

Thiru mangai azhwar



Chozha Empire, a place named as "Thiruvaali Thirunagari". Lots of lakes, small flowers surrounded parks, in that, there was a small village by named "**ThirukKuraiyaloor**" is found where all Vishnu bhaktas lived and explained the speciality of Sriman Narayanan are found. Aalinaadaar who was the senai Thalaivar (Chief of the army) for Chozha Empire and had a wife by named

"Vallitthiru". They both led their life very peacefully and had much bhakti towards Sriman Narayanan.

Due to their bhakti and the good life led by the couples, in Nala Varusham (year), Kaarthikai month, in Pournami Thursday - kaarthikai Natshatram (8th century) a child was born to them which is said to be the Hamsam of one of the panja Aayudham, the bow which is called as "The Saarangham". He was named as "Neelan".

From the childhood, Neelar was taught with proper education and some sanskrit languages too. Since, he was born in the generation of brave persons, he learnt the art of fighting learnt to use sword, bow and arrow. He also had the capability of leading the four different forces, the elephant, the horse, the chariot and the men forces. On hearing about the capability of both the intelligence in knowledge and the braveness, the chozha king, (the thirumangai Naadu) gave him the position as his head of the forces.

At that time, a great poet by the crowned name "Naarkaviperumal" lived. Since, he being a great poet defeated all the others with his poets and at that he heard about Neelan. (Thirumangai mannan). He wanted to test his intelligence, because of this, he asked Neelar to make victory over him. But at the same, Neelar was also equally qualified poet who can fight with the poet through various poems and finally the poet accepted his defeat

and from then, Neelar was crowned with the name "Naarkavipperumal" by the Chozha king.

Neelar also fought and led the forces on behalf of Chozha Empire and defeated them. For his braveness, the chozha king made him as the king of Aali Nadu, having its capital as "Thirumangai". His fighting nature made all of the enemy kings to think him as "Kaalalan" (time which takes all of our lives) and because of this, Neelar was also given the name "Parakaalan". Para kaalar means a person who cannot be reached by anyone and a person who is away from the Kaalan (the time). In spite of having the name as "Neelar", he was known to the entire chozha naadu, when he became the king of Thirumangai. As a result of this, he was popularly called with the name "Thirumangai Mannan".

In that time, in Deva lokam, a deva kanni by named "Sumangali" lived and she is the head of the deva mangais. Once, she wanted to visit the bhoolokam. So, Sumangali along with other deva kanniyars came down to the bhoolokam and first visited to Himalayan Mountain. At that time, kapila munivar was explaining about the beauty and greatness of Sriman Narayanan. Lots of Munivars and people were found around Kapila Munivar. One among the munis, is found ugly and his face and body is found to be damaged. On seeing him, along the deva kanniyars and also Sumangalai commented on him and laughed at him. On seeing the bad character of all the kanniyars and

specifically of Sumangali, Kapila munivar got angry on them and gave sumangali a sabham as to born as a normal human and to become the wife to a normal human in the earth.

On hearing this, the deva loka Kanniyar's head, sumangali was worried and realised her mistake. She asked Kapila muni to get back the sabham.

But on seeing sumangali, as she realised her mistake, Kapila muni told her an alternate way since the given sabham cannot be taken back. Kapila muni explained that the Sabham given to her was due to the fate that's written and she will be got married to a great warrior and an intelligent person, who is said to be the Hamsam of Sriman Narayanan's bow, the Saarngham and he will be king of Thirumangai which is found in Chozha Empire. He also added that his (Thirumangai mannan's) mind is concentrated fully on war and fight and it has to be turned towards her and his mind should be diverted towards the bhakti of Sriman Narayanan. It is done like that, she will be led to the Vinnulagam, finally. On hearing this, Sumangali was so happy.

After this, Sumangali along with other kanniyar went to Thirunaangoor and were attracted by a pond covered with Alli flowers. Much attracted by the beauty of the flowers, they all got down into the pond and took bath in that. After realising the time, all the other deva Kanniyars left Sumangali. After for a while, Sumangali

searched for her friends and thought the actions that are happening are happening according to her fate and finally she changed into a newborn baby and was found near the alli flowers in the pond.

In that place, an excellent doctor was found, who doesn't have a child. Accidentaly, he came along the pond and was happy to find a new born child in the pond. He thought that the God has gifted him with this child and took her to his house. His wife was also happy to see the child and named her as "Kumudha valli" and they took care of her very much.

Years past away and one fine day, his father said that Kumudhavalli has attained the age for marriage and asked her about the wish. At that time, she explained her birth secret and explained him that she will be getting married to the Thirumangai Mannan. That's her fate and he will approach her in getting married.

As the day passed, Thirumangai Mannan heard about the beauty of Kumudhavalli and thought of meeting her and getting married to her. Soon, he went along with his soldiers to Thirunaagoor on his horse, "Aadan Maa". He sent a message to the Vaithiyan (doctor), father of Kumudhavalli that Thirumangai mannan had come to meet him regarding his daughter's wedding towards him.

Kumudhavalli appeared before thirumangai mannan and both of them were attracted towards each other. Kumudhavalli put a condition that if he dedicates his life towards the

Emperumaan and he should dedicate himself for doing the service to the bhaktaas of Sri Vishnu, she can marry him. For this conditions and will act according to that. Thirumangai mannan changed himself from the king's character to an ordinary devotee of Sriman Narayanan and smeared Thiruman, Thirunaraiyoor in front of Thriu Naraiyoor Nambi and went towards the Vaithiyar's house. Kumudhavalli also added another wish (fasting) that she has and it is that she has to serve food for 100 bhagavadas (bhaktas) of Sri Vishnu and their feets should be cleaned by water. And that water has to be taken and split over her head. If he agrees for his also, she has no objection of getting married to him. For this condition also, he agreed and consulted proper prohibits and fixed a date for their marriage. At last, on a very good day, they both got married.

From then, Thirumangai Mannan as given the words that he will dedicate the food for 1008 bhaghavadas daily. As days passed, since he spent lots of money for the food, his wealth started to decrease. As a result of this, he could not pay the Kappam (money that has to be paid by the small kings to the king of the Empire).

The Chozha king got angry on him and sent some of his soldiers to ask for it. But, since Parakaalan (Thirumangai mannan) spent lots of money for the Vishnu bhaktaas, he could pay the money to the Chozha Empire. But, at last, the chozha king sent a huge troop towards

parakaalan for making a war. But, since he was a very brave man and had enough soldiers, he could not be defeated. But, the king questioned him that inspite of making lot of good thing and making him as a king, the return action performed by him seems to make his mind sorry and he don't want this to happen again. And finally, he warned parakaalan if he fails to pay it, he will be promised.

Finally, he thought that he can steal money and products from others and can spend that for satisfying the Vishnu Bhaktas. Sriman Narayanan Emperumaan was very much worried of his diversion of the mind and thought of changing it. As a result of it, Sriman Narayanan along with Nammpiratti, sri Lakshmi in wedding kolam went through the forest, where Thirumangai mannan stopped all the persons who are found wealthy and grabbed their ornaments and Money. Likewise, Sriman Vishnu and Sri Lakshmi who were in the form newly married couples were stopped by Thirumangai mannan and his soldiers. Thirumangai Mannan ordered all of them to give their ornaments and money they have with them.

Hearing this, all the persons and also the Maappillai (Sri Vishnu) and Manamagal (Sri Lakshmi) gave their ornaments. Thirumangai mannan checked whether all of theri ornaments are removed but found a Kanaiyaazhi (an ornament are that is weared on the legs) on the right hand of the Maappillai. Parakaalan asked that should be

also removed for which the Maappillai said that he could not remove that and he can try if he can do that. Neelan tried to remove that but he could not do that and finally tried to remove it through his teeth, but also he could not do that. He questioned himself that he might be also a brave and strong person like him and from then, he was named with the name "Kaliyan". Since, Kaliyan has a relationship with the thiruvadi of Sriman Narayanan, this action is performed and to explain this to the world only.

Since he could not remove the Kanaiyaazhi from his legs, he left that and ordered his main soldier "Thoalavazhakkan" to tie - up all the ornaments and money and get them up. But, he could not lift that sack full of various precious products. Then, Thirumangai mannan tried and he too failed.

He got angry of the Maapillai and said that he might have made some Mantram, so that they could not lift that. Sriman Narayanan, who has come in the Maappillai kolam asked Kaliyan to come close to him, so that he can explain the Mantram. The perumal explained the Ashtaakshara Mantram, the light words on his right eyes and thanked the perumal. From then, Thirumangai Mannan is popularly named as "Thirumangai Azhwar". He finally identified that the maappillai and the Manamagan are none other than the Emperumaan and Sri Lakshmi piratti and enjoyed the meaning of the Mantram.

His eyes were flooded in tears and his hands were raised above his head and started to praise the perumal as

"Vaadinen; vaadi varunthinen; Manathaar perunthuyar.... and ended with Naadinen; Naadi Naan Kandu konden Narayana Ennum Naamam"

and praised about Sriman Narayanan with 10 Paasurams. Finally, on hearing the paasurams, the perumal gave his seva as found along with Sri Lakshmi and on the Garudan and said him to praise about him in all the various sthalams and disappeared.

From then, he visited almost to all the **108 Divyadesams** and praised and sung various paasurams on him. He wrote 6 prabhandham named Periya Thriumozhi, Thirukkurunthandagam, Thirunedunthandagam, Thiruvezhukootirukkai, Siriya Thrumadal, Periya Thirumadal, which includes total of 1137 paasurams.

He also helped in raising the Madhil Suvar (big walls around the temple) of Sri Rangam, Sri Ranganathar temple. He brought the NammAzhwar statue (Iympon silai - Statue made up of 5 different kinds of precious ornaments like Gold, Diamonds, etc.) from Azhwar Thirunagari to SriRangam in Maargazhi Month and a 10 day festival is done and after that he is returned back to Azhwar Thirunagari.

After Thirumangai Azhwar's time the paasurams of other Azhwars is done the paarayanam (sung and explained as pagal patthu and Raa patthu utsavam.)

Like this, an ordinary person who became a king and turned finally into Azhwar is best explained through the various aspects in the life of Thirumangai Azhwar. Knowing the greatness of Thirumangai Azhwar, we can praise him and worship him.

Sri Thirumangai Azhwar was the youngest and the last of the Azhwars. He was born on Kritthikai Nakshatrammonth of Karthikai, in Thirukkurayalur in Thiruvalinad. He was considered the amsa (incarnation) of the divine bow Sarngam of the Lord. He became a chieftain of the Chola king even when he was young. He was known by a variety of names including Parakaalan, Kaliyan, Mangaiyarkone, His call to spiritual journey and superior bhakti came when he married the divine and most beautiful Kumudavalli Naachiyar . She set two conditions for him before she would marry him. One was for him to embrace Sri Vaishnavism by taking proper instruction from an acharya and the second was to serve 1008 bhagavataas (devotees) with a grand meal daily for one year. His ardent desire to keep his promise to his wife made him spend beyond his means. He had difficulties meeting the required collections of taxes for the chola king. The latter made him a captive by force. He was vexed and upset with the Lord for not showing him the way. Due to Lord's love of

the Azhwar, He revealed the location of a hidden treasure in Kanchipuram in his dreams, with which the Azhwar could compensate the King and continue feeding the bhagavataas. The Azhwar followed the lead and retrieved the treasure which made him meet his obligations for a while. Eventually however the funds ran out. He then with a few of his friends, decided to rob the rich to keep up the feeding of the bhagavataas. The Lord's direct grace came to the Azhwar during one of those occasions when he waited to waylay some rich couple travelling through the woods in the night. The Lord Himself along with Sri Maha Lakshmi came in the form of a newly wed rich couple. The Azhwar got the bridegroom to bundle up all the jewels and part with them by mere show of his sword. But the bundle was too heavy for The Azhwar to carry. The Azhwar felt that the bridegroom had put some kind of a "mantric" spell on him. He forced Him to reveal the "mantra". Following this, the Lord imparted the Ashta akshara mantra to the Azhwar. This immediately transformed the Azhwar completely. The Azhwar refers to this in the 5th verse of the first decad in epriy tiRemazi (Periya Thirumozhi) and mentions how effortlessly he obtained the grace of the Lord.

The Lord revealed Himself to the Azhwar and commanded him to visit all divya deshas. Sri Thirumangai Azhwar in fact visited many divya deshas; some, difficult to reach even

today, such as Naimisharanyam, Bhadrinath and Ahobilam. Thus the Azhwar utters his benediction on these shrines. Thus all the divya deshas sung by the various Azhwars, came to take on a special meaning for the discerning devotees.

Sri Thirumangai Azhwar was a very talented poet and he had a large share of verses in the Naalaayiram, with a variety of intricate poetry. One such work is Thiruvezhuk Kootrirukkai. The other five works are Periya Thirumozhi with 1084 verses, Thirukkurun Thandakam, Thiru Nedun Thandakam, Siriya Thirumadal and Periya Thirumadal. Thirujnana Sambandhar, the Saivite Naayanaar saint was a contemporary of the Azhwar and the Azhwar's poetic skills were challenged by him when he visited Sirghazhi. The Azhwar sang ten verses on Sirghazhi Sri Ramar (Periya Thirumozhi III-4) and won the admiration of Sambandhar who presented him with his trident acknowledging the Azhwar to be a Nalu-kavipperumaal. This is the reason why Thirumangai Azhwar in the temples has a trident in his hands. The first ten paasurams of Periya Thirumozhi the Azhwar feels elated about his own blessing of receiving Sriman Narayana mantra. He points out all its benefits, how it will remove all our woes and bring us "bliss divine" even in this world. He entreats all to chant the Narayana Namam.

"Call Narayana's name at the time when life begins to fade. Think of Narayana's name when in distress, it is

good to say even when there is none. Lo and behold! it
is Medicine for all our ills".