the presence of men and hence if she has a kid to talk to SHE would feel comfortable". Such was the love for Mohini Avatara of Malaiappan!

Azhwar Emperumaanaar thiruvadigale charanam.

Heartwarming Vignettes – Thirumalai Nambigal

The service that Sri Thirumalai nambi has performed to our sampradayam is immeasurable. Most notably, at the behest of his AchArya, he performed thIrtha kAinkaryam and pushpa kAinkaryam for ThiruvenkatamudaiyAn. Both Bhagavad Ramanuja and his cousin (mother's sister's son) in his pUrvAshrama relationship, Govinda Bhattar (later known as EmbAr), studied under Thirumalai nambi. Ramanuja studied the 24,000 slokas of VAlmiki's Ramayana under his tutelage. Thirumalai nambi was one of the five AchAryas of Bhagavad Ramanuja.

Thirumalai nambi was a role model for AchAryas everywhere. Upanishad says, "pAnDityam nirvidya bAllyena tishTAsEt" ("even if someone is a learned pandit, he has to behave like a child who does not know anything"). Thirumalai nambi was a shining illustration of this maxim. When Bhagavad Ramanuja visited Tirumala for the first time after he donned the saffron robes, Thirumalai nambi was over 80 years old. Regardless, he himself came to the foothills of Tirumala with his frail frame, carrying the pUrna kumbham, ready to welcome Bhagavad Ramanuja. Bhagavad Ramanuja, shocked to see him, exclaimed, "SwAmy! Why should devareer wait to welcome adiyen at your advanced age? Could you not have sent someone junior?" And Thirumalai nambi replied : "adiyen searched high and low in all of Tirupati, but could not find anyone more junior!" What deep humility do these words convey! Thirumalai nambi showed how an AchArya or a BhAgavata should conduct himself.

Thirumalai nambi was always accompanied by Ramanuja or Govinda Bhattar as he carried the water for BhagavAn. Once Govinda Bhattar was accompanying Thirumalai Nambi, who was imparting words of wisdom. Govinda Bhattar would periodically say 'um' to acknowledge that he heard and assimilated Thirumalai Nambi's words. But suddenly the 'um' stopped. When Nambi looked back, Govinda Bhattar was sitting down in one spot. When Nambi went closer, he noticed that Bhattar had his hand inside the throat of a king cobra. When Nambi questioned Bhattar, the latter replied, 'This cobra is in pain because of a thorn that has gotten lodged in its throat. So I am taking it out'. Nambi, thrilled at this action, praised him thus, 'It is now that you are a complete Srivaishnava'. Thus, Thirumalai Nambi was a shining example of how a Srivaishnava should conduct himself. Once when Thirumalai Nambi was bringing water, a hunter's child followed him and said, 'Grandpa! (THAttha) I am thirsty. I need water! Nambi told the child 'My child! I am taking this water for PerumAL; I cannot give it to you! But the boy, not giving up, kept following him and repeating his requests for water, not heeding Nambi's 'No' replies. Then the boy threw a stone on the pot; which began leaking the water. Stealthily, he drank the water that began leaking. Nambi, suddenly realizing that the pot was now empty, looked back at the boy; Nambi, who never got angry, was angry indeed. Then the boy gave him a vision with conch, disc, mace and weapons. 'Grandpa! It was me who was the perpetrator!' said BhagavAn. From that day on, those who came in the lineage of Nambi's ShatamarshaNa gotra were given the honorific title of 'TAtAchArya'.

(Source: Sri Thooppulmaal Sathsampradaya Sabha. <http://www.vdssabha.org/>)

Swami Manavala Mamunigal - Significance of His Life and Contributions –

Smt Padma Rajagopal

Swami Ramanujar established Sri Sampradhayam, at Sri Rangam, on the planks of Vishistadvaitam, Saranagathi, Ubaya Vedantam and Azhwar Pasurams including the Thiruvoimozhi [Sama Veda essence in Tamil] after effectively demolishing the opponent philosophies and religious forces. There were three key elements to it a) Visionary Leadership of Emperumanar, b) Bedrock of Philosophies and Scriptures, c) Magnificent Sri Ranganayaki thayar and Sri Ranganathar and the temple with its seven prakara infrastructure.

Two centuries later the nascent Sampradhayam faced a near extinction due a series of attack by Muslim rulers of Delhi. The last one was particularly cataclysmic leading to the total annihilation of all the priests, learned scholars and senior temple administrators at Sri Rangam, wipe out of 12000 Sri Vaishnavas and Namperumal himself on an exile at various places like Yanai Malai, Kerala and Tirupathi after fifty years or two generations.

The external facade of the sampradhayam such as temples, idols, rituals fell into ruins in headquarters of Sri Rangam. More important than those outward facades, the underlying philosophical literature, Azhwar Pasurams, suktis and commentaries that powered Sri Vaishnavam suffered serious blow with the annihilation of thousands of Sri Vaishnavas. In the absence of modern documentation tools such as books, audio mp3s, videos and internet, transmission of Knowledge was time consuming through intensive methods of palm leaf manuscripts, oral traditions and Guru Shishya traditions of one to one or few learning. In the year 1371 after five decades of occupation Sri Rangam was recovered from Islamic hold. The temple and utsavams were slowly being revived. The damage done to knowledge corpus was devastating. Two to three generations had passed without a formal learning propagation. The scriptures, commentaries and traditions survived in isolated pockets of Melkote, Kanchi, Thiruvananthapuram, Thiruvahindrapuram, ThiruKannangudi, Thiruputkuzhi and Azhwar Thirunagari. Without serious intervention they would have also slowly been extinguished.



When Swami Ramanujar was living in Melkote due to Chola persecution his daily prayer used to include "Sriman Sri Rangasriyam Anupadravam Anu Dhinam

Samvardhaya" (Sriman Let Sri Ranga Sriyam flourish without any obstacle and grow every day). So when the sampradhayam was teetering on the edge of survival Adishesan had a rebirth or Punar avatharam as Sri Manavala Mamunigal.

In year 1370 Sri Manavala Mamunigal was born in Azhwar Thirunagari as Azhagiya Manavala Perumal Nayanar to parents Thigazha Kidanthan Thiru Naveerudaya Piran and Sri Ranga Nachiar. He grew up in his maternal hometown of Sikkil Kidaram learning Samaanya Sastram and Veda Adhyayanam from his maternal Grandfather Kollikavala Dasar (Pillai Logachariar's junior shisyar) as well as his own father.

Swami Manavala Mamunigal - Significance of His Life and Contributions –

(contd)

At the age of sixteen he got married and moved to Azhwar Thirunagari and became a shishya of Thiruvaimozhi Pillai and learned Divya Prabhandam, Thiruvaimozhi with vyakhyanam of different commentators. There was a very strong Guru Shishya bonding between them - with young Azhagiya Manavala Nayanar (in his late teens) holding Thiruvaimozhi Pillai (aged in 70s by then) in high esteem as Enthai (my spiritual father) and the Guru (Pillai) identifying his student (Nayanar) as the most promising one capable of carrying forward the Sampradhayic torch. Under Thiruvaimozhi Pillai's guidance Sri Azhagiya Manavala Nayanar did aradhanam at the Bhavishyad Acharyan sannidhi at Alwar Thirunagari, composed Yatiraja Vimasati - from the essence of Ramanuja Nootrandhadhi and obtained Emperumanaar's Anugraham. As Thiruvaimozhi Pillai end was approaching fast he instructs Nayanar to learn Sri Bhashyam, ensure the propagation of Thiruvaimozhi and full commentary as well as do Kainkaryam for Periya Perumal at Sri Rangam.

Thiruvaimozhi Pillai's untiring efforts in recovering the various commentaries from various locations deeply inspired and influenced Sri Manavala Mamunigal duly recorded in 12 Upadesa Ratna Malai pasurams 39 to 49. The same methodology became a guiding template in efforts of Mamunigal in reestablishing the sampradhayam throughout Tamil Nadu so it is worthwhile having a quick look at it.

Thiruvaimozhi Pillai was known as Thirumalai Azhwar and minister of Madurai King during the fall of Sri Rangam and Pillai Logachariar's journey with NamPerumal to Yanai Malai near Madurai / Thirukoshtiyur. The shock of rout at Sri Rangam took its toll on Logachariar and on his deathbed he nominates Thirumalai Azhwar who had taken initiation under him as a youngster as the successor - Thirumalai Azhwar not even present at that time. Thirumalai Azhwar eventually is drawn back to Sampradhayam from his royal duties and learns Thiruvaimozhi from Kura Kulothunga Dasar. Goes to Thirukkannangudi Pillai to learn in detail. After this proceeds to Thiruputkuzhi to learn word by word meaning but finds out that the Jeeyar whom he was hoping from had died.

With Devaperumal's blessings Nalur Pillai who had learned Eedu or 36000 padi commentary from Nampillai instructs his son to teach - Thiru Narayanapurathu Ayi, Thiru Narayanapuraththu pillai and Thirumalai Azhwar. Thus Thiruvaimozhi and its commentaries survive by a single thread with three knowledge torch bearers. Thiruvaimozhi Pillai also goes to Thiruvananthapuram to learn from Vilancholai Pillai about Eedu, Thiruvaimozhi, Sri Bhasyam, Vacana Bhushanam and Tatva Trayam - since Vilancholai Pillai had directly learnt from Pillai Logachariar and his brother. The point to note here is there are no courses online or direct universities to enrol, these acharyas had to locate surviving shishyas and learn it before the knowledge disappears.

Thiruvaimozhipillai also locates and cleans Azhwar's Kurugapuri forests (Thol Kurugapuri athanai thulakkinaan vaazhiye), locates and reinstalls Bhavishyad Acharyan and Nammazhwar vigrahams in Azhwar Thirunagari. Changes his name to Thiruvaimozhi Pillai in deference to Nammazhwar and his works. In the next part we shall continue with Mamunigal's efforts in propagating Thiruvaimozhi and Eedu.

(Picture source: www.antaryami.net)