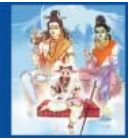




ॐ नमः शिवाय
Om Namah Shivaya



प्रदोषम
Pradosham



Next Pradosham on : 12-9-2008

[Home](#) [Pooja](#) [About Pradosham](#) [Scripts](#) [Saints](#) [What's New](#) [Why we Celebrate](#) [Temples](#) [Photo Gallery](#) [Downloads](#) [About us](#)



LIFE SKETCH OF SHRI SUNDARA MURTHI NAYANAR - ONE AMONG THE FAMOUS FOUR SERVITORS OF LORD SHIVA

First decad of Sundarar : "PITHAPIRAI SOODIPERU MAANE ARULALA
ETHTHAANMARA VAATHEENINAIK KINRENMANATH THUNNAI
VAITHAAYPENNAITH THENPAALVENNAY NALLOORUTTURAIYUL
ATHTHAA UNAK KAALAAYINI ALLENENA LAAME."

Meaning of this decad : "O Crazy one! O crescent moon-adorned One!
O Great Lord! O Dispenser of Grace!
You have installed Yourself in the mind of me
who contemplate You
without forgetting You, in any circumstances whatever;
O Father Who abide in Arulthurai of Vennainalloor
on the southern bank of the River Pennai,
having become Your slave, can I hereafter ever deny it? (7th Thirumurai)". *Sundarar*

SUNDARAR'S INTRODUCTION

Sundaramurthi Nayanar - fondly called as Sundarar flourished in the 8th century. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva absorbed. He is one of the Tamil Samaya Acharyas (four Tamil religious Teachers) and considered very high equivalent to the Top four (Sundarar, Appar(Thirunavukkarasar), ThiruGyAnasampandhar, Manickavachagar).

Sundaramurthi Nayanar sang the glories of Lord Shiva at all the sacred places that he visited. These hymns are called Thevaram. They have been collected into a book-form. All devotees sing the Thevaram even today. The hymns sung by Sundarar, Appar or Tirunavakkarasu, and ThiruGyAnana Sampandar are called Thevaram. The hymns of Manickavachagar are called Thiruvachagam.

Sundarar had the Sakhya Bhava or the attitude of a friend towards the Lord. He was called "Thambiran Thozhan" meaning a close friend of God. He freely demanded of the Lord whatever he wanted. He did not do so with selfish desires, however. whatever he asked for was for the sake of those who were dependent on him. He lived only eighteen years.

Sundaramurthi Nayanar was born in Thiru Navalur where the entire atmosphere was full of spiritual vibrations and Shaivism was well established. In this place, there lived a pious, devout and respected Brahmin by name Sadaiyanar whose ancestors were all ardent devotees of Lord Shiva. Isaiganianar was his dutiful wife. She gave birth to a divine child whom the parents named 'Nambi Aarurar' after his grandfather.

In his previous incarnation Aarurar was (Halahala) Alala Sundarar, who was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva. When the Milky Ocean was being churned by Devas and Asuras, a deadly poison began to spread on the surface of the ocean threatening the existence of all beings. Then Alala Sundarar, under instructions from Lord Shiva, collected that poison in his hand and gave it to Lord Shiva Who drank it for the protection of the world. Hence, Sundarar got the word Alala (for Halahala, the poison) prefixed to his name.

Once when Halahala Sundarar was living by the side of Lord Shiva in the Mount Kailash, serving the Lord and bringing flowers from the garden for His worship, he cast a lustful look at Aninditi and Kamalini, the attendants of Goddess Parvathi who had also gone to the garden to collect flowers for the divine Mother's worship. They, too, fell in love with him. Lord Shiva, through His divine vision, understood all that had happened in the garden. He called Halala Sundarar and said: 'Sundarar, since you fell in love with these girls, you and they, too, will go down to the earth and take a human birth. You will marry them and enjoy the pleasures of the world.' Sundarar wept bitterly, regretting his folly which had resulted in his separation from the Lord. He prayed to the Lord: 'Oh Lord! It is due to my evil thought that I have to undergo this separation from Thee. I am afraid lest I should be steeped in ignorance and forget Thee. Oh Lord of mercy! Let this not happen to me. Oh Lord of compassion! Dispel my ignorance soon and take me back to Your lotus feet.' Lord Shiva granted this wish.

There was another cause for Sundarar's human birth. To an ordinary man it may appear that Sundarar was a victim to lust, even in the divine realm of Kailasa. It was not so. Sundarar was only an instrument in the hands of God. It was Lord Shiva's wish that Sundarar should sing Thiru Thonda Thogai (Garland of hymns on God) for the benefit of mankind. So, Lord Shiva entered his mind and created a desire for these two girls. Also, the Lord wanted to teach mankind a great lesson. Lust is extremely powerful. It can delude even a great devotee of the Lord like Sundarar, if he is not vigilant. Maya's charms are powerful. Unless this evil quality is burnt, the Jiva cannot reach Shiva. Yet another lesson. The lustful eye was the cause of Sundarar's downfall. But, when it is used in the service of the Lord (for looking at the holy shrines, holy images of God, saints, and study of scriptures) the very same organ will help towards our emancipation.

Sundarar was, therefore, born as Aarurar. The king of that place, Narasinga Munaiyar, happened to see the beautiful child. He liked him. He wanted to bring him up himself and asked for the parents' permission, Sadaiyanar, whose mind was full of dispassion and who was not attached to anything in this world, immediately complied with the king's wish. As we shall see later, he and his devout wife are also regarded as Nayanars.

The boy grew up under royal care. At the proper age, the parents wanted to get their son married. Sadaiyanar sought Sandakavi Shivachariar's consent to obtain his daughter's hand for his son, Aarurar. Shivachariar gladly agreed. But, the wedding was not to take place.

Just when the ceremony was to begin, an old Brahmin, with sacred ashes on his body, Rudraksha around his neck and matted locks on his head appeared and said: 'This man, Arurar, is my bond-slave. I have a document to that effect executed by his grandfather. He cannot marry.' This put an end to the ceremony.

Sundarar and the Brahmin left the place. The young bride fixed her mind on the holy feet of Sundarar, shed her mortal coil and attained the immortal abode of Lord Shiva.

Sundarar and the old man had a heated argument. Sundarar asked him: 'Who are you and from where have you come?' To which the Brahmin replied: 'I belong to Tiruvennai Nellur.' Sundarar called him a liar and said: 'Come, let us go to Tiruvennai Nellur and get this dispute settled by the wise men there.'

At Tiruvennai Nellur, before an assembly of wise men the old Brahmin produced the document which read as follows:

I, Aruran, the Adi Saivite of Tirunavalur, execute this bond of slavery with heart and soul. I and my progeny for all time to come are bond-slaves to Pithan (*the Crazy one*) of Tiruvennai Nallur (a village), and we are bound to serve Him by all means.

Pithan means Lord Shiva who delights to be called a 'Crazy one', to exemplify the state of the highest Yogi whose behaviour resembles that of a mad man but who teaches us that there is nothing in this world worth taking any notice of and the worldly 'wise men' are all mad people in truth.

After examining the witnesses cited in the document and verifying the grandfather's signature, the assembly confirmed the old man's claim. Sundarar had to accept it as God's will. Followed by all of them the Brahmin entered the temple of Tiru Arul Turai on the pretext of showing them his house, and promptly vanished. Aruran understood that it was the Lord Himself who had appeared as the old man to save him from the shackles of Samsara. He was afflicted very much at heart that he had not recognised Him earlier. He cried aloud. The Lord appeared before him and blessed him: 'Oh noble soul. You are already My Bhakta. You were in My Abode in Kailasa before this birth as a man. A wrong thought made you take this birth. Now I have Myself come to save you.'

Because Sundarar had quarrelled with Him, the Lord Himself called him Vanthondan (the devotee who used harsh words) and asked him to sing His glories. 'My clear child, you called Me Pithan (madman) during your quarrel. So, begin with this word and compose a poem.' Sundarar did so: the result was that inspiring poem Pitha Pirai Soodi. The Lord Himself came to be known as Taduthatkonda Ishwarar (the Lord who prevented and saved him from Samsara).

Sundarar later visited a number of holy places and sang the praise of the Lord in all of them. He came to Adigai Virattanam, the sacred place where Appar served the Lord Viratteswarar and was blessed. Sundarar did not like to place his foot on the sacred ground and so stayed on the outskirts of the village.

BLESSINGS BY LORD'S FEET

That night when Sundarar was asleep, the Lord in the guise of an old man entered the Mutt. He lay down close to where Sundarar was sleeping and pretended to sleep. He then placed His feet on the head of Sundarar. When Sundarar objected to this, the old man apologised. Sundarar went over to another corner of the room. There, too, the old man repeated the same action. Sundarar did not lose his temper. He calmly asked him for his identity and explanation for the abnormal behaviour. 'Oh friend, don't you know me?' asked the Lord and disappeared. Sundarar realised that it was again the Lord Himself. Since he had not gone into the place for His Darshan, the Lord Himself had come out to where the devotee was! Sundarar prayed: 'Oh Lord! How kind and merciful You are! Even devotees who are well versed in Vedas and Agamas cannot touch Your feet. Out of love towards this poor creature, You left Your abode and came here to bless me with 'Your Holy Feet.'

Sundarar again continued his pilgrimage. At Tillai (Chidambaram), he went into a trance even as he saw the temple tower. In his ecstasy he rolled on the ground and shed profuse tears of love. He had the Darshan of Lord Nataraja. A heavenly voice commanded him to go to Thiruvarur.

He then visited many other shrines and came to Thiruvarur. The Lord appeared to the Brahmins of Thiruvarur and asked them to receive Sundarar with due honours. They did so. As Sundarar was worshipping the Lord in the temple, he heard a heavenly voice: 'Sundara! I have made you My friend. I prevented you from getting married. Hereafter you will appear for ever as a bridegroom and sport on earth.' Immediately, Sundarar became a handsome bridegroom. People called him Tambiran Thozhar (friend of God).

MARRIAGE OF SUNDARAR

In Thiruvarur, there was a chaste woman by name Paravayar who was none other than Kamalini, the attendant of Parvathi in Kailasa. Daily she would go to the temple and worship the Lord with faith and devotion and sing His glories. One day, she came to the temple, as usual, with her friends, to worship the Lord. At the same time, Sundarar, with his devotees entered the temple. Prompted by past Karma, Sundarar was attracted by Paravayar's beauty. He wanted to marry her, and entered the shrine of the Lord with this thought. The Lord was his friend, and so, he expressed his desire to Him!

Paravayar who had seen Sundarar in the temple also fell in love with him and wanted to marry him.

The marriage was pre-ordained by Lord Shiva Himself and it was now His duty to bring it about. He appeared to both of them in their dreams and told them that they would get married. He also commanded His devotees in dream to arrange for the wedding of Paravayar and Sundarar the very next day. This was done accordingly, to the joy of both Paravayar and Sundarar.

One day, Aaruran went into the temple and found a number of devotees of the Lord there. He wanted to sing their glories. The Lord Himself sang the first line of the famous poem Tiruthonda Thogai and by His grace, Sundarar completed it.

During his stay at Thiruvarur, a Vellala by name Kundaiyur Kizhar who was very highly devoted to him, was regularly supplying Paravayar with enough grains and groceries for the maintenance of Sundarar and the devotees. Suddenly there was famine in the district and people suffered for want of food. Kundaiyur Kizhar was also affected. He was afflicted at heart because he could not supply the needs of Sundarar. Lord Shiva appeared in his dream and promised enough grain! Kubera, the God of wealth, did the needful, as commanded by the Lord. The next morning, Kundaiyur Kizhar found huge heaps of grain. At the same time the Lord appeared before Sundarar and informed him of the incident. At once Sundarar left for Kundaiyur to meet Kizhar. They met half-way. Sundarar saw the heaps of grain at Kundaiyur and knew that it was His Lila. He went to a nearby Koili and sang the praise of the Lord, and entreated Him to have the grain removed to Thiruvarur. A celestial voice immediately assured him of this. Sundarar returned to Thiruvarur and informed Paravayar of all that happened. That night the Bhuta Ganas, the servants of Lord Shiva, removed the heaps of grain and filled the entire town of Thiruvarur with it! Paravayar offered repeated prostrations to the Lord and sang His glory. She asked the people to take the grain to appease their hunger. Thus the famine came to an end. All the people glorified the Lord and Paravayar.

Kotpuli Nayanar of Tirunattiyattankudi, the Commander-in-chief of a Chola King, and an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva came to Sundarar and entreated him to grace his house with his presence. Sundarar agreed to this and went. After worshipping Sundarar, Kotpuli Nayanar prostrated himself at Sundarar's feet along with his two daughters, Singadiyar and Vanappahaiyar, and pleaded that Sundarar should marry the two daughters. Sundarar, however, placed them on his lap and fondled them, treating them as his own daughters. Then Sundarar went to the temple and sang in praise of the Lord, a song in which he called himself Singadiyappan, since he took Singadiyar as his daughter.

SUNDARAR'S MISSION CONTINUES....

Sundarar then returned to Thiruvarur. It was Paravayar's custom to distribute plenty of money and other articles in charity on Panguni Uttaram, a festival day. Sundarar went to Tirupugalur and prayed to the Lord to give him gold for the sake of Paravayar. That night he slept there with a few bricks as his pillow. The next morning, he woke up to find that all the bricks had been converted into gold. Sundarar was surprised at this miracle of Lord Shiva and sang His glory and returned to Thiruvarur. On the way he had a vision of the Lord at Thiru Panaiyur.

After visiting many holy places again and singing hymns in praise of the Lord, Sundarar came to Tiru Pachilasramam. There he worshipped the Lord and asked for a gold coin. He did not get it immediately. He sang a Padigam (song) and the Lord at once gave him a heap of gold. The Lord was so fond of hearing Sundarar sing.

Then, Sundarar left for Vridhachalam, visiting a number of holy places on the way. He had omitted Tiru Koodalaiyarrur. So, the Lord came to him as a Brahmin of whom Sundarar enquired the way to Vridhachalam. The Brahmin led the way up to a certain distance, and then suddenly disappeared. It was close to Tiru

Koodalaiyarrur which Sundarar now visited and sang a song in praise of the Lord there.

DEPOSITS OF GOLD

Then Sundarar came to Vridhachalam. He worshipped the Lord, and sang a Padigam expressing his desire for gold coins. The Lord gave him 12,000 pieces of gold. Sundarar prayed to the Lord to remove these gold pieces to Thiruvurur. The Lord asked him to throw them into the river Manimukta and to receive them back at Thiruvurur. Sundarar did so, keeping a piece for identification. On return to Thiruvurur, Sundarar and Paravayar went to the tank to get back the gold pieces. Sundarar dived into the eastern side of the tank and searched for the gold, as though he had put them there. He could not find them. Sorely afflicted at heart, he sang a song. That was what the Lord wanted. Sundarar got the gold. All were amazed. But, on identification, it was found that the gold was inferior in value to the piece that Sundarar had kept back with him. He sang a song: and the Lord restored to them their original value. So fond was He of hearing Sundarar sing a song.

Sundarar went out on another pilgrimage again. On the way, he was afflicted with hunger and thirst. The Lord Who is the Indweller of our hearts, erected a water-shed and was waiting for Sundarar there in the guise of a Brahmin. Sundarar and the devotees entered the shed, singing the Panchakshara. The Brahmin offered him food and water and asked him to rest awhile. All of them appeased their hunger, but the quantity of the food remained the same. When they were resting, after food, the Lord disappeared. They knew that it was none other than the Lord Himself. Sundarar sang a song alluding to this incident.

On another occasion, soon after this, while on a visit to Tirukachur, Sundarar went to the temple, worshipped the Lord and was resting outside the temple, feeling hungry. The Lord understood it: and so, in the guise of a Brahmin came to Sundarar and said: 'It appears that you are hungry. Please wait here. I will give you food.' The Lord at once went out in the scorching sun, begged from each and every house, and offered the food so obtained, to Sundarar. As Sundarar and the devotees were eating, the Brahmin disappeared: and they understood that it was the Lord Himself. Sundarar sang a song alluding to this incident, revealing the Lord's supreme mercy.

SANGILIYAR

Later on, he went to Thiruvotriyur and stayed there for some time, worshipping the Lord there. Aninditayar, the other maid-servant of Parvathi in Kailasa, who had also taken a human birth, was now Sangiliyar in Jnairu in Thondai Nadu. Her father was Jnairu Kizhar, a Vellala by caste. He was also a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva. Sangiliyar was devoted to Parvati from her very childhood. Once her parents mentioned that she should get married, but the very word 'marriage' made her faint. Later, a respectable Vellala wanted to marry her. He sent some people to approach the girl's father. Jnairu Kizhar did not like even to speak to his daughter about it. He sent them away with an evasive reply. Soon after, the boy who wanted to marry Sangiliyar, and the party that went to negotiate,—all of them died. When Jnairu Kizhar heard this, he understood the greatness of his daughter. He took her to Thiruvotriyur and built a small Ashram for her there.

It was part of Sangiliyar's Sadhana to make garlands for the Lord in the temple. She regularly visited the temple and worshipped the Lord. One day Sundarar and the devotees went to the temple. After the worship, they came to the place where some devotees were making garlands for the Lord. Sangiliyar was also there. Sundarar was attracted by her beauty, due to past Samskaras. He wanted to marry her, and expressed this wish to the Lord. The Lord promised to fulfill his wish.

The Lord appeared in Sangiliyar's dream and said: 'Oh noble soul, I am highly pleased with your devotion. Now I tell this for your own good. Sundarar wants to marry you. He is My friend. He asked Me to arrange the marriage. So, marry him. You will be happy.' Sangiliyar prostrated before the Lord and said: 'Oh Lord, I will obey Your command and marry him. But, he may desert me since he is already married.' The Lord asked her to get a promise from Sundarar that he would not part from her under any circumstance.

Then the Lord appeared before Sundarar and said that Sangiliyar had agreed to marry him on condition that he would not part from her. Sundarar said: 'Oh Lord, how can I agree to this condition since I am constantly moving about visiting many holy shrines? But, if You so desire, then assure me that You will withdraw Your presence from the Lingam in the temple and will take Your abode in the nearby tree, when I take the oath before Your image.' The Lord granted him this wish and disappeared.

He again appeared before Sangiliyar and said: 'Oh noble soul, Sundarar has agreed to your condition. But, ask him to make this promise, not before the Lingam in the temple, but in front of the nearby tree.

The next morning Sangiliyar came to the temple. Sundarar was waiting there for her. Sangiliyar's friends told him that she wished the promise to be given in front of the nearby tree. He was taken aback, but accepted the proposal. The promise was given. The marriage was immediately solemnised.

LAW OF THE DIVINE.....SUNDARAR LOSES HIS SIGHT

In Thiruvurur, Vasanta Utsavam was being celebrated on a grand scale. Sundarar remembered the festival and longed to go there. He also recollected that Paravayar would sing and dance there in front of the Lord. At the same time, he could not part from Sangiliyar. For a long time, he struggled between the two conflicting duties. Finally, he decided to leave.

When he crossed the border of Thiruvotriyur, he suddenly lost his eye-sight and fell down on the ground. The Lord is impartial. None can escape the operation of the Law of Divine Justice. Sundarar slowly regained his consciousness. Immediately he realised his fault and prayed to the Lord for forgiveness, asking for the grant of the eye-sight. 'Oh Lord, I take complete refuge in You. I always repeat Your Name. Even when I fell down losing my eye-sight, I remembered You only. Oh Lord of Mercy, even if I commit a crime, is it not Your duty to forgive me? Oh Lord of Compassion, save me.' In spite of the blindness, however, his thirst for the Darshan of the Lord at Thiruvurur did not abate. With the help of some people on the way he came to Thirumullaivayil. Here, again, he prayed to the Lord to give him eye-sight. At Thiruvembakkam he again prayed to the Lord in a similar strain. In the temple, he prayed and asked: 'Oh Lord Who accepted me into His fold, prostrations unto Thee. Oh Lord Who cleverly played a trick on me, are You inside the temple?' The Lord gave a stern reply: 'I am here; you can go.' and gave him a blind-man's stick. This attitude of indifference on the part of the Lord pained Sundarar and he pleaded for mercy. 'Oh Lord of Mercy, have I not taken You as my sole refuge and support? I committed a mistake thinking that You will pardon me. You are even indifferent to public criticism. Will they not accuse You for turning a deaf ear to a devotee who is sincerely weeping at Your feet, accepting his fault and craving for pardon? Oh Lord, can You not understand suffering? Like a loving child that has been separated from its mother for a long time and wants to hug her, I have come to You: but, instead, You treat me like a stranger. Oh Lord, You deceived me, who asked You to remain for a while near the tree, by cleverly informing Sangiliyar of the same and asking her to get the promise from me near the tree. Oh Lord, You gave me Sangiliyar and all the pleasures. But, now You give me the blind-man's staff and say 'You can go'. Oh Lord, am I unfit to receive Your mercy? Pardon me and relieve me of my sufferings.'

Then, completely resigning himself to God, Sundarar came to Kancheepuram, after visiting many holy places on the way. He worshipped Mother Kamakshi and expressed his sufferings to her and pleaded to her to relieve him of his sufferings. Sundarar then worshipped Lord Ekambareswarar. Mother Who is seated on His left side, had already been moved by Sundarar's prayers and wanted to shower Her grace on him. Lord Shiva understood this. He at once restored vision to Sundarar's left eye. In ecstasy he rolled on the ground, shedding profuse tears of love.

After spending some days there, singing the glories of the Lord, Sundarar proceeded to go to Thiruvurur. At Tiruvavaduthurai, he again prayed to the Lord to forgive him and restore sight to the other eye, too. Sundarar then came to Thiruthurithi. The Lord asked him to take a dip in the northern tank there. Sundarar did so, and came out of it. To the surprise of all, his body had become as bright as polished gold. People were amazed at this change. Sundarar went into the temple and prayed.

RESTORATION OF EYE SIGHT COMPLETELY.....

Sundarar reached the outskirts of Thiruvurur. He grieved that, due to his partial sight, he could not get a complete Darshan of the Lord. The very sight of the temple tower entranced him. Sundarar wanted to feast both his eyes on the beauty of the Lord and so prayed to Him to restore vision to his other eye also. Sundarar's supreme devotion and lamentation moved the Lord's heart. He at once cured the other eye also. Sundarar was extremely happy. He worshipped the Lord and remained completely absorbed in divine bliss.

In the mean time, people whom Paravayar had sent to greet Sundarar and inform him of her eagerness to meet him, found out that he had married Sangiliyar. They went back and told Paravayar about this. Paravayar was sunk in grief. She was annoyed, too. Paravayar's people refused to allow Sundarar's devotees to enter the house. When Sundarar heard of this, he was afflicted at heart. He sent some elderly devotees to Paravayar, to bring about a reunion. They failed. At midnight when all the devotees were asleep, he prayed to the Lord for His help in pacifying Paravayar. The Lord appeared before him and assured him of His help. The Lord disguised Himself as Sundarar's messenger, a Brahmin priest, and went to Paravayar's house. The Brahmin pleaded Sundarar's cause and asked her to accept him back. She refused, though she herself was grief-stricken at the separation from Sundarar. Her annoyance at his second marriage was so great! The Lord coolly returned to Sundarar, who was anxiously awaiting His return. When the Lord informed Sundarar of all that had happened, Sundarar fell down on the ground, in grief. 'If You do not help me, Oh Lord, I will give up my life.' The Lord seeing Sundarar's pitiable condition, assured him of help and again set out to go to Paravayar's house.

In the mean time, the devout Paravayar had understood that the Brahmin was no other than the Lord Himself and was suffering from terrible anguish for not recognising Him. The Lord again went to her house: and this time He appeared before her in His real form. Paravayar at once prostrated before Him. The Lord said: 'O Paravayar, I have again been sent by Sundarar to plead his case. Do not refuse this time. He is undergoing terrible agony on account of separation from you. Accept him and allow him to come to your house.' Paravayar prostrated to the Lord again, with folded palms and said: 'Oh Lord, first You came in the guise of a Brahmin but I did not recognise You. Again You have come and have shown me Your real form. Oh Lord, how kind You are! You have graced my hut and showered Your grace on me. You have taken so much trouble this midnight, for the sake of Your friend. How can I go against Your wish? I will accept and obey Your command.' The Lord was immensely pleased with her. He blessed her and returned to Sundarar. The Lord informed him that he had pacified Paravayar and that he could now return to her. He then disappeared. Sundarar was overwhelmed with joy and sang the Lord's glories.

In the mean time, Paravayar had decorated her house beautifully and was eagerly waiting for her Lord. Sundarar, with his devotees, entered the house. Paravayar fell at his feet. Thus they were re-united after a long separation.

Yet, this was not all. The news that Sundarar had sent Lord Shiva Himself as his messenger, had reached the ears of Eyarkon Kalikama Nayanar of Tiru Perumangalam in Ponnai Nadu. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. He was terribly angry with Sundarar for treating the Lord as a messenger to settle a domestic quarrel. How, in a wonderful and mysterious manner Lord Shiva brings about a reconciliation between the two Nayanars, both of them greatly devoted to Him, we shall see, when we describe the life of Kalikama Nayanar.

Equally interesting is the way in which the Lord unites in friendship Sundarar and Cheraman Perumal Nayanar, another royal devotee of the Lord. We shall describe it in detail when we come to the life of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar.

SUNDARAR'S FRIENDSHIP WITH CHERAMAN PERUMAL

When, along with Cheraman Perumal, Sundarar was proceeding to Madurai, they arrived at Tirunagaikkoronam. Here Sundarar sang a song in which he asked the Lord to give him a pearl garland, precious stones, musk, spectacles, fragrance, clothes, jewelry, one-third of the wealth of Thiruvavur, horses which ran as fast as the wind, golden flowers, palanquin, etc. How wonderful is the relation between the devotee and the Lord! Sundarar regarded God as his friend, because God Himself had wanted it to be so. He adopted towards God the Sakhya Bhava (attitude of a dear friend).

In the company of Cheraman Perumal, Sundarar went on several pilgrimages, and met many of the kings of South India. Once, when they were at Tiru Kandiyur, they saw Tiruvaiyar on the opposite bank of the river. Cheraman desired to visit that place also. The river was in flood, and it was impossible to cross it. Sundarar sincerely prayed to the Lord to help them. He sang one of his songs which easily pleased the Lord. At once the river gave way, leaving a sandy tract through which they could walk across to the other bank. As soon as they reached the other bank, the river resumed its former form. They were delighted at this miracle of the Lord. Even the five elements are ever ready to serve the devotees of the Lord, at His command.

Cheraman then took Sundarar to his own place, with great honour and pomp. Sundarar stayed with Cheraman for some time. He suddenly remembered the Lord of Thiruvavur and wanted to go there. Cheraman could not accompany him and was therefore grief-stricken. Sundarar consoled him and asked him to stay behind and rule the country wisely and justly. Cheraman prostrated himself before him and gave him rich presents. He sent his own people to carry these presents, and to accompany Sundarar. It was the Lord's wish that Sundarar should receive gifts only from Him! How could His friend receive from others? Hence, He desired to deprive Sundarar of what Cheraman had given him. When Sundarar and his retinue were passing through Tirumuruganpondi, the Lord sent His Servants to rob Sundarar of all the riches that he had received from Cheraman. The Lord's Servants disguised themselves as hunters and attacked the party that was carrying the presents. The party dropped all and fled. They went to Sundarar and reported to him what had happened. Sundarar went to the local temple and sang a Padigam. He came out of the temple and to his surprise he saw there all that they had been robbed of. Now, it was a gift from the Lord Himself, and so Sundarar, God's friend, could have it. Wonderful are the Lilas of the Lord.

After some time, Sundarar again desired to see Cheraman Perumal. On the way to Kodunkalur, he went to Thiru Pukkoliyur Avinasi. As he entered this place, he heard simultaneously auspicious as well wailing sounds emerging from different houses.

On enquiry, he learnt how two Brahmin boys of the same age, from these two houses went to tank for a bath; and how one of them was caught by a crocodile, and the other escaped, providentially. The latter was being invested with the sacred thread that day, and hence the auspicious sound from that house. The people in the deceased boy's house were bemoaning the loss of the boy, sore at the feeling that, had he been alive, he would also be celebrating the sacred thread ceremony that day. Sundarar wanted to console the bereaved family. As he stood in front of the house, the people stopped wailing and came out to receive Sundarar. They were eager for a long time to get his Darshan, and so, forgetting their sorrow, they came to welcome him. Their devotion moved Sundarar's heart. He was prompted by the Lord to bring the dead boy back to life. So, he went to the same tank and sang a song on the Lord of Avinasi to give the child back to the parents. The Creator, pleased with Sundarar, entered the stomach of the crocodile and re-constituted the body of the boy, though it had already been digested. Lord Yama, too, for his part, released from his custody, the life he had once removed and the crocodile vomited the boy! To the wonder of all, the boy was much more handsome than when he met with the accident, and he showed signs of growth, appropriate to the lapse of time. All were amazed at this miracle of Sundarar. The parents of the boy were immensely pleased and embraced Sundarar's feet. Sundarar took the boy to the temple and worshipped Lord Avinasiappar. He himself performed the sacred thread ceremony for him.

SUNDARAR'S FINAL DEPARTURE TO THE ABODE OF LORD SHIVA

At Kodunkalur, Cheraman, who had already come to know of the crocodile miracle, received Sundarar with still greater love and veneration than before. Sundarar stayed with the king for some time. One day Sundarar visited the temple alone and worshipped the Lord. The very sight of the Lord sent him into trance. He rolled on the ground shedding tears of God-love. The hairs on his body stood on end and his mind was filled with rapture. He regained consciousness after a long time. He was tired of worldly existence and so requested the Lord to take him back to Kailasa. He sang a Padigam.

The Lord, desiring to take Sundarar back to His Abode, commanded the celestials to bring him to Kailasa on a white elephant. He also informed Sundarar of this. Sundarar came out of the temple. The white elephant was waiting for him there. He mentally wished to take Cheraman Perumal also with him to Kailasa. Then he climbed the elephant and proceeded towards Kailasa.

In a Padigam he sang on this occasion, Sundarar himself reveals that this departure for Kailasa was not in his physical body, but in his spiritual body. The physical body was discarded here in this world itself, and the elements of which it was composed were returned to their sources.

Cheraman learnt by intuition of Sundarar's departure for Kailasa. At once, he mounted a horse and came to Tiru Anchaikalam. There he saw Sundarar going along the sky on the celestial elephant. At once Cheraman pronounced the Panchakshara in the ears of the horse. The horse flew up and reached Sundarar. Cheraman worshipped Sundarar there. Both of them went to Kailasa in their spiritual body.

At the Gate of Kailasa, Sundarar was allowed to enter, while Cheraman was not. Sundarar went into His presence and praised His mercy: 'Oh Ocean of Mercy, You have pardoned my sins and released me from the quagmire of Samsara. You have taken me back into Your fold, and bestowed on me the Immortal Bliss. How kind and merciful You are!' He then informed the Lord that Cheraman was outside the Gate. To please His friend, Lord Shiva sent His Mount, Nandikesvarar to bring Cheraman also in. The Lord asked Cheraman how he could come to Kailasa without His permission. Cheraman replied that when he saw Sundarar proceeding to Kailasa, he could not bear separation from him and so accompanied him. Now, by the good offices of Sundarar which earned for him the Lord's grace he had been admitted into the Lord's Abode. In these words, Cheraman expressed a very great truth: that even if the devotee is undeserving, if he is devoted to a saint (the Guru), he will also gain a place in the kingdom of God, through the intercession of the Guru.

Sundarar, as before, engaged himself in His service with all his heart and soul. Paravayar and Sangiliyar, being purged of their Karmas, also reached Kailasa. They resumed their original duty as the servants of Mother Parvathi.

Copyrights 2007 - 2020

[top](#)