

Kulasekara Azhwar



Kulasekhara PerumAL

He was born in the 27th year after the beginning of the Kali Era (3102 BC), thus 3075 BC. He was born on Masi

Punarpusam at Thiruvanjiikalam. Kulasekara Azhwar was born to the cEra king DhiDavrathan and his queen nAdhanAyaki in the year 767 CE. From his childhood he was taught the sAstrAs, epics, arts, Thamizh, Sanskrit, and martial arts. In due course he became the king and fought several wars with the adjoining sOzha and PANDya kings and won. He ruled his kingdom to the satisfaction of his subjects for quite a few years. Then he had a dream in which Lord Venkateswara appeared and from then on he diverted his attention to devotion and religion. He ruled his kingdom in the most vedic manner. It is said that his rule was so good, that people compared it to the rule of Lord Rama in Ayodhya. In due course, King Kulasekara invited learned people from all over the world. Slowly by mercy of LORD understood Lord Sriman Narayana is everything, and the highest purpose in life is to perform service to HIM and HIS devotees. The Lord also blessed Kulasekara with the knowledge and mindset of being a true devotee.

Even though he was born in kshatriya kulam (which is conducive for having great ego) but was still so humble in his attitude towards emperumAn and bhakthas. It is because

of his great devotion and attachment towards perumAL (srI rAman) he came to be known as kulasekara perumAL himself

At one time in his court a religious scholar was giving a discourse on Ramayana and the predicament that Rama faced in fighting Ravana. Kulasekara got perturbed and asked his army general to get his army ready to be sent to help Rama. Such was his devotion to Rama. He had to be consoled later by the scholar that all was well with Rama and that he prevailed in the war. He immediately got up, and commanded his commander in chief to get his army to help Lord Rama in fighting the 14000 demons! On seeing the King so involved, the pundit immediately said "the great Rama, single-handedly defeated the 14000 strong demon army and retired safely to the cottage where mother sita was composed and relaxed

This continuity made king Kulasekara calm. This single incident was a lesson to all the pundits to speak always about the safety of Lord. As he was learning and listening to these holy scriptures and concepts, Kulasekara came to understand the special place that the holy town of SriRangam holds for devotees. He yearned to go there, live

there, and perform service the Lord of Srirangam - Lord Ranganatha.

It is said that every morning, Kulasekara would proceed to SriRangam, abandoning all his duties as the king. On seeing this, his ministers, and prominent people in his kingdom would bring some vaishnavas enroute. On seeing them, the king would pay obeisance and invite them to his palace, and serve them all day.

His ministers got disenchanted with his attention on religion and not on royal affairs. They decided to execute a plan on the appearance day of Lord Rama (Sri Rama Navami). The ministers stole a very valuable necklace adorned to the deity of Lord Rama and pointed it was the devotees who were worshipping and they may be held responsible for the theft. King Kulasekara asserted that there was no way that the devotees would do such a thing. To rebuke that, he had his ministers bring him a pot containing a poisonous snake and declared that he will put his hand into the pot to prove their innocence.

Miraculously, the serpent did not harm the king, and thus everyone was convinced that the devotees had not stolen the necklace. On seeing the miracle, the ministers apologized for their mistake and returned the necklace to the king. Kulasekhar understood that his position came in the way of his desire to serve the Lord and His devotees.

Eventually he renounced his kingdom, anointed his son on the throne and started visiting shrines. By virtue of his extreme devotion to Rama he had a vision of Rama in his dreams and Rama named him *KulasEkara perumAL* akin to *iLaiya perumAL* (LakshmaNa). He is considered a representation of *kausthubham* (the gem on the chest of Lord Vishnu). He lived till he was 67 and attained *mukthi* at a place called *mannArkoyil*. He is known as "*mARRalarai, vIranGkeduththa chenGkOl kolli kAvalan villavarkOn, chERan kulachEkaran mudivENThar chikAmanNi*" and *gushyathE yasya nagarE rangayAthrA dhinE dhinE thamaham sirasa vandhE rAjAnam kulasEkaram*

His works are called *Perumal ThiruMozhi* and *mugunda mala*. *PerumAL thirumozhi*: Being a scholar in *Thamizh*, *KulasEkara AzhwAr* wrote 105 *pAsurams* in praise of the deities at

Srirangam, Thirumalai (Thiruppathi), ThiruvithuvakkODu, ThirukkaNNapuram, ThiruccitrakUDam, AyOdhya, and also on Rama and Krishna. The eighth, ninth, and tenth decades deal with Rama and the 10 songs in the eighth decade constitute a lullaby to baby Rama. All these songs were dedicated to the lord at ThirukkaNNapuram.

*Mannupugazh kausalaithan maNivayiRu vAyttavanE!
Tennilangaik kOnmuDigaL sinduvittAy! semponsEr
kanninanmA madhiLpuDaisUzh kaNapuratten karumaNiyE!
ennuDaiya innamudE! irAgavanE! tAlElO.*

In the fourth decad he longs to be associated with ThiruvEngaDam (thirumalai/Thiruppathi) in any form—be it animate or inanimate in the sacred hills. He mentions that he does not want his royalty, wealth, and even the opportunity to rule the heavens if given. He would rather want to be born as the fish in the temple pond or the bird (a crane for instance) that circles there. The desire to be born as a crane is indicative of his earnestness to catch a glimpse of the Lord just as the crane would eagerly wait for the fish to swim by. He would want to be born as a flower bush, the hilltop, and even the flagpole at the entrance to the temple. The wild river, the path leading to

the temple and even the steps at the entrance to the temple are his choices.

SeDiyAya valvinaigaL tIrkkuM thirumAlE!
neDiyOnE! vEngaDavA! ninkOyi linvAsal
aDiyArum vAnavaarum arambaiyarum kiDandhiyangum
paDiyayk kiDandhun pavaLavAy kANbEnE!

In the fifth decad he talks of the glory of the divya dEsam vittuvakkODu, located in PALakkADu district (in KEraLA). A patient would continue to see his medicine man although the medicine man may use harsh techniques (using knife) to cure him. Likewise, even if God subjected him to undergo miseries, he would continue to visit the Lord in order to get deliverance

In Six and Seventh decad he was describing about Krishna and his naughtiness. Also, he describes gopikas despair/disappointment experienced by the gOpis at gOkulam when Krishna does not turn up as promised.

KulasEkara AzhwAr was also well-versed in Sanskrit and accordingly sang 53 slokham in Sanskrit on Krishna. It was in praise of Krishna titled Mukunda Mala (garland for Krishna). In the 52nd slokham he signs it as a bee at the lotus feet of the lotus-eyed lord. In the final slokham he

declares the benefit (phalasaruti) of reciting all the slokams, viz., the eradication of all sins and the attainment of the Lord's abode. He is revered as PerumAL and his pAsurams (105 of them) are known as PerumAL Thirumozhi in recognition of his exalted status.

He attained moksham at mannAr kOyil (near thirunelveli).