

HYMNS OF THE ALVARIS
IN PRAISE OF
LORD SRINIVASA

- R.Ramanujachari

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Tirupati

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HYMNS OF THE ALVARS IN PRAISE OF LORD SRINIVASA

Edited with translation and notes by

R. RAMANUJACHARI

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FOREWORD

The Riks in Vedas are called Hymns. They are holy *stotras*, discriptions and prayers done by great Rishis. In devotional literature, in general, the entreaties intended to Divine entities are treated as hymns. Hence hymn is a sacred lyric that can be chanted and sung in adoration, ardour and honour.

In this context, the blissful expressions and experiences of Alvars in poetic form are entitled as Hymns. The Alvars are great ardent devotees and scholars and are responsible for spread of the Vaishnava cult. As a matter of fact the origin of chanting of Vaishnava Divya prabandham in temples was owned by the Alvars. The Alvars are twelve in number. The poems written by them are called 'pasuras' in Tamil language in praise of Vishnu, Vaishnava temples and associated sacred Tirthas. There are 4000 pasuras produced by the Alvars and they constitute Vaishnava literature, otherwise called 'Nalayira Divya Prabandham' and popularly respected as 'Dravida Vedam'. The Alvars belonged to different castes and most of them visited famous Vaishnava temples in South India including Venkatachalam.

The selected hymns in this book are all in praise of Lord Srinivasa shining in Vengadam known as Seshadri, the holy spot where one is to render service to the Lord.

The devotion, experience, imagination, service, description, and offerings of Alvars are embeded in these pasuras. I congratulate Sri R. Ramanujachari who has ably edited the hymns in a particular sequence, and translated into beautiful english and bestowed with necessary notes.

This bunch of hymns is a treasure of spiritual living presenting an adequate understanding of hearty veneration which, I hope, would motivate pilgrims to raise to greater devotional heights and worship of the Lord of Seven Hills.

In the Service of the Lord


L.V. Subrahmanyam I.A.S.

Tirupati

24-08-2012

Executive Officer,
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

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SRI
PERIYALVAR'S TIRUMOZHI
PALLANDU

*பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு, பல்லாயிரத்தாண்டு
பல கோடி, நூறாயிரம்
மல்லாண்ட திண்டோள் மணிவண்ணை! உன்
செவ்வடி செவ்வி திருக்காப்பு.*

Hail! Hail! many years! many years!
many thousands of years! many many
aeons! May the Adorable Lord strong of
arm, of beauteous form radiant like
the brightest blue gem, vanquisher
of mallars, be blessed, be glorious for
ever! May Thy blessed feet, soft and
red like the lotus, be glorious for ever!

ஸ்ரீ:

SAINT SATAKOPA (Nammalvar)
TIRUVOIMOZHI

III.iii. Sthanotkarsham - the greatness of Tiruvnekadam where the Lord resides

1) Saint Satakopa, popularly known as Nammalvar, gets a vision of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam, enjoys the Lord's supreme beauty and exhorts his mind and also **bhaktas** (god-lovers) to render service unto Him.

1 स्थानोत्कर्षात् सुदीप्रत्वम्

ஒழிவில் காலமெல்லாம், உடனாய் மன்னி

வழுவிலா அடிமைசெய்ய வேண்டும் நாம்*

தெழிகுரலருவித், திருவோங்கடத்து*

எழில்கொள் சோதி, எந்தை தந்தை தந்தைக்கே. 1

Ever remaining with the Adorable Lord, we should render constant and unremitting service, faultless, appropriate to all times, places and circumstances, unto Him,- the Lord of transcendant beauty, who resides in Tiruvenkadam noted for its roaring streams and who is the God of my sire, his sire, his sire and so on.

2) To the question: Is not **Paramapada** the place where one has to perform **kainkarya** (service) eternally to the Lord? Why this invitation to Tiruvenkadam? the answer is: when those who dwell in Paramapada themselves proceed to Tiruvenkadam to offer worship, proceed. Clearly this is the holy spot where one is to render service to the Lord.

2 अमहरवपुष्ट्वम्

எந்தை தந்தை தந்தை, தந்தை தந்தைக்கும்

முந்தை* வானவர், வானவர் கோனெடும்*

சிந்து பு மகிழும், திருவேங்கடத்து*
அந்தமில் புகழ்க், காரெழிலண்ணலே. 2

The Lord of limitless glory, whose form is most beautiful like the rain-cloud and who is **Seshi** to my master, master's master, his master, his master and so on the Lord who has himself no master and who resides in Tiruvenkadam which maintains in perfect bloom the flowers offered by the celestial beings headed by their leader, Sri Vishvaksetna.

3) He may be accessible to **nitya-suris**; but what about us hardened sinners? The answer to this is: The Lord is supremely generous, bounteous (**udara**) and easy of access to all.

3 स्वाङ्कपर्यासभूपत्वम्

அண்ணல் மாயன், அணிகொள் செந்தாமரைக்
கண்ணன்* செங்கனிவாய்க், கருமாணிக்கம்*
தெண்ணிறைச் சுனை நீர்த், திருவேங்கடத்து*
எண்ணில்தொல் புகழ், வானவாசனே. 3

The bounteous and wonderful Lord, who is bedecked in ornaments, who has a resplendent form with eyes like lotus, lips like red **kovai** fruit, and body like precious zaffire, and whose excellences are limitless, eternal and innate, who is the Lord of the celestial beings (**nitya-suris**), resides in Tiruvenkadam studded with tanks filled with limpid waters, in order to be easy of access to nitya-suris and to the denizens of this world.

4) Is it necessary to say that the Lord has favoured **nitya-suris**, when He has been graciously pleased to associate with a lowly person like myself?

4 नीचयोगात् तेजिष्ठवम्

**ஈசன் வானவர்க் கென்பன், என்றால்* அது
தேசமோ, திருவேங்கடத்தானுக்கு?*

நீசனேன், நிறைவொன்றுமிலேன்* என் கண்
பாசம்வைத்த, பரஞ்சடர்ச் சோதிக்கே. 4

Is the statement that Bhagavan, the lord of **nitya-suris**, stays in Tiruvenkadam for their delectation really a tribute to the lord of Tiruvenkadam when (it is remembered) that the supreme Deity possessed of the most effulgent divine form has chosen to bestow His **vatsalyam** on such a lowly person as myself, riddled with the most undesirable qualities and utterly lacking in **atma-gunas** (such as forbearance, compassion, straight forwardness and the like)?

5) To say that the Lord is exceedingly generous and has chosen me, may all the world for this favour, is itself not adequate praise. In fact, there is no limit to His **audarya**.

5 प्रणमितभुवनत्वम्

சோதியாகி, எல்லாவுலகும் தொழும்*
ஆதிமூர்த்தியென்றால், அளவாகுமோ?*வேதியர் முழுவேதத்து, அமுதத்தை*
தீதில் சீர்த், திருவேங்கடத்தானையே. 5

Does it do justice to His glory to say that He is the resplendent God whom all Vedas describe as the highest **purusartha**, (the supreme goal of all endeavour that He is possessed of countless excellences and is totally devoid of imperfections (such as partiality) and that He takes His abode in Tiruvenkadam, has made Himself accessible to all people of the world for service?

The Alvar's self-depreciation goes to the extent of stating that when he has been admitted to the privilege of **bhagavat-kainkarya**, all the peoples of the world too are sure to have that privilege. There is also the suggestion that the vedas alone are competent to sing the Lord's praises and that we are far too unworthy to do so.

6) What is the means to be adopted to qualify for the privilege of rendering service unto Him?

6 सन्नतानां पावनत्वम्

வேங்(ம்)கடங்கள் மெய்ம்மேல் வினைமுற்றவம்*
தாங்கள் தங்கட்கு நல்லனவே செய்வார்*
வேங்கடத்துறைவார்க்கு நமவென்ன
லாங்கடமை*அது சுமந்தார்கட்கே.

6

Those who perform the bounden duty of making the submission to the lord of Tiruvenkadan (Srinivasa): “I am Thine (I exist wholly for Thee)” will find all their debts, i.e impediments in the way of **bhagavat kankarya**, namely past karmas as well as those that might accrue in the future completely burnt out; and they would be wholly free to render all the service they desire.

This **upaya** (means) is open to every-one. Besides being easy, it has the merit of being in conformity with our essential nature.

7) There is no need to appeal to the Lord of Tiruvenkadam; Tirumalai itself could grant us this privilege.

7 प्राप्यर्हस्थानत्वम्

சுமந்து மாமலர் நீர்சுடர் தூயம்கொண்டு*
அமர்ந்துவானவர் வானவர்கோனெடும்*
நமன்றெழும் திருவேங்கடம் நங்கட்கு*
சுமன்கொள்வீடுதரும், தடங்குன்றமே.

7

Worshipping the Lord with steadfast devotion (i.e. considering **bhagavat kankarya** as an end in itself) and with deep devotion and offering Him pure, choice flowers, sacred water, incense and the like, the celestial beings and their leader, Sri Vishvakasena, achieve the fullness of perfection at Tiruvenkadam, that vast, expansive Tiruvenkadam itself (Adishesha) would bless us with the attainment of kankarya, opportunity to render service similar to what Tirumalai (Adishesha) is itself rendering.

Tiruvenkadam (also called Seshadri) is identified with Adishesha who is unwearied in his varied service to the Adorable lord.

4

8) As the Lord Himself has chosen Tiruvenkadam for His abode, it is **prapya** for us too.

8 अंहःप्रशमनविषयत्वम्

**குன்றமேந்திக் குளிர்மழை காத்தவன்*
அன்று ஞாலம் அளந்தபிரான்* பரன்
சென்றுசேர் திருவேங்கடமாமலை*
ஒன்றுமேதொழு நம்வினை ஓயுமே.

8

The Supreme Lord who lifted the Govardhan Hill and protected gokula from the chill, devastating and incessant rain and who, of more measured all the worlds and saved them, has proceeded (from Paramapada) and eagerly sought the great Tiruvenkadam for His stay - when that is so, worship of this sacred Hill would, in itself, lead to the dissolution of all our **karmas** (that stand in the way of attaining **moksha**)

9) Is not God our **prapya** (goal)? How can Tiruvenkadam be considered our goal?

9 बन्धविच्छेदिपादत्वम्

ஓயும்மூப்புப் பிறப்பு இறப்புப்பிணி*
வீயுமாறு செய்வான் திருவேங்கடத்து
ஆயன்* நூள்மலராம் அடித் தாமரை*
வாயுள்ளும் மனத்துள்ளும் வைப்பார்கட்கே.

9

Gopala who has taken Tiruvenkadam for His abode will see to it that whoever thinks of the lord and praises His lotus-like feet, soft and delicate like a newly blossomed flower, would have his ills, such as deliberating old age, birth, death and disease completely destroyed.

The suggestion is the lord acquires the power to dispel our **karma** from His residence in Tirumalai and therefore that sacred Hill, the secret of the Lord's greatness, is our goal.

10) For reasons stated already, it is wise to seek Tiruvenkadam when you are still physically fit and mentally alert.

5

10 शीघ्राभियानक्षमशुभवसतित्वम्

வைத்தநாள்வரை எல்லைகுறுகிச் சென்று*
 எய்த்தீனாப்பதன் முன்னம் அடைமினோ*
 பைத்த பாம்பணியான் திருவோங்கடம்*
 மொய்த்த சோலை, மொய்ப்புந்தடம் தாழ்வரே. 10

Before the allotted span of life comes to an end and the body gets enfeebled and mental power declines due to old age, set out and reach Tiruvenkadam which is studded with dense orchids and extensive flower gardens and which is the favoured spot of the Lord who has for His couch the serpent with expanded hoods.

11) Phala sruti-

**தூள்பரப்பி, மண்தாவிய ஈசனை*
 நீள்வொழில், குருசுவர்ச்சடகோபன்சொல்*
 கேழிலாயிரத்து, இப்பத்தும் வல்லவர்*
 வாழ்வார் வாழ்வெய்தி, ஞாலம் புகழுவே. 11

These ten stanzas out of the thousand are composed by Satakopa of the garden-city of Kurukur on the Lord who with outstretched feet measured up all the three worlds. Whoever understands correctly these ten stanzas of this unrivalled work would be acclaimed by all and attain truly blessed life (at Tiruvenkadam) of everlasting joy.

स्थानोत्कर्षात् सुदीप्तं श्रमहरवपुषं स्वाङ्गपर्याप्तभूषं
 तेजिष्ठं नीचयोगात् प्रणमितभुवनं पावनं सन्नतानाम्
 प्राप्यर्हस्थानमंहःप्रशमनविषयं बन्धविच्छेदिपादम्
 भेजे शीघ्राभियानक्षमशुभवसतिं लम्बितार्चाभिमुख्यः

sthanotkarshat sudiptam Sramahara-vapusham svanga
 paryapta bhusham
 tejishtham nichayogat pranamita bhuvanam pavanam
 sannatanam |

praptyarha sthanamamhah prasamana vishayam bandha
 vicchedipadam
 bheje Sighrabhiyanakshama subha-vasatim lambhitarchabhi-
 mukhyah ||

A gist of the ten stanzas comprising Tiruvoimozhi III.iii -

By His stay in the exalted Venkatam Hill, the Lord shines in greater glory and splendour; His, supernal radiance drives out, like dark rain clouds, all dread and distress; His lotus - like eyes and other organs are themselves ornaments to His divine beautiful form; He is the Primeval Cause of the Universe adored by all the world; He renders pure and perfect all who approach Him in humility and faith and say, "Lord Venkatesa! I am Thine"; He has made as His temple Tiruvenkadam, which, by itself, can grant their prayer for **bhagavat kankarya**; the place which He has chosen is capable of destroying all our sins; His blessed feet have the potency to dispel our evils, such as birth, old age, death and disease; Therefore, while yet young, (physically fit and mentally alert) one has to hasten to Tiruvenkadam and ought not be tardy. Thus, saint Satakopa experiences the Lord resident in Tiruvenkadam and sings His glories.

SRI MANAVALAMAMUNI
TIRUVOIMOZHI NUTRANDADI

ஒழிவிலாக் கால முடனாகி மன்னி
வழுவினா ஆட்செய்ய மானுக்கு - எழுசிகர
வேங்கடத்துப் பாரித்த மிக்கநலம் சேர் மாறன்
பூங்கழலை நெஞ்சே புகழ்.

Zealously intent on render faultless service at all times, places and circumstances without any lapse, to the consort of Sri resident in the cool heights of Tiruvenkadam, Maran (Nammalvar) the greatest among devotees (in the manner of Lakshmana who longed to render every kind of service to the Divine Couple, Sri Rama and Sita, in Tiruchitrakutam) exhorts his mind to worship the exceedingly soft and delicate, flower-like feet of Lord Srinivasa.

TIRUVOIMOZHI

VI. X.

Finding that his yearning for **bahya-samslesha** (i.e. desire not merely to contemplate on the Lord with the eye of his mind but to actually see Him to converse with Him, to hold Him in embrace and so on while still bound to bodily existence) unfulfilled, and his prayer for being taken to Paramapada unavailing the Alvar concludes that **prapatti** (self-surrender) is the only means of attaining the Lord. Accordingly, he sings the praises of he Lord in nine stanzas of this decadand, in the tenth, records his surrender unto Lord Srinivasa with Lakshmi (Sri) who plays also the role of a mediator (**Purusha-kara**)

1 आपत्संरक्षकत्वम्

**உலகமுண்ட வெருவாயா! உலப்பில் கீர்த்தியம்மானே!*

நிலவும் சுடர் சூவுறாளி மூர்த்தி! நெடியாய்! அடியேனருயிரே!*

திலதமுலகுக்காய் நின்ற திருவேங்கடத்து எம்பெருமானே!*

குலதொல்லடியேன் உனபாதம் கூடுமாறு கூறயே.

My Lord! (out of innate compassion) Thou swallowest the worlds at **pralaya** (i.e. protected all beings from the deluge by keeping them safe in Thee); Thou art famed for Thy measureless innate excellences (such as **vatsalya**); Thou shinest every where in Thy supernatural (**aprakrta**) effulgent, divine form; Thou dwellest in Paramapada; (yet) Thou hast come to reside in Tiruvenkadam which shines as the brightest **tilaka** to all the worlds; Thou art my **prana** (i.e. the soul sustaining me; without Thee I cannot exist even for an instant); pray tell me, this age-old servant of Thine, how I am to reach Thy blessed feet.

At pralaya when souls were **asatkalpa** (as it were non-existent, being devoid of name and form), Thou wert pleased to save them from the waters of the deluge even without a petition from them for help. Now that I entreat Thee to save me from the sea of **samsara** should Thou not deign to protect me? I am Thy natural, hereditary bondsman.

Therefore, Thou must choose to take me unto Thy blessed feet. The idea is the Alvar entreats the Lord to assure him protection just as Lord Krishna gave Arjuna the word of assurance “grieve not; I shall grant thee moksha”.

2) Imagining that the Lord tells him “Your karmas are an obstacle in your way; you could be accepted only when they are got rid off, the Alvar replies as follows.

अर्युपकरणत्वम्

கூறாய் நீராய் நிலனாகிக், கொடுவல்லசுரர் குலமெல்லாம்*
சீருளறியும் திருநேமிவலவா! தெய்வக்கோமானே!*
சேரூர்சுனைத்தாமரை செந்தீமலரும் திருவேங்கடத்தானே!
ஆளுவன்பிலடியேன். உன்னடி சேர்வண்ணம் அருளாயே.

God of gods! Thou wieldest in Thy right hand the flaming Discus which, like the hissing serpent, pulverised all the cruel and mighty hoards of asuras, leaving no trace of their existence; the Lord of beautiful Tiruvenkadam, lit up as it were by red lotus flowers in full bloom in the deep waters of ponds! Thou must, of Thine own accord, graciously take me, this servant of Thine, whose devotion to Thy blessed feet is unfagging, but ever-growing.

Thou wert pleased to root out the enemies of the gods who sought Thy succour; even so Thou art to come to my rescue and remove the obstacles that stand in the way of my reaching Thee.

3) Answer to the question: How could moksha be granted without an adequate reason?

3,4 मेघसाम्यादिभूमवत्वम्

வண்ணமருள் கொளணிமேகவண்ணை! மாயவம்மானே!*
எண்ணம் புகுந்து தித்திக்கும் அமுதே! இமையோர திபதியே!*
தெண்ணலருவி மணி வொன் முத்தலைக்கும் திருவேங்கடத்தானே!*
அண்ணலே! உன்னடிசேர அடியேற்கு ஆவாவென்னாயே.

Lord of **nitya-suris!** Compassionate by nature and having the complexion of beautiful, shining clouds! My Lord endowed with a divine form of ravishing beauty! Thou hast entered into my mind and art an insatiable nectar! The Lord of Tiruvenkadam where cool and crystal clear streams waft to the banks gold and pearls! Embodiment of daya! Pitying my plight and saying “Ha!”, ‘Ha”, how sad!” Thou should take this servant of Thine to Thy blessed feet.

4) Thinking that the Lord said, “For my entry into thee, there was some pretext (**vyaja**), some past deed; like wise, for granting your request for redemption, there is need of a plausible excuse, the Alvar gives the following reply.

ஆவா! என்னுது உகைத்தையலைக்கும்அசுரர்
வாணர்மேல்*
தீவாய்வாளிமழை பொழிந்த சிலையா! திருமாமகன்கேள்வா!
தேவா!சுரர்கள்முனிக்கணங்கள்விரும்பும்திருவேங்கடத்
தானே!*

புவார் கழல்கள் அருவினையேன்பொருந்துமாறுபுணராயே.
4

Wonderful Archer who rained fiery arrows at the asuras who pitilessly harassed the peoples of the world! Consort of MahaLakshmi! Most bright and shining Being! Lord of Tiruvenkadam most eagerly sought by **nitya-suris** and hosts of sages! Thou must be pleased to make it possible for me, this vile sinner, to reach they blessed feet, ever bedecked by floral offerings!

The first two lines allude to the episode in Srimad Ramayana portraying Sri Rama’s returning in the full splendour of his complete victory in routing out single-handed the vast asura hordes headed by Khara and Dushana, and of Sita holding him in embrace thereby enhancing His loveliness.

The asuras not only failed to realise that all the people of the world constitute the possessions (**vibhutis**) of the Lord, but committed the

further offence of harassing them. They were thus doubly guilty, and hence the action against them by the Lord.

5) The Alvar replies to the imagined query of the Lord: How can you expect me to devise a new means (Sadhana) for your sake?

5 स्वानां विश्वासदातृत्वम्

புணரா நின்றமரமேழ் அன்றைய்த ஒரு வில்வலவாவோ!*
 புணரேய் நின்றமரமிரண்டின் நடுவேபோன
 முதல்வாவோ!*
 திணரார் மேகமனக்களிறு சேரும்திருவெங்கடத்தானே!*
 திணரார்சார்ங்கத்துஉனபாதம்சேர்வது, அடியெனந்
 நாளே?

Unrivalled Bowman! Thou pierced with a single arrow the seven huge trees (**Salavrikshas**) that stood close together like a mountain (to infuse faith in the mind of Sugriva)! The First cause of the entire universe! Thou easily found Thy way through two closely knit (**maruda**) trees (and brought them down effortlessly)! Lord of Tiruvenkadam where huge elephants gather like dark clouds! Wielder of the invincible and perfect Saranga! When am I, this servant, to reach Thy blessed feet!

6) So far the Alvar's prayer has been for attaining the blessed feet of the Lord. Now mention is made of the place where they are to be attained.

6 सुरगणभजनविषयत्वम्

எந்நாளே? நாம்மண்ணளந்த இணைத்தாமரைகள்
 காண்பதற்கென்று*
 எந்நாளும் நின்று இமையோர்களைத்தி இறைஞ்சி
 இனமினமாய்*
 மெய்ந்நாமனத்தால்வழியாடு செய்யும்திருவெங்கடத்தானே!*
 மெய்ந்நானெய்தி எந்நாள் உன்னடிக்கண் அடியென்
 மேவுவதே!

Nitya-Suris (denizens of **Paramapada**) who ever perceive Thy transcendent greatness throng in large concourse to Tiruvenkadam eager

to have a vision of the pair of Thy lotus-like feet that measured the worlds (i.e. to experience Thy **saulabhya**, **sausilya** and other excellences), to sing Thy praises, offer Thee worship and ever serve Thee with their mind, speech and body. When, indeed, am I, Thy servant truly to reach Thy blessed feet and offer into Thee steady and uninterrupted service!

The **nityasuris**, who enjoy the **paratva** of the Lord in Paramapada, hasten to Tiruvenkadam to experience His **saulabhya**, for which there is scope only in the mundane world; I must seek Thee only in Tiruvenkadam and render unremitting service or Thy blessed feet.

7) Imagining the lord as stating: “you expect me to devise a new means for your sake. How is it possible? Even if possible, would it not entail the charge of partiality? Therefore, adopt one of the means already established, “the Alvar replies as follows

7 दिव्यदेशोपसन्नत्वम्

அடியென் மேவியமர்கின்ற அமுதே! இமையோரதிபதியே!*
 கொடியாவடு புள்ளுடையானே! கோலக்கனிவாய்ப்
 பருமானே!*
 செடியார்வினைகள்தீர்மருந்தே! திருவெங்கடத்தெம்
 பெருமானே!*
 நொடியார்வொழுதும் உனபாதம் காண நோலாதாற்றேனே.

Lord of the celestails! Thou hast for Thy banner garuda, Who destroys the enemies of Thy devotees! Lord of Tiruvenkadam! Thou art the most effective antidote to my sins which grow little rank weeds! Thou art the nectar which I long to experience constantly, losing myself wholly to Thy sublime beauty. I have not accumulated sufficient merit to experience the limitless bliss of Thy blessed feet; yet I am unable to endure even a moment's delay.

Surrounded by **nitya-suris**, for my sake, Thou reached Tiruvenkadam riding on garuda for my sake. An antidote to my sins

which grow like wild plants, Thou rooted them out. By revealing Thy beauty, Thou made me captive, removed my craving for everything else and made me experience the nectar of contemplating on Thee. I am unable to bear even a moment's delay. Having done so much, should not grant me what yet remains! Though I have not adopted any means, Thou must make me behold Thy lotus-like feet.

8) "Have I done for anyone else what you want me to do for you?" The answer to this imagined query.

8 स्वजनप्राप्यत्वम्

நோலாதாற்றேன் உனபாதம் காணவென்று
நுண்ணுணர்வின்*
நீலார்கண்டத்தம்மானும் நிறைநான்முகனும்
இந்திரனும்*
சேலேய் கண்ணார் பலர்கூழ்விரும்பும் திருவெங்கடத்
தானே!*
மாலாய் மயக்கி அடியேன்பால் வந்தாய்போலேவாராயே.

The blue-throated Rudra noted for his jnana, the Four-faced Brahma (the lord of satyaloka) whose intellect is even keener, and Indra (the ruler of Devaloka) and others, though falling short of requisite merit, still intensely feel their inability, to exist without Thy vision, and have gathered in large numbers along with their consorts having fish like eyes in Tiruvenkadam, and experience Thee. In the case of this servant of Thine who feels mad without a vision of Thee, pray present Thyself at least for an instant, as Thou wert pleased to do for Gajendra.

9 विजनाप्राप्यत्वम्

வந்தாய்போலே வாராதாய்
வாராதாய்போல் வருவானே!!*
செந்தாமரைக்கண் செங்கனிவாய்
நால்தோளமுதே! எனதுயிரே!*
சிந்தாமணிகள் பகரல்லைப்பகல்செய்
திருவெங்கடத்தானே!*

அந்தோ! அடியேன் உனபாதம்
அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமே.

Thou appearest not before Those who are not genuine devotees, though appearing to do; Thou presentest Thyself to real seekers, though seeming not to do so; Endowed with lotus-like eyes, having lips red like **kovai** fruit and having four arms, Thou art exceedingly sweet, blissful like nectar! The soul of my soul! Lord! Thou hast chosen for Thy residence Tiruvenkadam the delightful spot abounding in priceless gems (**Chintamani**), which, by their brilliance convert nights into days. Lo! Thy hapless servant can never bear separation from Thy blessed feet even for an instant!

10) Thinking that the Lord directed him to adopt one of the prescribed means of attaining **moksha**, the Alvar performs **prapatti**, the foremost among the **upayas**.

10 सत्प्रपत्त्यत्वम्

**அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று
அலர்மேல்மங்கையுறைமார்பா!*
நிகரில் புகழாய்! உலகம் மூன்றுடையாய்!
என்னையாள்வானே!*
நிகரிலமரர் முனிக்கணங்கள் விரும்பும்
திருவெங்கடத்தானே!*
புகலொன்றில்லா அடியேன்!
உன்னடிக்கீழ் அமர்ந்து புகுந்தேனே.

O lord on whose chest Sri, the lady of the lotus ever abides saying "Never, not ever for an instant, shall I leave Thee!" Thou art possessed of matchless excellences (such as **saualabhya**, **sausilya**, **karunya** and **vatsalya**) bespeaking Thy glory! Ruler of all the worlds! Master of this lowly servant! (what shall I say of Thy **sausilya**!) Lord of Tiruvenkadam cherished by large concourse of **nitya-suris** and sages unexcelled in their devotion and service to Thee! Thou hast made Tiruvenkadam Thy residence to be easy of access to all. Having no

other refuge and no other saviour, I, this humble servant of Thine, have surrendered myself unto Thy blessed feet (with no after purpose except to serve Thee) with the full conviction that the burden of saving me has been accepted by Thee.

The Lord is ever in association with Sri, the Divine Mother. This vouches for erring man compassionate treatment, *நிகரில் புகழாய்* signifies the possession specially of excellences such as **saulabhya**, **sausilya**, **vatsalya** and **karunya** which exclusively subserve the purposes of **anugraha**. The description 'Ruler of all the worlds' indicates possession of **Swamitva**. 'Master of this lowly servant' implies **sausilya**, the quality of the most high, mingling on equal terms with the lowly. 'Lord of Tiruvenkadam' stresses His **saulabhya**, easy accessibility.

Swamitva, **saulabhya**, **sausilya** and **vatsalya** are the qualities of the lord that are to be meditated upon at the time of **prapatti**.

Saulabhya, **sausilya** and the like are in full play in the mundane world, not in **Paramapada**, the Home of the Blast, as there is no scope for their exercise. Thy shine best only in the abodes of men. That is why **nityasuris** and **yogins** rush to Tiruvenkadam.

Even in association with the Lord, Sri, acts as purushakara (mediator), and accepts, along with the Lord, the responsibility for the soul's redemption. Thus Lakshmi is **purushakara** and **upaya**, besides being the **upeya** (the goal). Hence, tradition speaks of the three fold aspects (**akara-traya**) of Sri. While the Lord is both **upaya** and **upeya**, Sri has the additional aspect of being **purushakara**. As Sri dwells in the lord's bosom all the time, she is a viseshana of the Adorable Lord. All these ideas are suggested in the first line of this stanza.

Purushakara is one who brings together the aspirant for a favour and the dispenser of that favour. Among the several significations of the term **purusa**, one is 'bounteous giver'. Hence **purushakara** signifies one who makes a person the most bounteous giver.

As the Mother of the universe (**Akhila-jagan mataram**), Sri reforms the wayward soul and makes him approach the Lord. She pleads before the Lord on behalf of the erring soul and induces Him to exercise His innate **karunya** (**sahaja - karunya**).

"Having no other refuge and no other saviour" signifies **karpanya** - the realisation of one's utter incompetence and being devoid of any other protector (**akinchanya** and **ananyagatitva**), an essential step in **prapatti**.

This stanza is of special importance as expressing the significance of **Dvayam**, a gem among **mantras**; used in performing **saranagati**. It embodies the quintessence of vedantic thought and religion.

11) Phala sruti

** அடிக்கீழமர்ந்து புகுந்து
அடியீர்! வாழ்மினென்றென்றருள் கொடுக்கும்*
படிக்கேழில்லாப்பெருமாணப்
படினக்குருசுவர்ச்சடகோபன்*
முடிப்பான் சொன்ன ஆயிரத்துத்
திருவோங்கடத்துக்கிவை பத்தும்*
பிடித்தார் பிடித்தார் வீற்றிருந்து
பெரியவானுள் நினைவுவரே.

11

These ten out of the thousand stanzas graciously composed by Satakopa of Tirukkurugur surrounded by fertile paddy fields in praise of the glories of the peerless Lord of Tiruvenkadam who is never tired of imparting the instruction: "O ye people who take delight in rendering service, dwelling steadfastly under My feet, with your minds centred thereon, and as an end in itself, will lead the blessed life." These stanzas were composed with the aim of enabling men to attain eternal blessedness. God-lovers who study these stanzas reverently and those who are devoted to them, would dwell for ever in the Highest Abode enjoying the supreme bliss of **bhagavad-anubhava** (and **kainkarya samrajya**) and would never more lapse to the turmoils of samsara.

आपत्संरक्षणादर्युपकरणतया मेघसाम्यादिभूमना
स्वानां विश्वासदानात् सुरगणभजनात् दिव्यदेशोपसत्या
प्राप्याप्राप्यत्वयोगात् स्वजनविजनयोःसत्प्रपत्तव्यभावात्
ऊचे नाथं शरण्यं श्रुतिशतविदितं वेङ्कटेशं शठारिः

Apatsamrakshanadaryupkaranataya meghasamyadibhumna
Svanam visvasadanat suragana bhajanat divyadesopa sattya
Prapyaprapyatva yogat svajana vijanayoh satprapattavya
bhavat

Uche natham saranyam srutisata-viditam venkatesam
satharih||

Saint satakopa says that hundreds of vedic texts (i.e. the Vedas in their entirety) reveal the truth that the Adorable lord is the Refuge for all. He protects us from all perils (such as pralaya); He wields the Discus and the conch (to reassure people that He is fully armed for that); He resembles the cloud (in His bounty, complexion and affording relief from **tapa**); He graciously dwells in the blessed Tiruvenkadam to be easily accessible for worship to men and celestials; He infused faith in the minds of His devotees (as in the case of Sugriva) that He could save and would not let down the suppliant; He is eagerly sought by successive bands of **nitya-suris** and sages; though appearing to be unapproachable, He is attained by the true bhakta, but not by those lacking in faith; He is the Lord of Mercy ever in association with Him on behalf of erring men and who encourages those who are weighed with a sense of their unworthiness to approach the Lord). From all these it is clear that the Adorable Lord residing in Tiruvenkadam is the sole saviour (**saranya**) to whom one has to surrender himself in the prescribed way (i.e. conscious of one's utter incompetence and lack of any other saviour, one must approach the Lord with no other end in view and saying "Thou art my only protector" and surrender unto Him oneself, the responsibility for protecting oneself and the fruits accruing from it).

SRI MANVALAMAMUNI TIRUVOIMOZHI NUTRANDADI

உலகய்ய மால்நின்ற உயர்வோங் கடத்தே
அலர்மகளை முன்னிட்டு அவன்தன்-மலரடியே
வன் சரணாய்ச் சேர்ந்த மகிழ்மாறன் தாளிணையே
உன் சரணாய் நெஞ்சமே உள்.

O mind! seek as your refuge the holy feet of Mahizh Maran || (Nammalvar), who, with Sri as **purushakara**, look as his sole refuge the lotus-like feet of the consort of Sri residing in the blessed Tiruvenkadam for the one and only purpose of enabling all the worlds to lead the truly blessed life.

KULASEKHARA PERUMAL PERUMAL TIRUMOZHI

Kulasekharazhvar, a great devotee of Bhagavan, developed complete detachment for things mundane and became so wholly absorbed in contemplation on the Lord and His gunas that he reached the stage of **parama bhakti** and felt that he could not brook delay till release from the body, for the attainment of uninterrupted, continual enjoyment of **bhagavad-anubhava**. The Lord made it known that He had taken His abode in Tiruvenkadam so as to be easy of access to all and that the Alvar could go there to worship Him to his heart's content. Deeply impressed by His **saulahya** the Alvar expresses in **Perumal Tirumozhi**, section4, in impassioned poetry, his most intense desire to go to Tirumalai to offer service unto the Lord of Tirumalai to offer service unto the Lord of Tiruvenkadam.

IV.1. Birth as a human being, even if it be as a great ruling prince, has no attraction for me, says the Alvar. It only makes the flesh grow without any spiritual gain. I shall be quite content to be a bird (**narai**) in Tiruvenkadam.

**உனனேறு செல்வத்து, உடற்பிறவி யான்வேண்டேன்*
ஆனேறேழ்வென்றான், அடிமைத்திறமல்லால்*
சுனேறு சங்கமிடத்தான், தன்வேங்கடத்து*
கோனோரிவாழும், குருகாய்ப்பிறப்பேனே. 1

I care not for birth as a human being with its mounting desires of the flesh, with its hankering for transient pleasures of princely life. I do not value anything except service unto the lord of Tiruvenkadam, who conquered the seven mighty bulls (for winning the hands of Nappinnai), and who holds in his left hand the spiral shaped panchajanya (symbolising the bliss of service unto the Lord). Let me be born as a **narai** (a bird) in Tiruvenkadam.

(2) Even if Lordship over **svarga** were offered to me, I would not be tempted by it, says kulasekharazhvar.

ஆளுதசெல்வத்து, அரம்பையார்கள்தற்கூழ*
வானூளும்செல்வமும், மண்ணரசுமயான்வேண்டேன்*
தேனூர்புஞ்சோலைத், திருவேங்கடச்சுனையில்*
மீனாய்ப்பிறக்கும், விதியுடையெனவேனே. 2

I do not long for the splendour of lordship over **svarga**, for the glamorous life surrounded by eternally youthful and beautiful damsels like Rambha; nor do I prize sovereignty over the earth. Let me have the good fortune to be born at least as a fish in the tanks of Tiruvenkadam surrounded by delightful gardens having flowers laden with honey.

The idea is that the fish has the opportunity of nibbling the feet of bhagavatas coming to the tanks, and thereby having contact with the dust of their feet.

(3) Notwithstanding what was said before, I am not unwilling to be born as a human being, provided it could afford to me an opportunity to render service unto the lord.

மின்னிடசடையானும், பிரமனும் இந்திரனும்*
துன்னிடடுப்புகலரிய, வைகுந்த நீள்வாசல்*
மின்வட்டச்சுடராழி, வேங்கடக்கோன் தானாமிழும்*
பொன்வட்டில்பிடித்து, உடனேபுகப்பெறுவெனாவேனே. 3

May I have the good fortune to enter the **garbhagrha** (sanctum sanctorum) of the lord of Tiruvenkadam and hold in my hand a gold cup as a spittoon before the lord's exquisite lips! Tiruvenkadam is equal to **Paramapada** to which Parama siva with matted hair, his sire, Brahma, and Indra have difficulty in getting access.

(4) Birth as a human being, no matter in what grade, is liable to the hazards of **aham-kara** (egoism) and insensate greed for wealth,

power, fame and the like. If only I could enjoy the **kataksha** (benevolent glances) of the Divine lord I should like to be as a **champaka** tree in Tiruvenkadam.

ஒண்பவள வேலை, உலவு தண்பாற்கடலுள்*
கண் தூயிலும் மாயோன், கழலிணைகள் காண்பதற்கு*
பண்பகரும் வண்டினங்கள், பண்பாடும் வேங்கடத்து*
செண்பகமாய் நிற்கும், திருவுடையெனவேனே. 4

To worship at the blessed feet of the Adorable lord of wondrous deeds and of inexhaustible excellence, who reclines in the cool Milky ocean whose waves waft to the shores brilliant corals, and who resides in Tiruvenkadam where bees swarm humming delightful music, may I have the exceeding good fortune to stand as a **champaka** tree.

(5) Lest the preference for the champaka tree should be mistaken for a lurking fondness for its fragrance and lest it should distract me from one-pointed devotion to the Deity, I hasten to state that I may be born as any tree or post in Tirumalai.

கம்பமதயானைக், கழுத்தகத்தின்மேலிருந்து*
இன்ப மரும் செல்வமும், இவ்வரசும்யான்வேண்டேன்*
எம்பெருமானீசன், எழில்வோங்கடமலைமேல்*
தம்பகமாய் நிற்கும், தவமுடையெனவேனே. 5

I do not crave for the position of a monarch seated on an elephant in rut, instilling fear in the minds of bystanders, enjoying all pleasures and untold riches of the monarch of monarchs nor for lordly power over a vast kingdom. May I have the luck to be born as any tree or post in the most beautiful Tiruvenkadam, the abode of my benefactor!

(6) Trees perish sooner or later. So let me forever be any region or part of Tirumalai to ensure lasting service.

மின்னினைய நுண்ணிடையார், உருப்பசியும்மேனகையும்*
அன்னவர் தம்பாலொடும், ஆடலைவ ஆதரியேன்*

தென்னவென வண்டினங்கள், பண்பாடும்வேங்கடத்துள்*
அன்னினையொற்குவடாம், அருந்தவத்தெனவேனே. 6

I do not esteem the music, dance and other dalliances of exquisitely beautiful maidens such as Rambha having waist slender like lightning. May I have the good fortune to be a region, a plot of land in the incomparable golden Hill of Tiruvenkadam resorted to by innumerable bands of bees humming delightful music!

(7) Better still let me be destined to be a wild stream irrigating the flower gardens in Tiruvenkadam to ensure a greater measure of usefulness.

வானூழும்மாமதிபோல், வெண்குடைக்கீழ்*மன்னவார்தம்
கோனாகி வீற்றிருந்து, கொண்டாடும் செல்வறியேன்*
தேனூர்பூஞ்சோலைத் திருவேங்கடமலைமேல்*
கானூழும்பாயும், கருத்துடையெனவேனே. 7

I do not even in imagination deem as important what people prize, namely the fabulous wealth, resources and grandeur of the monarch of monarchs exercising sway over all the peoples of the world, like the great Moon shining as a single source of light for all. I would like to be a wild stream in Tirumalai irrigating the beautiful gardens full of flowers richly laden with honey.

(8) Rather than beauty wild stream in some part of Tirumalai, it would be preferable to be a pathway trodden upon by all sri vaishnavas gathering there.

பிறையேறுசடையானும், பிரமனும் இந்திரனும்*
முறையாய் பெருவேள்விக், குறைமுடிப்பான் மறையானுள்*
வெறியார் தண்சோலைத், திருவேங்கடமலைமேல்*
நெறியாய்க்கிடக்கும், நிலையுடையெனவேனே. 8

In Tiruvenkadam resides the God of gods, luminously proclaimed in the Vedas, the Supreme Lord who helped to complete the great sacrifices performed by Rudra having the Moon on his locks, (his sire)

Brahma and Indra and who rewards them with the assignment of their respective offices. Let me be a pathway in Tiruvenkadam noted for cool, refreshing gardens rich in fragrant flowers.

(9) A pathway may offer contact with bhagavatas, but may miss the opportunity to worship the **divya mangala vigraha**, sublimely beautiful form of the Lord. Let me, therefore, have the great good fortune of being a step in the holy shrine to enjoy the bliss of beholding His beauteous lips.

**செடியாயவல்வினைகள் தீர்க்கும், திருமாலே! *
நெடியானே!வேங்கடவா!, நின்கோயிலின்வாசல்*
அடியாரும் வானவரும், அரம்பையரும்கிடந்தியங்கும்
படியாய்க்கிடந்து* உன்பவளவாய், காண்பேனே. 9

Consort of sri! gracious dispeller of the accumulated **karmas** binding people to **samsara!** Lord of Tiruvenkadam incomparably great in His love for devotees! May I be a step at the entrance leading to Thy great shrine which attracts multitudes of devotees, **nitya-suris** and celestial damsels like Rambha so that I may enjoy the bliss of beholding Thy coral - like lips.

Needless to say that this stanza gives expression to the highest aspiration of an extremely devout soul hungering for God-vision. It is a matter of great interest to know that the first step in the **garbha-grha** in Lord srinivasa's temple is named after this Alvar as **kulasekhara padi**.

(10) The Adorable Lord has made Tirumalai His abode in order to be easy of access to men and celestial beings alike and is a source of infinite bliss to all. Everything in this holy hill is therefore, most sacred. To seek to discriminate among them and to arrange them in a scale of values would be sinful. Hence the Alvar prays: Let me be any object in this golden mountain dear to the heart of the Lord.

உம்பருலகாண்டு, ஒருகுடைக்கீழ்*உருப்பசிதன்
அம்பொற்கலையல்குல்பெற்றாலும், ஆதரியேன்*
செம்பவளவாயான், திருவேங்கடமென்னும்*
எம்பருமான்வொன்மலைமேல், ஏதேனாமாவேனே. 10

Even if I were to get lordship over all the worlds, to get them under a single umbrella (i.e. my rule) and secure the pleasure of association with celestial maidens like Urvasi, bedecked in the most precious ornaments, I would not care for it in the least. (My real prayer of being any object whatever in this holy, beautiful, golden mountain truly famous as Tiruvenkadam, the seat of my Lord with sublimely beautiful, coral-like lips!

This stanza may be compared with the following stanza of Yamuna.-

Tava dasya sukhaika sanginam bhavaneshvastvapi kitajanma me|
Itarava satheshu ma sma bhutapi me janma chaturmukhatmana||

StotraRatna,55

“Let me be born even as a worm in the abodes of men who find their sole delight in serving Thee; but let me not be born even as the Four-faced Brahma in the abodes of men who have a contrary disposition.

11) Phala sruti :-

**மன்னியதண்சாரல், வடவேங்கடத்தான்தன்*
யொன்னியலும் சேவடிகள் காண்பான், புரிந்திறைஞ்சி*
கொன்னவிலும் சவ்வேல், குலசேகரன் சொன்ன*
பன்னியநூல் தமிழுவல்லார், பாங்காயபத்தர்களே. 11

Impelled by an over mastering desire to behold and worship the blessed lotus-like feet of the Lord of cool North Venkadam Kulasekhara, wielding a sharp **vel** (spear) intent on destroying bhakta's enemies, inner and outer, composed this work of exquisite beauty, a garland of sweet Tamil songs. Whosoever studies this with devotion would become foremost among bhaktas dear to the heart of Bhagavan.

To be an object in Tirumalai is the greatest aspiration for man. There is no question of ranking objects in this sacred hill on any scale of high and low. Men who really count have felt that anything, even a worm, must be deemed great, if it has contact with Tiruvenkadam.

SAINT ANDAL NACCHIYAR TIRUMOZHI

The ten stanzas comprising the eighth section of **Nacchiyar Tirumozhi** describe how saint Andal requests clouds to convey her message to the Lord residing in Tiruvenkadam.

VIII. 1. It is rainy season. The sky is overcast with thick rain clouds. Unable to bear separation from the Lord, saint Andal entreats the clouds to convey her message to the Adorable Lord residing in Tiruvenkadam.

**விண்ணீல மேலாப்பு
விரித்தாற்போல் மேகங்காள்!*

தெண்ணீர்பாய் வேங்கடத்து
என்திருமாலும் போந்தானே?*

கண்ணீர்கள் முலைக்குவட்டில்
துளிசோரச்சோர்வேனைப்*

பெண்ணீர்மையீடழிக்குமிது
தமக்கு ஓர் வருமையே? 1

Hearken clouds looking like a beautiful blue canopy covering the entire region, Has my Lord Srinivasa residing in Tiruvenkadam noted for its cool waters, accompanied you in your sojourn hither? (There in no reply) Tears flow in profusion from her eyes and drench her breasts. (she asks) Does it redound to the glory of my Lord to torment my femininity?

Perceiving the blue clouds, Saint Andal is reminded of her Lord who has a similar hue, and her pangs of separation (**Vislesha**) get intensified.

(2) O generous clouds showering pearls and gold even when unsought! Now I am in dire distress. I make a plaintive appeal to you, kindly carry a message to my Lord. will you?

மாமுத்த நிதி சொரியும்
மாமுகில்காள்!*வேங்கடத்துச்

சாமத்தின் நிறம்கொண்ட
தாடாளன் வார்த்தையென்னே!*

காமத்தீ உள்புகுந்து
கதுவப்பட்டு இடைக்கங்குல்*

ஏமத்தோர் தென்றலுக்கு
இங்கிலக்காய் நானிருப்பேனே. 2

O clouds! generous by nature, you shower pearls and gold of your own accord, without a request for them! I beseech you, will you kindly convey a message to the blue hued Lord of Tiruvenkadam and get me His word of reply? The fire of love has entered me, taken possession of me, who am entirely dependent upon the Lord and it is consuming my vitals. In this state, at mid-night the southerly breeze, as if adding fuel to fire, is making me more miserable. How long am I to be a prey to this?

(3) Due to **viraha-tapa** (pangs of separation) my bodily lustre has vanished; my complexion has changed; my bangles have slipped off; and sleep has deserted me. My condition is, indeed, parlous. I can't continue to exist any longer. If the Lord is not coming, He could at least send me a message.

ஓளிவண்ணம் வளை சிந்தை
உறக்கத்தோடிவையெல்லாம்*

எளிமையால் இட்டு என்னை
ஈடழியப் போயினவால்*

குளிரருவி வேங்கடத்து
என் கோவிந்தன் குணம்பாடி*

அளியத்த மேகங்காள்!
ஆவி காத்திருப்பேனே. 3

Generous clouds! an account of **bhagavad vislesha** my bodily lustre, my complexion, my bangles, sleep-all these have deserted me leaving me in a perilous state. Alas! It is possible for me any longer to hope to continue my existence praising the auspicious qualities of my

Kannan, my Govinda, who resides in Tiruvenkadam richly supplied with cool streams?

(4) Saint Andal entreats clouds to request the Lord, on her behalf, to hold her in embrace.

மின்னகத்தெழுக்கின்ற
மேகங்காள்! வேங்கடத்துத்
தன்னாகத் திருமங்கை
தங்கிய சீர் மார்வற்கு
என் ஆகத்து இளங்கொங்கை
விரும்பித் தாம் நாடோறும்
பொன்னகம் புல்குதற்கு
என் புரிவுடைமை செப்புமினே. 4

Clouds with lightning your body! (i.e. in your midst). Kindly tell the compassionate Lord of Tiruvenkadam who has Lakshmi in His bosom that it is my ardent desire that He should be pleased to embrace lovingly my young and tender breasts with His sublime bosom.

The dark clouds with a luminous streak of lightening reminds Saint Andal of the dark-complexioned Lord having in His bosom Lakshmi of splended golden hue.

(5) O clouds! The compassionate Lord, ever anxious to protect His devotees, tore with His sharp finger nails the body of Hiranyaksha; but He has forgotten His nature and is allowing me, having full trust in Him, to languish and pine away. If He has any intention of returning to me my bangles, please inform him of my distraught condition.

வான்கொண்டு கிளர்ந்தெழுந்த
மாழுகில்காள்!* வேங்கடத்துத்
தேன் கொண்ட மலர் சிதறத்
திரண்டேறிப் பொழிவீர்காள்!*

உன்கொண்ட வள்ளுகிரால்
இரணியனை உடலிடந்தான்*

Mighty clouds mounting up in vast array as if swallowing the sky! you pour down torrential rain causing honey-laden flowers in Tiruvenkadam to fall. If the Lord who with His sharp and powerful finger nails tore the body of Hiranyaksha has any intention of returning to me bangles, please intimate to Him my state of mind.

சாற்றுமினே-Please tell him my state of mind; it may, also mean 'ascertain His mind and tell me.'

It is not enough if the flowers unwanted now are made to fall. This is only **anishta nivrtti**. The clouds must go further and work for **ishta-prapti**; the attainment of what is desired, namely **bhagavad samslesha**. So, the clouds are requested to take the message to God.

'தான் கொண்ட சரிவளைகள்' (the bangles which He has taken) signifies that through **vislesha** (separation) He has allowed the body to thin and thereby caused the bangles to fall off. Likewise, the return of the bangles would signify **samslesha** (communion) accounting for the body regaining former health and ensuring that the bangles are retained and not caused to glide from the hands.

(6) Clouds! you have drunk fully the waters of the sea and are pouring in plenty over the whole of Tiruvenkadam where resides my Lord, who for the sake of **devas**, sought the gift of a small piece of land from Mahabali - please inform Him in what state of distress I am, says Saint Andal

சலங்கொண்டு கிளர்ந்தெழுந்த
தண்முகில்காள்!*மாவலியை
நிலங்கொண்டான் வேங்கடத்தே
நீரந்தேறிப்பொழிவீர்காள்!*
உலங்கு உண்ட விளங்கனி போல்
உள்மெலியப் புகுந்து*என்னை

Shining clouds that have drawn up the waters of the sea, mounted up the sky and poured down in Tiruvenkadam where resides the Lord who, for the sake of the gods, appeared as Vamana, sought and obtained the gift of a piece of land from Mahabali! **Viraha-tapa** (pangs of separation) has entered my mind and eaten up the vitals, even as swarms of bees enter the wood-apple and eat away the inside. Kindly intimate to Sriman Narayana my forlorn state. Clouds that art gathered over Tiruvenkadam where dwells the Lord who went to the extent of seeking a gift of land from the asura king, Mahabali, on behalf of selfseeking gods! I am not asking you to approach an asura king; but only our lord. Besides I am seeking the Lord as an end in itself. Would you not do me this favour?

(7) The message to be conveyed.

**சங்கமா கடல் கடைந்தான்
தண்முகில்காள்!*வேங்கடத்துச்
செங்கண்மால் சேவடக் கீழ்
அடிவீழ்ச்சி விண்ணப்பம்*
கொங்கைமேல் குங்குமத்தின்
குழம்பழியப் புகுந்து*ஒரு நாள்
தங்குமேல் என்னாவி
தங்குமென்று உரையீரே.

Cool clouds that move about in Tiruvenkadam where dwells the Lord who churned the great ocean full of beautiful shells and other riches! Kindly place this prayer at the blessed feet of the Lord whose eyes are like the lotus; If He is pleased to embrace me at least once so as to wipe off the saffron paste over my breasts, my prana would exist.

ஒரு நாள் ஆவி தங்கும் suggests that it would at least keep her alive.

(8) I am spending all my time singing His glorious names. Would He not be graciously pleased to send me a word of assurance?

கார்காலத்தெழுகின்ற
கார்முகில்காள்!* வேங்கடத்துப்
போர்காலத்தெழுந்தருளிப்
பொருதவனார் போர்சொல்லி*
நீர்காலத்து எருக்கின்
அம்பழவிலை போல் வீழ்வேனை*
வார்காலத்தொரு நாள்
தம் வாசகம் தந்தருளாரே. 8

Dense clouds appearing in Tiruvenkadam in the rainy, season! Repeating the names of Sri Rama who entered upon the war, fought and came out with resounding success, I am down like the **erukkam** leaf in the rainy season! Am I destined to pass all my days like this in sorrow? Would not the Lord be pleased to send me the immediate future a word of assurance?

(9) Would the Lord who reclines in **yoga nidra** on Adishesha in the Milky ocean utter an untruth? Would He forget His innate desire to protect His devotees and be responsible for causing a woman to languish?

**மதயாணை போலெழுந்த
மா முகில்காள்!* வேங்கடத்தைப்
பதியாக வாழ்வீர்காள்!
பாம்பணியான் வார்த்தை என்னே!*கதியென்றும் தானாவான்
கருதாது*ஓர் பெண் கொடியை
வதை செய்தான் என்னும் சொல்
வையகத்தார் மதியாரே. 9

Great clouds rising proudly like mad elephants! you have made Tiruvenkadam your home! How is it that the word of the Lord who

reclines on the serpent, Adishesha, is undependable? Forgetting that He is ever the protector of devotees, He is tormenting a lady exceedingly tender like a creeper. People of the world would now lose faith in His words.

“O clouds! you have made Tiruvenkadam your home” suggests that, in stead of being occasional visitors, they stay permanently in Tirumala having the good fortune of worshipping the Lord at all times. The next address ‘**வாழ்வீர்காள்**’ is indicative of the consequent transcendent facility they enjoy.

Saint Andal hoped that the Lord would be pleased to permit her to render every form of service unto Him, as in the case of Adishesha. She also placed full reliance on His words “**moksha-yishyami, ma suchah**”, shall grant you liberation; grieve not.” But now it is learnt that He, associated as He is with serpent Adishesha, speaks with a double tongue! Would people, it is asked, believe that He is tormenting a woman when He is universally acknowledged to be the protector of all?

(10) Phala sruti-

Para Vasudeva, the supreme Lord who reclines on Adishesha in **yoganidra** in the Milky ocean and who incarnated as Sri Krishna, has made Tiruvenkadam His abode in order to be easy of access to men and celestial beings alike. Saint Andal lost her heart to the Lord and sought **KainkaryaSamrajya**.

**நாகத்தினையாணை
நன்னுதலாள் நயந்து உரை செய்*
மேகத்தை வேங்கடக்கோன்
விடு தூதில் விண்ணப்பம்*
போகத்தில் வழுவாத
புதுவையர்கோன் கோதை தமிழ்*
ஆகத்து வைத்துரைப்பாரவர்
அடியாராகுவரே. 10

Andal who is endowed with an exquisitely beautiful and beaming face who is the celebrated daughter of Periyalvar of Sri Villiputtur, who experienced the fullness of **bhagavad anubhava**, set her heart on the lord of Tiruvenkadam and composed this great hymn. These ten stanzas of this work are cast in the form of a message to be conveyed by cloud-messengers to the Lord. Whoever studies them with care would be entitled to perform **Kainkarya** to the Lord and **experience** illimitable bliss.

TIRUMANGAI ALVAR PERIYA TIRUMOZHI

I. VIII - In the ten stanzas comprising **Peria Tirumozhi**, I.VIII, Tirumangai Alvar earnestly urges his mind to go to Tiruvenkadam and take refuge in the Lord.

1. The first stanza entreats his mind to seek Tiruvenkadam, as the Lord's resident there is the All-merciful God who descended on Earth as Krishna and who reclines in the Milky ocean.

கொங்கலர்ந்தமலர்க்குருந்தம்ஓசித்தகோவலன்எம்பிரான்*
சங்குதங்குதடங்கடல் துயில்கொண்ட தாமரைக்
கண்ணினன்*
பொங்குபுள்ளினவாய்பிளந்தபுராணர்தம்மிடம்*பொங்குநீர்ச்
செங்கயல்தினைக்கும்சுனைத்திருவேங்கடம்அடைநெஞ்சமே!

Tiruvenkadam, full of roaring streams and watersheds where red (young) fish happily move about, is the seat of the Ancient one, Sriman Narayana, who as Gopalakrishna, brought down the **Kurinta** trees full of fragrant flowers, my Benefactor, Pundarikaksha (the lotus-eyed) who is in **yoga-nidra** on the Milky ocean abounding in shells, untold riches, and who tore the beaks of the audacious crane (Bakasura who came in that guise to swallow up Krishna) My mind! seek Tiruvenkadam.

(2) Krishna, who killed the demoness, Putana and who reclines on the Milky ocean, stands on Tiruvenkadam Hill; seek Him there.

பள்ளியாவதுபாற்கடல் அரங்கம் இரங்கவன் பேய்முலை*
பிள்ளையாய் உயிருண்ட எந்தை பிரானவன் பெருகுமிடம்*
வெள்ளியான் கரியான் மணிநிறவண்ணென்றெண்ணி*
நாள்தோறும்
தெள்ளியார்வணங்கும்மலைத்திருவேங்கடம்அடைநெஞ்சமே!
(2)

The Lord, who even as an infant suckled the demoness (Putana) and took away her life too, reclines on the Milky ocean and in

Tiruvarangam; and the place where he grows and develops is the Mountain Tiruvenkadam where men of true wisdom contemplating on Bhagavan as White-hued (in Krta-yuga), black-hued (in kali-yuga) and as **syama-varna** (in dvapara-yuga) and worship Him daily as an end in itself (**ananya-prayojana**). My mind! endeavour to reach Him.

In infancy one can scarcely stand up; the infant spends most of the time in a lying posture. The lord is in the reclining posture on the Milky ocean and is available to Brahma and other gods. In Sri Rangam, He is lying down available for worship to suppliants in the world. During the stage of the toddler, He stays in Tirumalai-Tirupati.

பெருகுதல் refers to growth and development, the stage subsequent to infancy, when the infant learns to stand and walk. It is to stage of the toddler.

3) The lord residing in Tiruvenkadam is our refuge. It is He who incarnated as Krishna, felled the **Kurunata** trees and protected cows and cowherds of gokula by lifting the govardhana.

நின்றமாமருதுஇற்றுவீடு நடந்தநின்மலன்நேமியான்
என்றும்வானவர்கைதொழும்இணைத்தாமரையடி
யெம்பிரான்
கன்றிமாரிபொழிந்திடக் கடிதாநிரைக்குஇடர்நீக்குவான்
சென்றுசுன்றமெடுத்தவன்திருவோங்கடம்அடை
நெஞ்சமே!
(3)

The Lord who as Krishna (a toddler) walked with faltering steps betwixt the two huge **Kurunata** trees that stood firmly implanted, and brought them down, who is blemishless, who wields the Discus (Chakrayudha), whose lotus-like feet are worshipped by **nitya-suris**, and who lifted the govardan Hill and protected herds of cows from the danger of continual torrential rain caused by the irate Indra, resides in Tiruvenkadam. My mind! endeavour to reach Tiruvenkadam.

Having spoken in the previous stanzas about the reclining posture of the lord, in this His walking and the standing pose are referred to. As a toddler with faltering steps, He walks betwixt the turn **Kurunata** trees and brings them down effortlessly.

4) Lord Krishna, easy of access to devotees, dwells in Tiruvenkadam. He is our only refuge.

பார்த்தற்காய் அன்றுபாரதம் கைசெய்திட்டு
வென்றபரஞ்சுடர்*
கோத்து அங்கு ஆயர் தம்பாடியில் குரவையிணைந்த
எம்கோவலன்*
ஏத்துவார் தம்மனத்துள்ளான் இடவெந்தை
மேவியஎம்பிரான்*
தீர்த்த நீர்த்தடஞ்சோலைகூழ் திருவோங்கடம்
அடைநெஞ்சமே!
(4)

The Supreme Effulgence (Param jyotis), who once upon a time, for the sake of Arjuna took charge of military strategy and conducted the Mahabharata War to a victorious end, and who as Gopala participated in **rasa-krida** in Tiruvaipadi, and who dwells in the hearts of those who adore Him is my Benefactor abiding in Tiruvenkadam which abounds in holy waters and is surrounded by extensive groves. My mind! seek to reach Him there.

References to **rasa-Krida** are found in the **Vishnu Purana** and **Srimad Bhagavatam**. It is described as a kind of dance where each gopika dances with Sri Krishna who has for the purposes of the dance multiplied Himself.

Anganamanganam antare Madhavah Madhavam Madhavam chantarenangana.

5) The lord who liberates seekers from distress resides in Tiruvenkadam; so it is up to the mind to seek Him there.

வண்கையான் அவுணர்க்குநாயகன் வேள்வியில்சென்று,
 மாணியாய்*
 மண்கையால் இரந்தான் மராமரமேழும் எய்தவலத்தினுன்*
 எண்கையான் இமயத்துள்ளான் இருஞ்சோலைமேவிய
 எம்பிரான்*
 திண்கைம்மா துயர்தீர்த்தவன் திருவேங்கடம்
 அடைநெஞ்சமே! (5)

The Lord who appeared as a Brahma-charin at the **yaga-sala** before the asura chief, Mahabali, noted for his uncommon munificence; and tout himself in the position of a seeker of a gift of a piece of land, pierced the seven huge trees with a single arrow. He has eight arms; He dwells in the Himalayas (Badari); He liberated gajendra from the deadly grip of a crocodile. He is my Benefacotor; He has taken His abode in Tiruvenkadam. My mind! seek Him.

He has eight arms for the purpose of wielding weapons to assure His devotees that He is ever ready to rescue them from their troubles, however, serious.

6) The Lord who has made Tiruvenkadam His home saved the worlds from **maha pralaya** by keeping them within Himself. He killed Hiranya who subjected Prahalada to untold cruelty. so to reach Tiruvenkadam-

எண்திசைகளும் ஏழுலகமும் வாங்கிப்பொன்வயற்றில்பய்து*
 பண்டுஓராலிலைப்பள்ளிகொண்டவன் பால்மதிக்கு
 இடர்தீர்த்தவன்*
 ஒண்திறலவுணனுரத்துகிர்வைத்தவன் ஒள்ளையிற்றெடு*
 திண்திறலியாயவன் திருவேங்கடம் அடைநெஞ்சமே! (6)

The Lord who, once upon a time, took the eight directions (i.e.all objects located therein) and the seven worlds, kept them safe in His stomach (i.e.without their becoming a prey to the deluge) and reclined on a tender banian leaf on the waters of the deluge; who freed the

Moon from wasting away; who appeared as the mighty Narasimha with shining teeth and by pressing the formidable Hiranya with His finger nails tore his chest. He stays in Tiruvenkadam. My mind! seek Him.

ஒள் எயிற்றெடு -beautiful teeth.c.f. 'அழகியான் தாமன அரியருவன் தானே?'

7) The Lord exists as the five elements (i.e.as their inner Atma). He is referred to by a thousand names, signifying His auspicious qualities.

பாரும்நீர்ளிக்காற்றினேடு மஆகாசமும் இவையாயினுன்*
 பேரும் ஆயிரம் பேசநின்ற பிறப்பிலிபெருகுமிடம்*
 காரும்வார்பனிநீள் விசும்பிடைச் சோருமாழகில்தோய்தர*
 சேரும்வார்பொழில்கூழ் எழில்திருவேங்கடம்
 அடைநெஞ்சமே! (7)

The Lord appears in the form of earth, water, fire, air and akasa (i.e.has them as His **sarira**); He is praised by a thousand names; He is unborn (i.e.not subject to karma and therefore, not forced to be born due to karmic necessity). He stands expressive of His greatness in Tiruvenkadam which reaches beyond **meghamandala** where rain, snow and due full-the lofty mountain on whose sides clouds come and settle, and woods, full of tall trees, are found. My mind! reach this delightful mountain.

8) The Lord is **pancha-bhuta svarupi; nitya-suri nirvahaka;** the Consort of Sri; Kurava women keep guard over the cultivated fields in Tiruvenkadam which He has made His permanent abode.

அம்பரம் அனல்கால்நிலம் சலமாகிநின்ற அமரர்கோன்*
 வம்புலாமலர்மேல் மலிமடமங்கைதன் கொழுநனவன்*
 கொம்பினன்ன இடைமடக்குறமாதர் நீளிதணந்தொறும்*
 செம்புனம்மவைகாவல்கொள் திருவேங்கடம்
 அடைநெஞ்சமே! (8)

The Lord who exists as akasa, fire, air, earth and water (i.e.as the elements), who is the Consort of Sri who dwells on the fragrant lotus

and who is the Lord of the **nitya-suris**, resides in Tiruvenkadam, where modest, slender waisted Kurava women keep guard over cultivated lands from the lofts they have set high up on trees. My mind! endeavour to reach this.

9) My mind! try to reach Tiruvenkadam which is the dwelling place of the Lord who easily attained by **ashtakshara mantrajapa** and which is the brightest jewel (**tilaka**) to the world

பேசுமின்திருநாமம் எட்டெழுத்தும் சொல்லிநின்ற,
பின்னரும்*
பேசுவார் தமைஉய்யவாங்கிப் பிறப்பறுக்கும்பிரானிடம்*
வாசமாமலர் நாறுவார்வொழில் சூழ்தரும்உலகக்கலாம்*
தேசமாய்த்திகழும்மலைத் திருமேங்கடம் அடைநெஞ்சமே!
(9)

My mind! reach Tiruvenkadam hill which is surrounded by extensive groves full of fragrant and choice trees. This is the abode of the Lord who confers life abundance and liberation from births and deaths upon those who utter the blissful eight lettered mantra (**Ashtakshara**), open to all, and meditate on its significance. Tiruvenkadam is a tilakam, bright ornament, to all the worlds.

The great efficacy of the **Ashtakshara mantra**, called also **Mulamantra**, is referred to. Whoever repeats this - and it is open to all - and ponders over its inner significance crosses over **samsara**.

10) Phala Sruti - The benefits that accrue from a reverent study of these excellent stanzas on the Lord of Tiruvenkadam-

செங்கயல்தினைக்கும்சுனைத் திருவேங்கடத்து
உறைசெல்வனை*
மங்கையர்தலைவன்கலிகன்றிவண்தமிழ்ச்செஞ்சொல்
மாலைகள்*
சங்கையின்றித்தரித்து உரைக்கவல்லார்கள்
தஞ்சமதாகவே*
வங்கமாகடல்வையம் காவலராசி வானுலகாள்வரே. (10)

Those who without any lingering doubts (i.e. with unshakable faith) study and ponder over this beautiful garland of choice flowers of exquisite Tamil stanzas composed by Kaliyan, the chief of the people of Tirumangai region, in praise of the Lord who dwells eternally on Tiruvenkadam famous for its water-sheds where young fish play about freely and happily, and who consider Him as their sole refuge would during their life here be leaders of the world surrounded by the vast seas where numerous ships ply, and would, likewise, be leaders in Paramapada in after life.

PERIYA TIRUMOZHI

I. IX

In every one of the ten stanzas of **Periya Tirumozhi**, I.Viii, Tirumangai Alvar urges his mind to seek Tiruvenkadam.

திருவேங்கடம் அடைநெஞ்சமே is the refrain of the stanzas. The co-operative mind accedes to this and both repair to Tirumalai to render service unto the Lord. But, contrary to the Alvar's expectation, the Lord does not welcome him or talk to him or bid him render any service. The Alvar attributes this to the enormity of his own sins and makes a fervent prayer to evoke the sympathy of the Lord. "I have committed sins, many and manifold; but I now come with a contrite heart. Thou art the Protector of all. I am helpless and have no other saviour. The divine Mother, ever forgiving, is by Thy side. I have surrendered myself unto Thee in Her presence. Forgetting my sins, pray accept me as Thy servant."

1) Putting my trust in persons who are no true relatives, forgetting that Thou art the natural, unconditioned (**nirupadhika**) relative, I have suffered endless misery. with true repentance I seek Thee; pray accept me as Thy servant.

தாயேதந்தையென்றும் தாரமேகிளை மக்களென்றும்*
நோயேயட்வொழிந்தேன் நுனைக்காண்பதோராசையினால்*
வேயேய்ப்பும்பொழில் சூழ் விரையார்திருவோங்கடவா!*

நாயேன்வந்துஅடைந்தேன்நல்கிஆளென்னைக்கொண்டருளே.

(1)

Lord of Tiruvenkadam with its dense bamboos and fragrant groves! I have been steeped in misery talking always of mother, father, spouse and children (talking them as my true relatives when they are not). This cur of a fellow (this despicable creature) is now (rejecting the false relatives) approaching Thee (who art every kind of relation to me), with the sole aim of worshipping Thee and is taking refuge in Thee. Pray be pleased to accept me as Thy servant.

c.f.saint Satakopa-Tiruvoimozhi, V.i.8

சேலேய் கண்ணியரும் பெருஞ்செல்வமும்
நன் மக்களும் மேலாத்தாய் தந்தையுமவரே
யினியாவாரே- and
தாயாய்த் தந்தையாய் மக்களாய் மற்றுமாய்
முற்றுமாய், நீயாய் நீ நின்றவாறு. VII. Viii. 1

God is the only true, unconditioned relative; all others are relatives for the time and on account of chance factors.

2) My Lord! Taken in by the guiles of young damsels, I have run after sense delights and committed sins without number. I have now realised my folly and taken refuge in Thee.

மானேய்கண்மடவார் மயக்கில்பட்டு மாநிலத்து

நானேநானாவிதநரகம்புகும் பாவம்செய்தேன்

தேனேய்ப்பும்பொழில்சூழ் திருவோங்கடமாமலை*என்

ஆனாய்! வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (2)

Lord of Seshadri! My Lord noble, majestic like an elephant! losing my mind to the guiles, charms of young women of the world with eyes like those of the deer, I have all by myself committed many and manifold sins liable to punishment in all hells. But now, I have realised my sinfulness and I take refuge under Thee. Pray accept me as Thy servant.

In the address to Bhagavan as **என் ஆனாய்** one sees many a suggestion. Even as the elephant could be caught only with the help of a female elephant, one attains the Lord only with the aid of Sri as purushakara (mediator); or as one could approach the elephant with the help of an **acharya**; The arms of the Lord are long like the elephant's trunk; As the Lord is always accustomed to giving, and giving in plenty, His arms are long. Seven other implications also could be worked out.

3) I have been guilty of blind killing (jiva himsa); and have been hard on those that sought my aid; have never cared even to offer, them a polite refusal. Pray forgive me my sins and accept me.

கொன்றேன்பல்லுயிரைக் குறிக்கோளொன்றிலாமையினால்*
 என்றேனும்இரந்தார்க்கு இனிதாகஉரைத்தறியேன்*
 குன்றேய்மேகமதிர் குளிர்மாமலைவோங்கடவா!*
 அன்றேவந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (3)

Lord of Tiruvenkadam! the great mountain, ever cool, where huge bank of clouds causing thunder gather. Utterly devoid of sense, I have killed many lives. I know of on occasion when I have at least uttered a polite word of refusal to suppliants (not to speak of making gifts); but now, the moment wisdom has dawned upon me, I hasten to seek Thee. (or fresh from guilty deeds, I venture to seek Thee). I know of no other saviour. Pray accept me as Thy servant.

4) Subject to repeated births and deaths, I have been completely paralysed. I know of no good that I have done; I have suffered endless misery. Pray forgive me and accept me.

குலந்தானெத்தினையும் பிறந்தேயிறந்தெய்த்தொழிந்தேன்*
 நலந்தாவென்றுமிலேன் நல்லதோறும் செய்துமிலேன்*
 நீலம்தோய் நீள்முகில்சேர் நெறியார்திருவோங்கடவா!*
 அலந்தேன் வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (4)

Lord of Tiruvenkadam! the mountain on which thick rain-clouds settle and move about making the place cool! Taking many births in diverse forms and dying as often, I have been completely worn out.

I lay claim to no goodness, nor have I performed a righteous deed. I have suffered much misery. I have now taken refuge in Thee. Pray accept me as Thy kinkara.

5) Having committed sins without number and suffered much, being helpless and having no other refuge, I surrender myself at Thy feet. Pray accept me.

எப்பாவம்பலவும் இவையேசெய்து இளைத்தொழிந்தேன்*
 துப்பா! நின்னடியே தொடர்ந்தேத்தவும் கிற்கின்றிலேன்*
 செப்பார்திண்வரைகூழ் திருவோங்கடமாமலை என்
 அப்பா! வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (5)

My Lord resident in Tiruvenkadam surrounded by lofty hills for fortification! Omniscient and omnipotent Master! having without compunction committed many and manifold sins and suffered, being a helpless creature, I seek refuge in Thee, my Master, all-knowing and all-powerful. Pray accept me as Thy servant.

துப்பா-The Lord is **sarva-sakta** and **sarvajna** and He alone can save.

6) Caught up in the body constituted of the five elements and having suffered untold miseries, bereft of any other **rakshaka**, I seek Thy blessed feet; pray accept me.

மண்ணாய்நீர்ளிகால் மஞ்சலாவும் ஆகாசமுமாம்*
 புண்ணூராக்கைதன்னுள் புலம்பித்தளர்ந்து எய்த்தொழிந்தேன்*
 விண்ணாய்நீர்சிகர விரையார்திருவோங்கடவா!*
 அண்ணா! வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (6)

Entangled in the body fashioned out of the five elements-earth, water, fire, air and akasa, where clouds move about, and full of sores (to which the flesh is air), I have groaned in distress, have been enfeebled and have suffered. Having no other saviour, I have sought refuge in Thee. My master, resident in Tiruvenkadam with lofty peaks reaching up to the sky. Pray accept me as Thy servant.

The high peaks announce, as it were that the Lord is **sarva rakshaka** (universal saviour).

7) In early life, I committed sins in ignorance, in adult life I ran after sensuous pleasures and suffered in consequence. Now, with the dawn of right understanding, I seek refuge in Thee-Pray accept me.

தெரியேன்பாலகனாய்ப் பலதீமைகள்செய்துமிட்டேன்*
 பெரியேனாயினதின் பிறர்க்கேயுழைத்து ஏழையானேன்*
 கரிசேர்ப்பும்பொழில்சூழ் கனமாமலைவோங்கடவா!*
 அரியே! வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (7)

Lord of Tiruvenkadam abounding in elephants and surrounded by beautiful flower gardens! During early years, due to lack of proper understanding, I committed sins innumerable; when I grew up, I ran after sensuous pleasures and lost my understanding and everything. (Though the past years have been ill-spent, at least) now O Lord Sriman Narayana! I have sought Thee; pray accept me as Thy Servant.

8) O Lord of Tiruvenkadam! I have committed heinous sins and merited innumerable births and deaths and suffered in consequence. But now, I have come to behold Thee-Pray accept me.

நோற்றேன்பல்பிறவி நுன்னைக்காண்பதோராசையினால்*
ஏற்றேன்இப்பிறப்பே இடருற்றனன் எம்பெருமான்!*
கோல்தேன்பாய்ந்தொழுகும் குளிர்சோலைகூழ்வோங்கடவா!*
ஆற்றேன்வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே.

(8)

Lord of Tiruvenkadam noted for its cool gardens rich in honey! I committed many sins and forged many links in the chain of births and deaths; (by some unintended good) the desire to behold Thee is born in me in this life due to Thy grace. Dreading very much future births and deaths, I have come seeking Thee. Pray accept me.

9) Just as Nammalvar expresses in the stanza “அகல கில்லேன்---” **Tiruvoimozhi** VI.X. 10, how he performs **Saranagati** with Sri as purushakara (mediator, intercessor), in this stanza **Tirumangai Alvar**, singing the praises of the Lord’s saulabhya and other auspicious qualities, and of His being ever in association with Sri, expresses his own utter incompetence and helplessness and lack of any other means and surrenders himself unto the Lord, making a fervent prayer that his sins may be forgiven and he be accepted.

பற்றேல்ஒன்றுமில்லென் பாவமேசெய்துபாவியானேன்
மற்றேலொன்றறியேன் மாயனே! எங்கள்மாதவனே!*
கல்தேன்பாய்ந்தொழுகும் கமலச்சுனைவோங்கடவா!*
அற்றேன்வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே. (9)

Home of innumerable auspicious gunas! consort of Sri! who is never failing purushakara to us all! Lord of Tiruvenkadam where bamboo honey flows and lovely lotus-ponds abound! committing nothing but sins, I have become a confirmed sinner; I have no other support and no other means. I have come to Thee and am meant only to serve Thee Pray accept me as Thy servant.

Straying away from Thee, I have found no support anywhere else. When **jnana** and **ananda** are the distinctive marks of the self, I have made sinfulness as my nature.

Thy avowed purpose is to save sinners. Even if by chance Thou art to become vexed with me, there is Sri by Thy side to intercede on our behalf. Encouraged by this, I have sought Thy blessed feet. Be pleased to accept me.

The address **மாதவனே** indicates that **prapatti** has been performed at the feet of the Divine Dampati (The Divine Couple), the prayer for protection being addressed to both of them.

10) Phala Sruti:-

The fruit accruing from a devout study of these ten stanzas.-

கண்ணாய்வுமுலகுக்கு உயிராய எங்கார்வண்ணனை*
விண்ணோர் தாம்பரவும் பொழில்வோங்கடவேதியனை*
திண்ணார்மாடங்கள்கூழ் திருமங்கையர்கோன்கலியன்*
பண்ணார்பாடல்பத்தும் பயில்வார்க்கு இல்லைபாவங்களே.

(10)

These ten stanzas composed by the chief of the people of Tirumangai noted for its palatial buildings are in praise of my Lord who is an eye (i.e.who, like the eye gives true knowledge and protects thereby) and the life to all the seven worlds (i.e.who is the only support, **prana** for all), who is of the hue of rain clouds, who is resident in Tiruvenkadam surrounded by groves, who is worshipped by **nitya-suris** and who is the Supreme Lord taught in the Vedas. Whoever studies these sweet stanzas with reverence will be freed from all sins.

PERIYA TIRUMOZHI

I.X

Tirumangai Alvar expresses in **Periya Tirumozhi** I.IX. his utter incompetence and helplessness and his surrendering himself unto the Lord. **என்னை ஆட்கொண்டருளே** is the frequent prayer conveyed in each of the ten stanzas comprising this section. Since egoism (**ahankara**) and acquisitive tendencies (**mamakara**) the sense of 'I' and 'mine' - are the prime hindrances to being accepted for kainkarya, he now prays for liberation from these and for the fostering of true devotion. It may be recalled that Sri Ramanuja also performs Saranagati in this fashion - **tvat padaravinda yugalam_Saranamaham prapadye-** and then prays i) for help to leep over prakriti in its subtle and gross forms, ii) for **para-bhakti, para-jnana** and **parama-bhakti** and iii) for becoming the eternal servant of Bhagavan finding delight only in fulfilling the Lord's purposes.

1) Prayer for the removal of all hindrances to the attainment of **bhagavadanubhava**.

கண்ணார்கடல்கூழ் இலங்கைக்கு இறைவன்தன்*
திண்ணகம்பிளக்கச் சரம்செலைய்த்தாய்!*
விண்ணோர்தொழும் வோங்கடமாமலைமேய*
அண்ணா! அடியேனிடரைக்கனையாயே. (1)

Lord, thou aimed arrows so as to rend into two the strong body of Ravana, the chief of Lanka surrounded by attractive (extensive) seas! Thou residest in Tiruvenkadam to be worshipped by celestial beings. Pray dispel my sufferings (the travails of **samsara**)

The Lord who incarnated as Rama is the Lord who dwells in Tirumalai.

2) [Thou wert pleased to send Garuda to Lanka to kill Mali, a king of Lanka-Pray bestow Thy grace on me, who am devoid of any other means.]

இலங்கைப்பதிக்கு அன்றுஇறையாய* அரக்கர்
குலம்கெட்டு அவர்மாளக் கொடிப்புள் திரித்தாய்!*
விலங்கல்குடுமித் திருவேங்கடம்மேய*
அலங்கல்துளபமுடியாய்! அருளாயே. (2)

Lord! in the past Thou deputed Garuda, Thy banner, to Lanka to crush the entire brood of kings of Lanka! Thou residest in Tiruvenkadam whose lofty peaks the sin and the Moon have difficulty in crossing! Thou wearest tulasi garlands (as a symbol of Thy avowed purpose namely that of saving those that seek Thee). Pray bestow Thy grace on me.

3) [The Lord, who protected all the worlds at pralaya and who resides in Tiruvenkadam to save all, is entreated to bestow His grace.]

நீரார்கடலும் நிலனும்முழுதுண்டு*
ஏராலமிளந்தளிர்மேல் துயில்எந்தாய்!*
சீரார்திருவேங்கட மாமலைமேய*
ஆராவமுதே! அடியேற்கு அருளாயே. (3)

Lord! Thou swallowed all the vast oceans filled with waters, all land, everything else (i.e.protected them all at mahapralaya by keeping them safe in Thy stomach) and reclined on a beautiful, tender banian leaf! Thou residest at the great Tiruvenkadam mountain noted for its splendour! insatiable Nectar! Pray bestow Thy grace on this servant of Thine.

For one who protected all things without exception at the time of pralaya, redeeming me is nothing.

4) [Incarnating as Krishna Thou ate with relish the butter kept hanging high up near the ceiling; as Vamana Thou measured all the worlds. Thou residest in Tiruvenkadam. Thou art God of gods. Protecting those that seek Thee is Thy innate nature. May it please Thee to bestow Thy grace on me!]

உண்டாய்உறிமேல் நறுநெய்அமுதாக*
கொண்டாய்குறளாய் நீலம்ஈரடியாலே*
விண்தோய்சிகரத் திருவேங்கடம்மேய
அண்டா! அடியேனுக்கு அருள்புரியாயே. (4)

As Krishna Thou ate with relish, as if it were nectar, the sweet smelling ghee kept hung up from the ceiling; as Vamana Thou measured all the worlds in two steps!

Thou resideth with delight in the lofty peaks of Tiruvenkadam reaching up to the sky. Devadideva! (limitable shepherd!) Pray bestow grace on this servant of Thine.

அண்டா-could be rendered as Devadideva! or Shepherd. Either interpretation would be appropriate.

The first line referring to Krishna eating the ghee kept by the gopis stresses the Lord's **saulabhya** - The second line speaking of Vamana measuring the worlds in two strides emphasises His **paratva**, transcendence. The third line refers to both these aspects - the Lord dwells in Tiruvenkadam expressive of both His **paratva** and **saulabhya**. **Nityasuris** reach Tirumala to experience His **saulabhya**; peoples of the world go there to have experience of His **paratva**. The Alvar's prayer is for experiencing both the aspects (i.e.) the Lord in the fullness of His manifold perfections.

(5) [To protect Thy devotee, Prahlada, Thou incarnated as Narasimha; now Thou art in Tiruvenkadam to redeem those that seek Thee. Pray correct and accept me]

தூணாய் அதனூடு அரியாய்வந்துதோன்றி*
பேணு அவுணுடலம் நிளந்திட்டாய்!*
சேணுத்திருவேங்கட மாமலைமேய*
கோணுகணையாய்! குறிக்கொள் எனைநீயே. (5)

Thou incarnated as Narasimha in what was merely a pillar and tore the body of Hiranya who failed to recognise Thy lordship. Thou art resident in the great heights of Tiruvenkadam. Thou reclined on the king of serpents, Adishesha. Thou art Thyself to accept me.

In Narasimha Avatara, the Lord destroyed the wicked Hiranya and protected the great bhakta, Prahlada; likewise Thou stayest in Tiruvenkadam expressive of Thy vatsalya to devotees and Thy dislike of their enemies. Thou hast made Adishesha who is a dread to the wicked, Thy **kinkara** of Thine own accord. Thou must correct me and accept me as a dasa.

(6) [In response to the fervant prayer expressed, in the preceding five stanzas for the bestowal of grace, the Lord enters the Alvars mind; and the Alvar expresses his delight, and wonder at this.]

மன்னு இம்மனிசம்பிறவியை நீக்கி*
தன்னுக்கித் தன்இன்னருள்செய்யும் தலைவன்*
மின்னார்முகில்சேர் திருவேங்கடம்மேய*
என்னுனை என்னப்பன் என்நெஞ்சிலுளானே

(6)

My Lord, majestic like an elephant, has graciously dispelled the evanescent human birth and accepted me a **Kinkara**. He resides in Tiruvenkadam where clouds associated with lightning gather. My Lord has entered my mind.

Life in the world is evanescent. c.f. 'மின்னின் நிலையில மன்னுயிராக்கைகள்...'

Tiruvoimozhi

The Lord's entry into the Alvar's mind is taken as if it is the termination of his samsaric existence.

'தன்னாக்கி' signifies either 'made me like Himself' (sadharmya) or made me His **Kinkara**!

'மின்னார் முகில்சேர்' is suggestive of the presence of the Lord with His Consort Sri.

(7) [The Alvar expresses his joy that the Lord has graciously removed the hindrances in his way even as He in the past, killed the seven bulls that stood in the way of His accepting the hands of Nappinnai.]

மானேய்மடநோக்கி திறத்து எதிர்வந்த*
 ஆனேழ்விடை செற்ற அணிவரைத்தோளா!*
 தேனே! திருவேங்கடமாமலைமேய*
 கோனே! என்மனம் குடிகொண்டிருந்தாயே. (7)

Delicious Nectar! for the sake of Nappinnai of divine beauty, with eyes like those of the deer, Thou that are endowed with arms lovely and mighty, killed the seven bulls that approached with audacity! Master! Dweller in Tiruvenkadam, Thou stayest permanently in my mind.

The suggestion is the Lord stays in the Alvar's mind along with Sri.

(8) [Now that the Lord of Tiruvenkadam stays in his mind (along with Nappinnai), the Alvar says he knows of nothing except His blessed feet.]

சேயன் அணியன் என்சிந்தையுள் நின்ற
 மாயன்* மணிவாளொளி வெண்தரளங்கள்*
 வேய்விண்டு உதிர் வேங்கடமாமலைமேய
 ஆயனடியல்லது மற்றறியேனே. (8)

The Lord with wonderful auspicious qualities, deeds and the like, easily accessible to His devotees and out of reach of others, stays permanently in my mind. I know nothing except the blessed feet of Krishna who, of His own choice, resides in Tiruvenkadam where bamboos split and bring forth effulgent gems and shining white pearls.

(9) The Alvar expresses with gusto his exceeding good fortune and spells it out as three distinct acts. Thou came into my mind (**வந்தாய்**), Thou entered my mind (**என் மனம் புகுந்தாய்**), and Thou stayest permanently in me (**மன்னி நின்றாய்**).

வந்தாய் என்மனம் புகுந்தாய் மன்னிநின்றாய்*
 நந்தாதகொழுஞ்சுடரே! எங்கள்நம்பீ*
 சிந்தாமணியே! திருவேங்கடம்மேய
 எந்தாய்!*இனியான்உன்னை என்றும்விடேனே. (9)

Supreme jyotis! Never fading Effulgence! our Lord infinitely perfect and dispelling our wants! Chintamani! the Gem that grants whatever one may desire! Thou dwellest with delight in Tiruvenkadam! Thou has come unto me!

Thou hast entered my mind! Thou stayest there for ever! Here after, I shall never leave Thee.

The highest of the high, leaving the ever blissful places like Paramapada and the Milky ocean, hast come into the mind of the lowliest of the low! Thou does not think of leaving it! What a good fortune! How gracious! What saulabhya and sausilya!

10) Phala Sruti - [The result accruing from a careful study of these stanzas.]

வில்லார்மலி வேங்கடமாமலைமேய*
 மல்லார் திரள்தோள் மணிவண்ணனம்மாலை*
 கல்லார் திரள்தோள் கலியன் சொன்னமாலை*
 வல்லாரவர் வானவராகுவர் தாமே. (10)

Whoever studies garland of stanzas composed by Kaliyan (Tirumangai Alvar) strong of arm, on the Lord, who has mighty arms and who is like the bluegem in complexion and who dwells in Tiruvenkadam guarded by numerous huntsmen bow in hand (like guha) will become like **nitya-suris** (i.e. will ever have the bliss of beholding and serving the Lord).

PERIYA TIRUMOZHI

II.1.

The Alvar applauds his mind for not being fickle and running after inferior purusharthas and for being steadfast in the pursuit of **bhagavadanubhava**. In the guise of praising his mind, he derives joy in glorifying the Lord of Tiruvenkadam.

In praising the mind for being co-operative, he is following the example of Saint Satakopa, who says “நெஞ்சமே! நல்லை நல்லை! உன்னைப் பெற்றாலென் செய்யோம்! இனியென்ன குறைவினம்!” I.X.4 Again, he says,

ஊனில் வாழியிரே நல்லைபோ உன்னைப் பெற்று
வானுளார் பெருமான் மதுகூதன் என்னம்மான்
தானும்பா னுமெல்லாம் தன்னுள்ளே கலந்தொழிந்தோம்
தேனும் பாலும் நெய்யும் கன்னலும் அமுது மொத்தே.

PERIYA TIRUMOZHI II.iii.1.

1) [My mind! you have undertaken the rendering of service into the Lord who dwells in the heart - lotus of yogins - the Lord who dwells in Tiruvenkadam and who incarnated as Vamana. What a singular piece of good fortune!

வானவர் தங்கள்சிந்தை போலஎன்நெஞ்சமே!
இனிதுவந்து மாதவ
மானவர் தங்கள்சிந்தை அமர்ந்துறைகின்ற எந்தை
கானவரிடுகாரகிப்புகை ஓங்குவேங்கடம்மேவி*மாண்குற
ளான அந்தணற்கு இன்று அடிமைத்தொழில்
புண்டாயே. (1)

My mind! Like the mind of **nitya-suris**, you have with genuine pleasure accepted a life of Service (Kainkaryavritti) unto the Lord who stays eternally in the minds of great men who have performed great austerities, who dwells in Tiruvenkadam filled with the fragrance of incense offered by huntsmen! the Lord who incarnated as the great brahmacharin, Vamana. What a good fortune!

2) [My mind! how gratifying you have undertaken to render service unto the blessed feet of the Lord, our true master, contemplating on His auspicious qualities!

உறவுசுற்றமென்றென் றிலா ஒருவன் உகந்தவர் தம்மை*
மண்மிசைப்
பிறவியே கெடுப்பான் அதுகண்டுஎன் நெஞ்சமென்பாய்!*
குறவர் மாதர்களோடு வண்டுகுறிஞ்சி மருளிசை
பாடும்வேங்கடத்து*
அறவனாகற்கு இன்று அடிமைத் தொழில் புண்டாயே.
(2)

My good mind! understanding that the unexcelled Lord knows no distinction of relatives and others (i.e. views all as alike), that He dispels life on earth for those who are deeply devoted to Him, that He resides in Tiruvenkadam where **kurava** women and bees sing **kurinji**, **marul** and other tunes (in His praise) and that He is Lord of Righteousness (Lord is Bounteous giver) staying in Tiruvenkadam to reclaim us), you have entered on a life of service unto the Lord.

உகந்தவர் தம்மை - may be rendered either as ‘those that are deeply devoted to Him (i.e. the true bhakta)’ or as ‘those to whom the Lord is deeply attached’. The latter interpretation does not make the Lord liable to the change of favouritism (**vaishnavamaya**), because as Sri Ramanuja says in his **Sri Bhashya**, The Lord chooses some for special favour not arbitrarily, but because they are intensely devoted to Him: **Priyatama** eva hi varanyo bhavati.

It is only man that makes the false distinction of ‘relatives’ and ‘others’; but the Lord treats all alike He has no enemies c.f - suhrtvam sarvabhutanam; - devanam danavanam cha samanya mati daivatam.

3) [The Alvar feels gratified that his mind has entered upon service unto the blessed feet of the Lord having understood that the Lord of Tiruvenkadam is exceedingly bountiful and that He bestows His grace

not only on those that offer fresh flowers and worship Him but also on those that are associated with them and those connected with the latter and so on.]

இண்டையாயின கொண்டு தொண்டர்களேத்து
வாருறவோடும்*வாஸிடைக்
கொண்டுபோயிடவும் அதுகண்டுஎன் நெஞ்சமென்பாய்!*
வண்டுவாழ்வ வோங்கடமலை கோயில்கொண்ட
தனோடும்**மிசை
அண்டமாண்டிருப்பாற்கு அடிமைத்தொழில் பூண்டாயே. (3)

With the insight that the Lord, who resides in Tiruvenkadam where bees hum with delight, and who is also the master of the transcendental realm (Paramapada), takes to Paramapada not only His bhaktas who sing His praises offering flower garlands but also their associates, who have undertaken a life of service unto the Lord.

c.f - 'எண்டிசையுமுள்ள பூக்கொண்டு ஏத்தியுகந்துகந்து தொண்டரோங்கள் பாடியாட...' TIRUVOIMOZHI IV.Vii.8

4) [Applauding the mind for having stead-fastly undertaken to serve the Lord Gopala Krishna, residing in Tiruvenkadam.]

பாவியாதுசெய்தாய் என்நெஞ்சமே! பண்டுதொண்டு
செய்தாரை*மண்[மிசை
மேவி ஆட்கொண்டுபோய் விசும்பேறவைக்கும் எந்தை*
கோவிநாயகன் கொண்டலுந்துயர் வேங்கடமலையாண்டு*
வானவர்
ஆவியாயிருப்பாற்கு அடிமைத் தொழில் பூண்டாயே. (4)

My helpful mind! it is wise of you to have, with steadfast determination and without wavering, undertaken Kainkarya unto the Lord who out of His own will incarnated in the world and took to Paramapada those who served Him, who is the Lord of the gopis and who resides in the highest regions of Tiruvenkadam which obstructs the movement of the clouds, and who is the inner Atma (the very life) of the Nityasuris.

Following the Gita teaching about the Jnanins, it could also be said that the Lord considers the **Nityasuris**, His prana (atma).

5) [The Alvar expresses his gratification that he has not been caught up in the avaidic systems such as Buddhism and Jainism and that he is wedded to the service of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam.]

வொங்குபோதியும் பிண்டியும்முடைப் புத்தர்நோன்பியர்
பள்ளியுள்ளு[றை
தங்கள் தேவரும் தாங்களுமேயாக என்நெஞ்சமென்பாய்!*
எங்கும்வானவர் தானவர் நிறைந்தேத்தும் வேங்கடம்மேவி
நின்றருள்*
அங்கனாயகற்கு இன்று அடிமைத்தொழில் பூண்டாயே. (5)

My faithful mind! (How fortunate) you have taken up the rendering of service unto the Lord who stays in the lofty Tiruvenkadam worshipped alike by gods and men, at a time when Buddhists and Jains (who take five vows) owing allegiance respectively to their god seated under the many-branched Bodhi tree or the Asoka tree and when they, their shrine and gods were a power in the land. It is indeed, fortunate you have not come under their influence, but stood steadfast for bhagavad dasya.

6) [The Alvar expresses his gratification that his mind, instead of emulating the example of the Jains who wear orange coloured robes and fatter themselves, has opted, with determination, for a life of service to the Lord.

துவரியாடையர் மட்டையர் சமண்தொண்டர்கள்
மண்டியுண்டு பின்ன[ரும்
தமரும் தாங்களுமேதடிக்க என்நெஞ்சமென்பாய்!*
கவரிமாக்கணம்சேரும்வேங்கடம்கோயில்கொண்டகண்ணார்
விசும்பிடை
அமரநாயகற்கு இன்று அடிமைத்தொழில் பூண்டாயே. (6)

My co-operative mind! when the Jains are seen to wear orange-coloured robes, pull out the hair on their head and eat without restraint

and fatten themselves and their followers you have stood firm and adhered to the path of service to Bhagavan who has chosen for his permanent stay Tiruvenkadam where attractive deer gather in large members, and who is the Lord of the **Nitysuris** also.

7) [The Alvar commends his mind for not following the way of the Jains and for strict adherence to a life of service to the Lord of Tiruvenkadam, **Ubhaya-vibhutinatha**.]

தருக்கினால்சமண்செய்து சோறுதண்டயிரினால்
 திரனா*மிடற்றிடை
 நெருக்குவாரலக் கணதுகண்டு என்நெஞ்சமென்பாய்!*
 மருட்கள் வண்டுகள்பாடும் வேங்கடம்கோயில்
 க்ஷாண்டதனோடும்*வா
 அருக்கன் மேவிநிற்பாற்கு அடிமைத்தொழில் புண்டாயே.[னிலை
 (7)]

My good mind! seeing that the Jains seek to establish their doctrines by **tarka** (dry logic) and stuff their bellies with rice and curds you have not emulated them, but have undertaken to serve the Lord who has chosen for His stay Tiruvenkadam where bees sing melodious tunes, and who pervades the surya mandala

Another reference to the Alvar's appraisal of the Jaina is found in **Peria Tirumozhi** VII decad - தெருவில் திரிசிறு நோன்பியர் செஞ்சொற்றோடு கஞ்சி மருவிப், பிரிந்தவர் வாய்மொழி மதியாது வந்தடைவீர்'.

8) [Not misled by the specious reasoning of some people against the concept of God and His fivefold forms assumed for the purpose of protection of souls, the mind has shown great wisdom in sticking to a life of service to the Adorable Lord.]

சேயன் அணியன்சிறியன் வரியனென்பதும்
 சிலர்பேசக்கேட்டிருந்
 தே*என்நெஞ்சமென்பாய்! எனக்குஒன்று சொல்லாதே*

வேய்கள்நின்று வெண்முத்தமேசொரி வேங்கடமலை
 கோயில்மேவிய*
 ஆயர்நாயகற்கு இன்றுஅடிமைத்தொழில் புண்டாயே. (8)

Though you have heard some people offer puerile objections to the Lord's forms, e.g.the Para form as 'too far away', the archa form as 'too ordinary and common place' the (**vibhava** forms of Rama, Krishna and the like) as low, and defective, and the **vyuha**, and **harda** forms as beyond our reach', you have, my dear mind, even without telling me anything, entered upon a life of service to Gopalakrishna who has chosen for His stay Tiruvenkadam where bamboos en mass pour in plenty shining white pearls.

Tamil classics speak of valuable gems and pearls coming from out of the bamboo. c.f. 'வேய்கள் நின்று வெண்முத்தமே சொரி வேங்கடம்'. In an earlier stanza Tirumangai Alvar has referred to 'வெண்தாளங்கள் வேய் விண்டுதிர்'.

The Alvar refers to the specious arguments by which the entire seeks to discredit the doctrine of **pancha-vyuh**s, being unable to grasp its spiritual import. It is amusing that some consider transcendence (Paratva) a weakness, and some regard **saualabhya** (immanence) a defect. It is assumed without question that God is either transcendent or immanent but not both at once.

(9) The mind which till now has been going the way of the world is today totally transformed. what a wonder! How fortunate! says the Alvar.

கவையாடியுரைத்ததே உரைத்தாய் என்நெஞ்சமென்பாய்!
 துணிந்துகேள்*
 பாடியாடிப்பலரும் பணிந்தேத்திக் காண்கிலர்*
 ஆடுதாமரையோனும்ஈசனும்அமரர்கோனும்நின்றேத்தும்*
 வேங்கடத்து
 ஆடுகூத்தனுக்கு இன்று அடிமைத்தொழில் புண்டாயே. (9)

My helpful mind! (previously) you were at one with the world running after worldly things and echo-uttering the sentiments they uttered.

(you are unaware of the change that has come over you). Listen with interest you have now taken up a life of service unto the Lord whose praises many sing and dance with joy, whom many worship in deep reverence and whom many have failed to behold, and who is worshipped with steadfast devotion by the victorious Brahma born of the wonderful lotus, by Siva and Indra, the leader of the devas. How fortunate!

The reference is to Brahmas success in carrying out the creative activities entrusted to him by Bhagavan.

(10) Phala Sruti-

மின்னுமாமுகில்மேவு தணிந்தருவெங்கடமலை கோயில்மேவிய*
அன்னமாய் நிகழ்ந்த அமரர்வருமாளை*
கன்னிமாமதிள் மங்கையர் கலிகன்றி இன்
தமிழாலுரைத்த*இம்
மன்னுபாடல் வல்லார்க்கு இடமாகும் வானுலகே. (10)

These immortal Tamil hymns sung by the Alvar, the chief of the people of Tirumankai, with its strong ramparts, are in praise of the Adorable Lord who has selected as His permanent abode Tiruvenkadam where clouds generating lightning gather, and who in the past incarnated as Hamsa and who is the Lord of **Nitya-suris** and devas. Whoever studies these stanzas reverently will be certain to reach Paramapada.

ஸ்ரீ:
Poikai Alvar

FIRST TIRUVANDADI

26. [Tiruvenkadam itself is our refuge; it could enable us to realise our goals.]

எழுவார் விடைகொள்வார் ஈன் தூழாயாளை*
வழுவா வகை நினைந்து வைகல்-தொழுவார்*
வினைச்சுடரை நந்துவிக்கும் வோங்கடமே*வானோர்
மனச்சுடரைத் தூண்டும் மலை. (26)

Tiruvenkadam itself could put out the fire of Karmas (merit and demerit) standing in the way of the realization of the, **artharthins** (the seekers of wealth) who rise and get away when their object is fulfilled, of the **Kaivalyarthins** (seekers of self realization i.e those who aspire for realising their own self in its absolute purely uncontaminated by **prakrti**) who would take leave once their goal is reached, and of those who yearn for uninterrupted meditation on the Lord wearing **tualsi** garlands as an end in itself (and as a gift to be sought from the Lord and no other). The same Tirumalai kindles and keeps the flame of spirituality ever bright in the heart of **Nityasuris**.

Ramanuja's commentary on the gita VII.16 refers to aisvarya, kaivalya (self-realization) and moksha (God-realisation) as the three possible objects of human aspiration.

Without discriminating between those who seek God-realisation as an end in itself and those who aspire for interior purusharthas, namely, self-realisation (**Kaivalya**) and wealth (**aisvarya**), Tiruvenkadam removes the obstacles standing in the way of these goals, and enables the different aspirants to attain their respective goals. There is **anishta-nivrtti** (the dispelling of obstacles) and **ishtaprapiti** (the attainment of what is desired).

Tirumalai-Tirupati puts out the fire of Karmas that hinder the realisation of the different goals; and it kindles the fire of devotion and makes it glow ever bright. It is note worthy that Tiruvenkadam at once puts out the fire of Karmas (வினைச் சுடரை நந்துவிக்கும்) in the case of the seekers of wealth, of self-realisation and one-pointed seekers of God realisation; and it keeps the fire of devotion ever-bright (மனச் சுடரைத் தூண்டும்) in the case of **nityasuris**. That means, the intense desire of **Nitya-suris** for the experience of the Lord's gunas, such as saulabhya and sausilya is intensified and the joy of experience heightened.

(37) For the benefit of all coming after the **vibhava avataras**, i.e after the periods when the Lord incarnated as Rama and Krishna, the Lord appears in the mundane world as **archamurtis** (icons, images) in sacred places, such as Tiruvenkadam.

வகையறு நுண்கேள்வி வாய்வார்கள்* நாளுநம்
புகை விளக்கும் பும்புனலுமேந்தி*- திசை திசையின்
வேதியர்கள் சென்றிறைஞ்சும் வோங்கடமே* வெண்
சங்கம்
ஊதியவாய் மாலுகந்த ஊர். (37)

Persons well-versed in the nuances of vedic teaching regarding the several objects of desire and of the means prescribed for their attainment and repair to Tiruvenkadam daily in large numbers from all directions with incense, lamp, fruits and holy water and offer them unto the Lord. This is the place dear to the Lord who (as Krishna) blow with His lips the Panchajanya (during the Mahabharata war).

(38) Tiruvenkadam is the place where the Lord likes to dwell always.

ஊரும் வாயியரவம் ஒண்குறவர் மாலயானை*
பேரவெறிந்த பெருமணியை*-காருடைய
மின்னென்று புற்றடையும் வோங்கடமே* மேலசுரர்
எம்மென்னு மாலதிடம். (38)

In Tiruvenkadam striped snakes crawling on their bellies seeking the big gems, which worthy **Buravas** throw at elephants to drive them away from cultivated fields, in the proximity of the elephants mistake them for lightning and, afraid of the anticipated thunder, run to cover into their holes. This is the place which **Nityasuris** greatly prize saying "This is specially dear to our Lord".

The kuravas of Tirumalai are characterised a 'worthy' because from time immemorial they have been in Tiruvenkadam in the service of the Lord, keeping guard over cultivated fields. Like Guha, they are steadfast in **bhagavat kainkarya**.

All objects in Tirumalai, sentient or non-sentient-kuravas, elephants, ant-hills, trees, groves, snakes and so on are praiseworthy as they are in the service of the Lord. Kulasekhara Alvar, it may be recalled, longed to be born as any thing-sentient or nonsentient in Tirumalai.

(39) [The Lord's redemptive deeds.]

இடந்தது பூமி எடுத்தது குன்றம்*
கடந்தது கஞ்சனை முன்னஞ்சக்*-கிடந்ததுவும்
நீரோதமாகடலே நின்றதுவும் வோங்கடமே*
பேரோதவண்ணர் வயரிது. (39)

The Earth it was that the Lord lifted from the bottom of the waters of the deluge during Varahavatava. It was Govardhana that the Lord (as Krishna) held a loft; and Kamsa it was, that was made to end himself through sheer fright; it is in the surging thickly ocean that He reclines. It stands in all majesty on Tiruvenkadam.

Steadfast in the love of God, the Alvar derives endless joy in recounting the various wonderful redemptive deeds of Bhagavan.

(40) [The wonders of Tirumalai]

பெருவில் பகழிக் குறவர் கைச்செந்தீ*
வெருவிப்புனம் துறந்த வேழம்*- இருவிசும்பில்
மீன்வீழக் கண்டு அஞ்சும் வோங்கடமே* மேலசுரர்
கோன்வீழக் கண்டுகந்தான் குன்று. (40)

Tiruvenkadam is the place of the Lord who, having destroyed Hiranya, is seen expressive of His great joy in having rescued a **bhakta** from harassment. (Among the manifold wonders of the place, one is the following) kuravas keep vigil during nights holding bow and arrow and torches in their hands. The elephant mistakes the torch for a bright star falling from the sky, thinks that the **kuravas** have thrown the torches at it and stands dazed thinking that there is no way of escape.

(68) [Having stated in the previous stanza that knowledge worth the name is knowledge of God, the Consort of Sri, the Alvar points out the extreme difficulty in obtaining such a knowledge.]

உணர்வாரார் உன்பெருமை? ஊழிதோறுழி*
 உணர்வாரார் உன்னுருவந்தன்னை? - *உணர்வாரார்?
 விண்ணகத்தாய்!மண்ணகத்தாய்!வேங்கடத்தாய்!*

[நால்வேதம்
 பண்ணகத்தாய்! நீ கிடந்தபால். (68)]

Lord of Sri Vaikuntha! Supreme Ruler of the worlds! Dweller in Tiruvenkadam! The Supreme Person taught in the four vedas noted for their divine musical cadence! Who knows Thy greatness? Even if one endeavours through out the ages, who can understand Thee fully! who, indeed, can comprehend Thy **divyatma-svarupa**? who can know the Milky ocean where on Thou reclinst contemplating what Thou could do to redeem the jivas?

Who understands Thee? implies that even the omniscient Lord does not comprehend His own glories fully.

(76) [When Tiruvenkadam itself confers what the aspirant seeks, is it at all necessary to state that the Lord grants our desires?]

வழிநின்று நின்னைத் தொழுவார்* வழுவா
 மொழி நின்ற மூர்த்தியரேயாவார்* - பழுவொன்றும்
 வாராத வண்ணமே விண் கொடுக்கும்*மண்ணளந்த
 சீரான் திருவேங்கடம். (76)

Those who steadfastly worship Thee in the prescribed way (i.e.practise bhakti-yoga) would, as the Vedas (the upanishads) declare, attain similarity with God. Should this be specifically stated, when Tiruvenkadam itself where stands the great benefactor who measured the three worlds confers moksha without a doubt?

c.f. The upanishadic text: “Paramjyoti-rupasampadya svena rupenabhi nishpadyate.” Reaching the Supreme Purusha, the sore gets the fullest manifestation of its inherent attributes and shines in its essential nature. Tirumangai Alvar states in **Periya Tirumozhi** XI.iii.5 தம்மையே நானும் வணங்கித் தொழுவார்க்குத் தம்மையே யொக்க அருள் செய்வார்.” The scriptures declare that the released sore acquires similarity with God (Parama Samya mupaiti-)

Perivacchan Pillai states that Embar, a disciple of Sri Ramanuja, used to recite this stanza every morning.

(77) [Contemplation on the divyadesas where the Lord resides would lead to the dispelling of our sins.]

வேங்கடமும் விண்ணகமும் வெஃகாவும்* அஃகாத
 பூங்கிடங்கின் நீள்கோவல்வொன்னகமும்*- நான்குஇடத்
 நின்றான் இருந்தான் கிடந்தான் நடந்தானே*[தும்
 என்றால் கெடுமாம்இடர். (77)]

If one contemplates on the Lord in Tiruvenkadam, Sri Vaikuntha, Tiruvehka (in Kanchipuram), the great Tirukkoyalur, the golden city where the Lord appears respectively in the standing, sitting and in the walking posture, all hindrances to the attainment of moksha fall off.

All the sins we commit while standing, sitting and walking and so on would disappear like cotton before fire if we contemplate on the Lord appearing in several poses in holy shrines.

(82) [Tiruvenkadam is easy of access to all, even to women]

படையாரும்வாடகண்ணார் பாரசிநாள்* பைம்பூந்
 தொடையலோடு ஏந்திய தூபம்* - இடையிடையில்
 மீன்மாய மாசூனும் வேங்கடமே* மேலொருநாள்
 மான்மாய வெய்தான் வரை. (82)

Tiruvenkadam is the mountain of the Lord who, once upon a time, as Sri Rama killed Maricha appearing in the guise of a deceitful deer. Here women with eyes bright like **velayudha** offer worship on the twelfth day of the fortnight (**dvadasi**) with garlands made of flowers in fresh bloom and the smoke of incense which hides the stars scattered here and there in the sky.

The idea in referring to woman worshipping the Lord in Tiruvenkadam is to emphasise the fact that the Lord dwells in Tirumalai so as to be accessible to women as well.

Dvadasi day is mentioned as it is specially sacred for worship in the early hours of the morning.

For the sake of Sita, Rama went after the deceitful deer and killed it; hence the Hill where Sri Rama stands is specially sacred to women.

(99) உள்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே! உத்தம னென்றும்
உள்கண்டாய் உள்ளுவா றுள்ளத்து - உள்கண்டாய்
வெள்ளத்தி னுள்ளானும் வேங்கடத்து மேயானும்
உள்ளத்தி னுள்ளானென்று ஓர். (99)

Know ye my good friends! The Supreme Purusha truly exists (as He is engaged in our redemption). He exists at all times (our rakshana being His one and only avowed purpose). He exists at all times in the minds of seekers; know ye this-the Lord who reclines in the Milky ocean and who dwells in Tiruvenkadam is in our mind.

His stay in the Milky ocean, in Tiruvenkadam and other places is to watch for a favourable opportunity to enter the minds of jnanins. **SriVachana Bhushana** states that His stay in these places is the means (sadhana) for the objective (sadhya) of entry into our minds. Stay in our minds is what He relishes most.

BHUTATTALVAR

Second Tiruvandadi

[The inner purpose of the avatars of Bhagavan]

(25) சென்றது இலங்கை மேல் செவ்வே* தன் சீற்றத்தால்
கொன்றது இராவணனைக்*- சுறுங்கால் நின்றதுவும்
வேயோங்கு தண் சாரல் வேங்கடமே*விண்ணவர்தம்
வாயோங்கு தொல் புகழான் வந்தது. (25)

The Lord of ancient fame whom the gods (devas) praise with gusto as the God of gods marched against Lanka and in indignation killed Ravana. Coming to stay in the standing posture in the shrine at Venkadam in the cool valleys whereof tall and stately bamboos grow luxuriantly speaks of His saulabhya and sausilya. Of the three-fold purpose of God's avatars-the protection of the good, the destruction of the wicked and the firm establishment of Dharma-the second and the third are not sufficient reasons for God's direct descent into the world. The all-wise and all-powerful God could bring them about through His mere **samkalpa** (will); but **sadhu paritrana stands** on a different footing altogether and it cannot be achieved through mere will or proxy. The sadhus are the wise ones (**jnanins**) who ever intensely devoted to the Lord in their single-minded devotion feel a moment of separation from the Lord as ages of agony. The God-intoxicated men have evoked the greatest praise of the Lord. He **says** He considers them as His very self (jnani tu atmaiva me matam). He appears in bodily form as Rama, Krishna and so on or as **archa-murtis** in temples to enable the jnanins to feast their eyes and minds therewith; otherwise they would languish.

The destruction of evil-doers is incidental to the protection of the good. Besides, **bhagavata apachara**, any harassment of the good, is what God deems intolerable.

(28) [The Lord whom the Alvar has been eagerly seeking, even as a tender creeper seeks the support of a tree or post, has come to stay in his mind, says the Alvar]

மனத்துள்ளான் வேங்கடத்தான் மாகடலான்* மற்றும்
நீணப்பரிய நீளரங்கத்துள்ளான்* - எண்ப்பலரும்
தேவா தீதேவனைப்படுவான் முன்னொரு நாள்
மாவாய்பிளந்த மகன். (28)

The supreme Lord, whom proficients in the vedas praise with one voice as the God of gods (Devadideva), who reclines on the Milky ocean, who once (i.e. during Krishnavatara) as the young Krishna tore Kesi, the asura in the guise of a horse, and who reclines in Tiruvarangam of unimaginable sanctity and who dwells in Tiruvenkadam, has come to stay in my mind!

The five forms the Lord takes are here mentioned - 1)The Pararupa in Sri Vaikuntha, 2)The Vyuha forms-the Lord reclining in the Milky ocean, 3)Vibhava forms-incarnations as Rama, Krishna and so on, 4)The antaryamin-dwelling in the heart of yogins utter god-lovers and 5)The archa murtis-tools in temples.

(33) [All faculties of the Alvar vie with one another in serving the Lord]

துணிந்ததுசிந்தை துழாயலங்கல்* அங்கம்
அணிந்தவன்பேர் உள்ளத்துப்பல்கால்* - பணிந்ததுவும்
வேப்பிறங்குசாரல் விறல்வேங்கடவனையே*
வாய்திறங்கள் சொல்லும்வகை. (33)

(45) [The greatness of Bhagavatas]

உளதென்றிறுமாவார் உண்டில்லையென்று*
தளர்தலதனருகுஞ்சாரார்* - அளவரிய
வேதத்தான் வேங்கடத்தான் விண்ணோர் முடிதோயும்*
பாதத்தான் பாதம்பயின்று. (45)

Those who are steadfast in their devotion to the blessed feet of the Lord, who is taught in the measureless vedas as the one Supreme Deity, who dwells in Tiruvenkadam where the nityas and muktas bow their heads at His lotus-like feet, do not get any where near feelings of dejection if they happen to lose the fortune they had before.

(46) [A few of the numerous holy places where the Lord resides]

பயின்றது அரங்கம் திருக்கோட்டி* பன்னாள்
பயின்றதுவும் வேங்கடமே பன்னாள் - பயின்றது*
அணிதிகழும் சோலை அணிநீர்மலையே*
மணிதிகழும் வண் தடக்கைமால். (46)

The Adorable Lord, effulgent like a brilliant gem and having long arms ever engaged in dispensing bounteous gifts, stays ever in Tiruvarangam and Tirukkottiyur; for long He has been dwelling in Tiruvenkadam and in Tirunirmalai with its beautiful groves-an ornament to the world. (Alternately-for long He has been dwelling in Tirumalirumsolai with its cool, beautiful groves and Tirunirmalai, an ornament to the world.)

(53) [The natural beauty of Tiruvenkadam].

நெறியார் குழற்கற்றை முன்னின்று பின் தாழ்ந்து*
அறியா திளங்கிரியென்றெண்ணிப்* - பிறியாது
புங்கொடிக்கள் வைகும் பொருபுனற்குன்றென்னும்*
வேங்கடமே யாம் விரும்பும் வெற்பு. (53)

The sacred hill which we like most is the renowned Venkadam noted for its plentiful supply of water - the hill where tender creepers, not knowing that they are the tresses flowing down from the heads of godly folk who stand motionless all along the route lost in meditation, and mistaking them for boulders, twine fast round them and keep on growing. c.f. A huge ant-hill growing over sage Valmiki standing motionless in deep contemplation.

(54) [The five forms of the Lord.]

வெற்பென்றிருஞ்சோலை வேங்கடமென்றிவ்விரண்டும்*
நிற்பென்று நீ மதிக்கும் நீர்மைபோல்*- நிற்பென்று
உளங்கோயில் உள்ளம்வைத்துள்ளினேன்* வெள்ளத்து
இளங்கோயில் கைவிடெலென்று. (54)

Just as Thou hast been pleased to stay with delight in the holy mountains of Tirumalirumsolai and Tiruvenkadam saying ‘This is where we would be pleased to dwell’ Thou hast been pleased to reside in my mind. My prayer is Let not Thy interest in the Milky ocean diminish on that account’.

The milky ocean is the primordial base from where the Lord takes all His **vyuha** and **vibhava** avataras. Hence it is called இளங்கோயில் (Balalaya) engaged in the redemptive endeavour during the avataras. He may not be interested in the Para form. Even now it is customary while renovating temples to instal the Deity in a temporary place called **balalaya**. After renovation is completed and the Archa-murti (the Deity) is consecrated in the original sanctum sanctorum, interest in balalaya would cease. Likewise with the Lord’s entry in Holy shrines and in the hearts of god-lovers, His interest in the Milky ocean may diminish fears the Alvar. This is a felicitous way of stating that the Lord has entered his mind with deep interest.

(72) The Alvar exhorts his mind to concentrate on service unto the Lord stating that even animals in Tirumalai are engaged in Bhagavat Kainkarya.

போதறிந்துவானரங்கள் பூஞ்சுனைபுக்கு* ஆங்கலர்ந்த
போதறிந்துகொண்டேத்தும்* போது உள்ளம்! - போது
மணிவேங்கடவன் மலரடிக்கேசெல்ல*
அணிவேங்கடவன் பேராய்ந்து. (72)

Knowing the proper time (for worship) monkeys get into tanks filled with lotus, bathe and gather freshly blossomed flowers, and offering them praise the Lord-May my mind like wise devoutly utter the holy names of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam expressive of His excellent gunas and offer flowers at His blessed feet!

(75) An excellent example of the Alvars poetic genius.

வருகுமதவேழம் மாப்பிடிக்கு முன்னின்று*
இருகணிளமுங்கில்வாங்கி* - அருகிருந்த

தேன்கலந்து நீட்டும் திருவேங்கடம் கண்டி*
வான்கலந்த வண்ணன் வரை. (75)

Look for a wonder! Tiruvenkadam, the mountain where the Lord of the hue of clouds resides, is the lovely spot where the excited elephant standing before its chosen mate plucks a tender bamboo shoot with barely two nodules, dips it in honey found nearby and presents it to her!

PEYALVAR
MUNRAM TIRUVANDADI

(14) If God could be known only after one has controlled one's senses and mind, it would indeed be beyond the reach of many. What could the weak-minded do? The answer to this is furnished in this stanza.

மாற்பால்மனஞ்சுழிப்ப மங்கையர்தோள் கைவிட்டு*
நூற்பால் மனம்வைக்க நொய்விதாம்* - நூற்பால்
வேதத்தான் வோங்கடத்தான்* விண்ணோர் முடிதோயும்
பாதத்தான் பாதம் பணிந்து. (14)

If one seeks the blessed feet of the Lord whose greatness is proclaimed in the four-fold vedas, who resides in Tiruvenkadam in order to be accessible to men and celestial beings, and at whose blessed feet **Nitya-suris** bow their heads in reverence, and if one fixes one's mind on Bhagavan, the desire to embrace young women (i.e. desires for sensual enjoyment) would go and the mind could easily be turned to scriptures that reveal God and proclaim His nature.

(26) The Lord wearing fragrant tulasi gardens resides in my mind with as much relish as that in sacred places.

சிறந்தஎன் சிந்தையும் செங்க ணரவும்
நிறைந்தசீர் நீள்கச்சி யுள்ளும் - உறைந்ததுவும்
வோங்கடமும் வெஃகாவும் வேளுக்கைப் பாடியுமே
தாங்கடவார் தண்துறா யார். (26)

The great places where the Lord (Sriman Narayana), wearing cool **tulasi** garlands, resides with great zest and without ever thinking of leaving them are in my mind, and they are the red-eyed-serpent, Adishesha the great Kanchipuram with its enormous riches, Tiruvenkadam, Tiruvehka and Tiruvelukkai padi (Kamasika).

'சிறந்த என் சிந்தை' is indicative of the Lord's great zest in residing in the Alvar's mind.

Tiruvehka and Tiruvelukkai padi are shrines in Kanchipuram. Velukkaipadi may also be taken to refer to two places, namely i)Tiruvelukkai and ii)Ayar padi.

(30) The head quarters of the sovereign ruler of all worlds.

சேர்ந்த திருமால் கடல்குடந்தை வோங்கடம்
நேர்ந்தஎன் சிந்தை நிறைவிசும்பு - வாய்ந்த
மறைபா டகம்அனந்தன் வண் துறாய்க் கண்ணி
இறைபாடி யாய இவை. (30)

The head-quarters of the sovereign ruler of the entire universe-Sriman Narayana-where He resides with great relish are the Milky ocean, Tirukkudantai, Tiruvenkadam, my chastened mind, the vast Paramapada, the eternal and faultless Vedas, Tiruppadakam and Adishesha.

Just as one beholds the Lord in these **divya-desas**, the Alvar beholds Him in the Vedas.

(32) The places where the Lord always dwells.

பாற்கடலும் வோங்கடமும் பாம்பும் பனிவிசும்பும்
நூற்கடலும் நுண்ணூல தாமரைமேல் - பாற்பட்
டிருந்தார் மனமும் இடமாகக் கொண்டான்
குருந்தொசித்த கோபால கன். (32)

The Gopala who brought down the two **Kuruntha** trees has for His abode the following places - the Milky ocean, Tiruvenkadam, the Serpent Adishesha, cool Vaikuntha, the Sastras extensive as the ocean, the subtle space in the lotus of the heart, the mind of the Yogins who, having controlled all their senses and minds, are absorbed in deep contemplation.

Cool Paramapada - **பனி விசும்பு** - is the blissful realm where there is no sorrow of any Kind.

'The vast ocean of scriptures' refers to the countless Vedas, Ithihasas, Puranas and the like.

(39) The Lord who exists as all things, sentient and non-sentient (i.e. who has all the universe as His body) came to dwell in the cool, refreshing Tiruvenkadam and then entered my mind and will not leave it.

இறையாய் நிலனாகி எண் திசையும் தானாய்*
மறையாய் மறைப்பொருளாய் வானாய்*- பிறைவாய்ந்த
வெள்ளத்தருவி விளங்கொலி நீர் வேங்கடத்தான்*
உள்ளத்தினுள்ளே உளன். (39)

The Master of every thing that exists, the Inner Ruler of all elements such as prthvi, of the eight regions and all objects located therein (i.e. who has all these as His Sarira) the Lord of the Vedas, the Supreme Being taught in the Vedas, and the Master of **nitya-vibhuti** (the transcendental realm) resides in Tiruvenkadam with lofty peaks reaching up to chandra mandala and with roaring streams ever in floods; and thence He comes to dwell in my mind.

He is the master of the mundane world (**lilavibhuti**) and the Supramundane domain (**nitya-vibhuti**).

From a place where there is no samsaratapa, He comes to reside in my soul afflicted by Samsara.

c.f. **Tiruvoimozhi** - மலை மேல் தான் நின்று என் மனத்துள்ளிருந்தானே-

(40) When the Lord enters our mind, what more do we require?

உள்கண்டாய் நல்நெஞ்சே! உத்தமனென்றும்
உள்கண்டாய்*உள்ளுவாருள்ளத்து - உள்கண்டாய்
விண்ணொடுங்கக் கோடியரும் வீங்கருவிவேங்கடத்தான்
மண்ணொடுங்கத் தானளந்தமன். (40)

Helpful mind! behold the Lord resident in Tiruvenkadam with its lofty pinnacles and streams ever filled with pure water. He is the great Lord who measured all the worlds in just two strides. The highest Purusha stays here at all times (for our sake) with the sole object of protecting us. See Him ever existing in the minds of those who have full faith in Him and meditate on Him.

(45) The blissful Lord resident in Paramapada has, for our sake come down to Tiruvenkadam to be easy of access.

புரிந்துமதவேழம் மாப்பிடியோடு ஊடி*
திரிந்துசினத்தால்பொருது* - விரிந்தசீர்*
வெண்கோட்டு முத்துதிர்க்கும் வேங்கடமே* மேலொரு [நாள்
மண் கோட்டுக் கொண்டான் மலை. (45)

In Tiruvenkadam the elephant in rut roams hither and thither after sulking from its good mate; and in great anger it hits the rocks with its tusks, finds its reflection in the shining rocks, takes the image for another elephant and strikes it with its tusks and from the broken tusks drop down priceless pearls. This is the place of the Lord who in Varahavatara rescued the Earth from the bottom of the waters of deluge.

(58) The splendour of Tiruvenkadam.

தெளிந்தசிலா தலத்தின் மேலிருந்த மந்தி*
அளிந்தகடுவனையே நோக்கி*- விளங்கிய
வெண்மதியம் தாவென்னும் வேங்கடமே* மேலொருநாள்
மண் மதியில் கொண்டுநந்தான் வாழ்வு. (58)

On the lofty peaks of Tiruvenkadam the monkey seated on a rock shining like crystal, asks its loving mate seated near her to catch hold of the shining Moon and give it to her. This is the place where dwells the Lord who, in the past, as Vamana was happy that He could through a clever ruse, recover the domain (which Mahabali had snatched away from Indra).

Great skill and cleverness is displayed in the pleasant manner in which the recovery was effected, without hurting Mahabali, and also satisfying both Indra and Mahabali.

(61) The special favour shown to the Alvar.

**பண்டெல்லாம் வேங்கடம் பாற்கடல் வைகுந்தம்*
கொண்டங் குறைவார்க்குக் கோயில்போல்*- வண்டு
வளங்கிளரும் நீள்சோலை வண்புங்கடிகை*
இளங்குமரன் தன் விண்ணகர். (61)

Vaikunthanatha formerly considered the Milky ocean, Tiruvenkadam and ghatikachalam with its extensive flower gardens humming with bees and Tiruvinnagaram as His temple; but that was before the eternal youth got my mind for His abode.

(62) The Lord not only stays in the mundane world but abides there for ever in certain places with especial zeal.

விண்ணகரம் வெஃகா விரிதிரைநீர் வோங்கடம்*
மண்ணகரம் மாமாடவேளுக்கை*- மண்ணகத்த
தென்குடந்தை தேனார் திருவராங்கம் தென்கோட்டி*
தன்குடங்கை நீரேற்றான் தாழ்வு. (62)

The places where the Lord, who received a gift of land from Mahabali, greatly loves to dwell are Tiruvinnagaram (the modern uppiliappan sannidhi), Tiruvehka, Tiruvenkadam with its plentiful supply of water, Tiruvelukkudi, with its beautiful buildings and Tirukkudantai famous as Vaikuntha on earth, Tiruvarangam with its groves full of honey and Tirukkottiyur.

(63) The Lord grants the Alvar a vision of His wonderful Hari-Hara form.

தாழ்சடையும் நீள்முடியும் ஒண்மழுவும் சக்கரமும்*
கூழரவும்பொன்னூரம் தோன்றுமால்*- கூழும்
திரண்டருவியாயும் திருமலைமேலைந்தைக்கு*
இரண்டருவுமொன்னூயிசைந்து. (63)

The Lord with His flowing tresses, high crown, beautiful club, the Discus and serpents for ornaments, gold waist band-a delightful combination of the two forms (of Hari and Hara) - shines in Tiruvenkadam where flow many streams in different directions. This composite form is specially appropriate to the Lord. what a wonder!

Even as the entire universe of the manifold sentient and non-sentient beings constitutes the body of the Lord, Brahma, Rudra and Indra form His **sarira**. In His **divya-mangala vigraha** one sees all these forms. For the delectation of His votaries He reveals Himself in different forms.

68) A picturesque scene.

பார்த்தகடுவன் சுனை நீர் நிழல்கண்டு*
போர்த்தோர்கடுவனைப்பேர்ந்து* - கார்த்த
களங்கனிக்குக் கைநீட்டும்வோங்கடமே* மேல்நாள்
விளங்கனிக்குக் கன்றெறிந்தான்வெற்பு. (68)

At Tiruvenkadam a male monkey sees its reflection in the clear mountain stream, mistakes it for a rival monkey, tries to get it out of its way and moves out, and stretches out its hand for the black **Kalankani** (a fruit). This is the mountain where dwells the Lord, who as Krishna, once hurled the calf (really Vatsasura in that disguise) at a wood-apple (which was another asura in that form) and destroyed both the demons in a single act.

69) The experience of the Lord's gunas gets so intense that the Alvar, in self-forgetfulness, puts himself imaginatively in the position of a **nayaki** and feels the utmost misery of **bhagavad vislesha**. The Alvar's feelings are expressed as though a mother is describing her daughter's lovelorn state or (alternately) the Alvar teaches people that whatever they do must be in the service of the Lord, since that is the only way of attaining true-blessedness.

வெற்பென்று வோங்கடம் பாடும் *வியன் தூறாய்க்
கற்பென்று கூடும் கருங்குழல் மேல் *- மற்பொன்ற
நீண்டதோள் மால் கிடந்த நீள் கடல் நீராடுவான்*
புண்ட நாளெல்லாம் புகும். (69)

(At the mention of the word mountain) my daughter sings in praise of Tiruvenkadam; she wears the marvellous **tulasi** on her dark tresses as being the most appropriate adornment for a chaste woman to do; she sets out early in the morning to bathe in the Milky ocean where dwells the Lord who smashed the **mallars** (the agents hired by Kamsa for killing Krishna).

This stanza could also be understood as follows - I ye devotees! if you to speak of any mountain, sing the glories of Tiruvenkadam; if

you are to wear flowers, use the priceless **tulasi**; and when you take a bath, bathe in the Milky ocean, where Krishna who crushed the **mallars** reclines.

c.f. Venkatanatha's description of Tiruvnekadam- கண்ணனடியிணை யெமக்குக் காட்டும் வெற்பு.

The insignia of chastity is wearing the singular tulasi that adorned the Lord. “தொடுத்த துழாய் மலர்குடிக் கனைந்தன குடும் இத்தொண்டர்களோம்?

70) Even elephants worship the Lord at Tiruvenkadam.

புது மதத்தால் வாய்ப்பூசிக் கீழ் தாழ்ந்து* அருவி
உரு மதத்தால் கால்கழுவிக்க கையால்* - மிகு மதத்தேன்
விண்ட மலர் கொண்டு விறல் வோங்கடவனையே*
கண்டு வணங்கும் களிறு. (70)

Elephants in rut clean their mouth and sip the fluid (i.e. **perform achamana**-purificatory sipping) flowing from their heads and cheeks, wash their feet with what flows down like a stream; and gathering with their trunk, flowers in full bloom laden with inebriating honey, they have darshan of the victorious Lord of Tiruvenkadam and worship Him reverently.

The Lord is described as ‘victorious’ since Tirumalai - Tirupati is a place of victory - **vijayasthanam Vrshadrim** c.f. venkatanatha-

Karune! duriteshu mamakeshu
pratikanantara durjayeshu khinnah|
Kavachayitaya tvayaiva Sarngi
vijayasthanamupasrito Vrshadrim||

“O Karuna Devi! my sins go on multiplying uncontrolled, and like sharp arrows they cause pain to the Lord. Finding no other way of deflecting me from my sinful career, the Lord, with Thee as a shield to protect Himself from injury from my sins, takes the bow, Sarnga, on hand, and has reached Tiruvenkadam with the prospect of attaining victory from there.”

71) A picturesque description of Tirumalai.

களிறு முகில் குத்தக் கையெடுத்தோடி*
ஒளிறு மருப்பொசிகை யாளி - பிளிறி
விழு கொன்று* நின்றதிரும் வோங்கடமே* மேனார்
குழக்கன்று கொண்டெறிந்தான் குன்று. (71)

At Tiruvenkadam an elephant mistaking the dark cloud on a rock for another elephant, rushes to attack it with its trunk; a **yali** (a fabulous creature resembling a tiger) breaks the elephant's tusks, causes it to yell and drop down dead, and stands roaring - the roar reverberating. This is the mountain dear to Lord Krishna who once caught hold of a calf (Vatsasura) and catapulted it at the wood-apple (Kapitasura), killing both.

Forgetting that its trunk is meant for offering worship, the elephant attempts to hit the cloud, which, like the Lord, is intent on driving out draught and rendering the place cool for men. Upset at this conceited action, the yali kills it and stands roaring, as if proclaiming that Tiruvenkadam is meant solely for victory over the forces of evil.

72) The high peaks of Tiruvenkadam reach chandramandala. The Lord destroys the hindrances to the attainment of God realisation.

குன்றென்றினாய குறமகளிர் கோல் வளைக்கை*
சென்று விளையாடும் தீங்கழை போய்* - வென்று
விளங்கு மதி கோள் விடுக்கும் வோங்கடமே*மேலை
இளங்குமரர் கோமான் இடம். (72)

Kurava women, who have known only Tiruvenkadam in all their lives, climb up in sport, the bangles in their hands jingling, the beautiful, tall trees proceeding skyward, shalting Rahu and freeing the Moon (from Rahu's clutches). This mountain is the dwelling place of the Master of the eternally youthful **Nitya-suris**.

(Alternately, it may mean - By scattering the dense bamboos, kurava women made the Moon's cool rays penetrate the dark regions below).

73) The only proper aim in life for man is to praise the Lord who resides in Surya-mandala, who played the pot-dance, who performed **rasa-krida** with gopis and who resides in Tiruvenkadam.

இடம் வலமேழ் புண்ட இரவித் தேரோட்டி*
வடமுக வேங்கடத்து மன்னும்* - குடம் நயந்த
கூத்தனாய் நின்றான் குரை கழலே கறுவதே*
நாத்தன்னால் உள்ள நலம். (73)

The only good to be attained by our tongue (i.e. speech) is to sing the praises of the blessed feet of the Lord jingling with ornaments, the Lord who as the Inner Atma of the Sun driving his chariot drawn by seven horses steers its northerly and southerly courses, and who played the pot - dance and who resides permanently in Tiruvenkadam.

c.f. **Mukundamala** - jihve Kirtaya Kesavam...

75) The fact of Tiruvenkadam having very high peaks is represented in a graphic way.

சார்ந்தகடு தேய்ப்பத் தடாவியகோட்டுச்சிவாய்*
ஊர்ந்தியங்கும் வெண்மதியினொண்முயலைச்* - சேர்ந்து
சினவெங்கை பார்க்கும் திருமலையே* ஆயன்
புனவேங்கை நூறும் பொருப்பு. (75)

The beautiful Moon in its orbit jostles over the extensive peaks of Tiruvenkadam; a tiger attempts to catch the rabbit at the centre of the Moon; and failing in this, stands gaping. This is the mountain where well - grown **venkai** trees spread aroma all round, and where resides the Lord who, in the past, incarnated as Gopala.

The slight shadow noticed in the Moon's surface is traditionally identified, on account of its shape, sometimes with the rabbit and sometimes with the deer.

89) The physical resources of Tirumalai, the fertility of its soil and abundance of water supply.

முடிந்தவொழுதில் குறவாணர்* ஏனம்
படிந்துமுசால்பைந்தீனகள்வித்த*- தடிந்தெழுந்த
வேயங்கழைபோய் விண் திறக்கும் வேங்கடமே*

மேலொரு
தீங்குழல்வாய் வைத்தான் சிலம்பு. [நாள் (89)

Kuravas of Tiruvenkadam who are past adult stature (unable to take to their usual active avocations resorting to cultivation) sow seeds in the deep burrows in the ground made by pigs while uprooting bamboo plants. Though uprooted the bamboos throw forth fresh shoot again and soon grow luxuriantly so as to reach up the sky. This fertile mountain is the permanent abode of the Lord who once incarnated as Krishna who played the flute (and feasted the ears of all the residents of Gokula).

TIRUMAZHISAI ALVAR

Tirumazhisai Alvar, also known as Bhaktisara, expounds in his **Nanmukan Tiruvandadi** the quintessence of the vedic teaching, namely, that the supreme Reality is the Consort of Lakshmi (Sriman Narayana). In his **Tiruchanda viruttam** he expresses his exceeding good fortune in not running after mundane pleasures and in not seeking minor gods and goddesses in the realization of the supreme goal of God - realisation. Twelve stanzas of the former work and two of the latter are devoted to the praise of Tiruvenkadam and of its presiding Deity.

NANMUKAN TIRUVANDADI

The resolve never to forget to worship the Adorable Lord residing at Tiruvenkadam and other holy places.

(34) குறிப்புஎனக்குக் கோட்டியூர் மேயாளை யேத்த
குறிப்புஎனக்கு நன்மை பயக்க - வெறுப்பனே?
வோங்கடத்து மேயாளை மெய்வினை நோய் எய்தாமல்
தான்கடத்தும் தன்மையான் தாள் (34)

It is my ardent desire to sing the praises of Bhagavan residing permanently in Tirukkottiyur and in Tiruvenkadam. The goal of my endeavour is to attain the supreme bliss of **bhagavadanubhava**. Would I forget even for an instant the blessed feet of the Lord who alone could dispel my Karmas (**punya** and **papa**), which cause entanglement to bodily existence and diseases and could see to it that they do not afflict me any longer.

Etymologically, Venkadam signifies what bestows immortality (moksha) and wealth (**aisvarya**). **Venkatah amrtabijam syat kadam aisvaryam uchyate**.

(39) Heart felt desire to stay continuously at Tirumalai and worship the Lord.

அழைப்பன் திருவோங்கடத்தாளைக் காண*
இழைப்பன் திருக்கடல் கட* மழைப்பேர்

அருவி மணி வரன்றி வந்திழிய யாளை
வெருவியரவொடுங்கும் வெற்பு.

(39)

Longing to behold the Divine, I invoke the Lord of Tiruvenkadam, where great streams pour like torrential rain carrying along bright gems whose remarkable lustre scares away elephants and drives serpents into their holes for safety. Anxious to ascertain the prospect of reaching this holy hill, I engage in **Kudal izhaittal**. (Alternately, the elephants mistaking the lustre of gems for fire, get frightened and fall into the gaping mouths of pythons.)

Kudal izhaittal is device adopted by ladies to ascertain the future. It consists in drawing a wide circle in sand and inscribing smaller circles. Therein and counting their number. As per original understanding, if the number of smaller circles is even, it foretells success, otherwise failure or delay in the realisation of one's desire. In **Nacchiyar Tirumozhi**, the stanza commencing with the words **தெள்ளியாம்பலர்** speaks of saint Andal as having adopted this device. Since Tirumazhisai Alvar speaks in the guise of a love-born lady, his recourse to this practice is not inappropriate.

The flow of torrential streams symbolises the overflowing of the Lord's **daya**. Of the Lord's gunas it is daya that encourages the sinner to approach Him. Qualities such as omniscience, and omnipotence make Him so far transcendent that man hesitates to approach Him. Being all-knowing, all-powerful, being the guardian of righteousness and having none above Him, He knows all our misdeeds and would punish us therefore. It is daya that, from the man's point of view, renders the foregoing qualities excellences; without **daya** they would even be defects (**dosha**). Vadanta Desika in **Dayasatakam**, st. 15 says:

Vrshagiri grhamedhi gunah bodha balaisvarya
Virya Sakti mukhat|
dosha bhavayurete yadi nama Daye
tvaya vina bhutah||

Afraid to approach the Adorable Lord man may seek minor gods and godlings, even as the elephants afraid of the lustre of gems, fall into the gaping mouths of pythons.

(40) For an **alpa vyaja**, the accident of having uttered the name of the sacred mountain, Tiruvenkadam, I got the highest reward. The Lord is caught up in the net of the Vedas; and cannot be attained by any means other than bhakti. I who have been a wayward soul, have been bound up in the net of His blessed feet!

வெற்பென்று வோங்கடம்பாடினேன் வீடாக்கி*
நிற்கின்றேன் நின்று நீனைக்கின்றேன்* - கற்கின்ற
நூல்வலையில்பட்டிருந்த நூலாட்டிகேள்வனார்*
கால்வலையில்பட்டிருந்தேன்காண். (40)

Talking of sacred mountains, I happened quite casually to chant the name Tiruvenkadam and (for a wonder) I find myself liberated from all sorrow; and I remain contemplating on the compassionate Lord for granting me supreme felicity for such a trivial act. The Adorable Lord, the Consort of Sri, is caught up in the net of His blessed feet!

‘The Lord is caught up in net of the Vedas’ signifies that His existence and nature is grasped only from the Vedas (i.e. from scriptural testimony). C.f. the **Brahma-sutra** I.i.3 - Sastra Yonitvat. “Because Brahman can be known only from the Veda.” Of mantradhnam tu daivatam.

(41) [From Tiruvenkadam Thou hast come to stay in my heart. I long to worship Thee and Tiruvenkadam also]

காணலுறுகின்றேன்* கல்லருவிமுத்துதிர
ஓணவிழுவிலொலியதிர* - பேணி
வருவோங்கடவா! என்னுள்ளம் புகுந்தாய்*
திருவோங்கடமதனைச் சென்று (41)

Lord! Tiruvenkadam is dear to Thy heart! Thou hast been pleased to enter into my mind! At Tiruvenkadam roaring streams speed down

carrying pearls. I long to behold and worship Thee at Tiruvenkadam on the occasion of the constellation Tiruvonam when the place resounds on all sides with Thy praises sung by vast multitudes of Thy devotees.

(42) [An exhortation to fellow men.]

சென்றுவணங்குமினோ சேனூயர் வோங்கடத்தை*
நின்றுவினை கெடுக்கும் நீர்மையால்* - என்றும்
கடிக்கமல நான்முகனும் கண்மூன்றத்தானும்*
அடிக்கமலமிட்டேத்துமங்கு. (42)

Tiruvenkadam with its very high peaks by its very nature (i.e. innate compassion) dispels all the sins of devotees. Go and offer worship to Tirumalai. Here the Four-faced Brahma born of the unique and most fragrant lotus and the Three-eyed god, Siva ever offer lotus flowers and sing the praises of the Lord’s blessed feet. Nammalvar’s **Tiruvoimozhi** III.iii.6 may be compared with this.

(43) Brahma and Rudra offer twilight prayers at Tirumalai everyday; let us hasten to that holy place.

மங்குல்தோய்சென்னி வடவோங்கடத்தானை
கங்குல்புகுந்தார்கள் காப்பணிவான்* - திங்கள்
சடையேற வைத்தானும் தாமரைமேலானும்*
குடையேறத் தாங்குவித்துக் கொண்டு. (43)

To offer obeisance (twilight prayers) to the Lord of Tiruvenkadam whose peaks pierce through the clouds, Rudra wearing the Moon in his forelocks, Brahma dwelling in the lotus, and other gods hasten to Tiruvenkadam taking umbrella and other accessories (**chatra, chamara** and so on) needed for worship.

(44) When you are yet young repair to Tiruvenkadam.

கொண்டுகுடங்கால் மேல் வைத்த குழுவியாய்*
தண்டவரக்கன் தலை தாளால் - பண்டெண்ணி*
போம்குமரன் நிற்கும் பொழில் வோங்கடமலைக்கே*
போம் குமரருள்வீர்! புரிந்து. (44)

In the past, Bhagavan in child's guise lovingly taken up and seated on the lap of Brahma, forewarned him by counting with His divine feet that the suppliant was (no other than) the ten-headed asura, Ravana, deserving of punishment, and then disappeared. This ever youthful Lord stays permanently in Tiruvenkadam. Young Lord stays permanently in Tiruvenkadam. young people! when you have still the vigour of youth hasten to the same sacred hill.

The story alluded to in the this stanza, as also in **Mudal Tiruvandadi**, st. 40 and **Munram Tiruvandadi** st. 75, is as follows. Ravana performed severe austerities, and hiding the fact that he was the ten-headed asura king, he approached Brahma in all humility and sought from him some boons. Lord Vishnu appeared before Brahma in the form of a child and counted with His toes the heads of the suppliant as ten, thereby giving Brahma the timely warning that the apparently humble seeker was no other than Ravana and that if boons were granted to him disastrous consequences would follow. Brahma however did not take the warning seriously, as he was taken in by the prayerful attitude of Ravana. The Lord has to plan ways of meeting the disaster that this was one ensued from the thoughtless grant of boons to Ravana. Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the Lord's stay in Tiruvenkadam. This story and a few others do not seem to find a place in any of the authentic puranas. The Alvar must have intuited them through the grace of the Lord.

In acquiring **vidya** and wealth one may consider oneself as long lived; but in practising virtues and leading a righteous life one has to make haste and let slip no opportunity, lest death may supervene at any moment.

The Lord stays in Tirumalai as an eternal youth beckoning young people to seek Him when They are still young and apt to neglect their spiritual welfare. With advancing age, climbing the mountain would be difficult indeed. Saint Satakopa says in stanza commencing with the words. 'சிறிரொளியிளமை கெடுவதன் முன்னம்...' (II.X.1) that before the prime of life is lost, it would be wise to go to the sacred spot

of Tirumalirumsolai. likewise Kulasekhara says in **Mukundamala** "How is it possible for my thought to be centred on Thee at the time of the departure of the breath from the body when the throat will be choked with phlegm, bile and wind? Let my mind, (O Krishna, enter even now into the cage of Thy lotus-like feet, like the sivan in lake Manasa". In **Dayasatakam** st-31, Vedanta Desika echoes the sentiments, expressed by Tirumazhisai. Alvar and saint Satakopa states, "O Daya of the slayer of Madhu! while these senses of mine are not yet rendered feeble, while the respiratory function is not injured or and while my body is still fit to go about freely, I desire to live on the slopes of Tirumalai (Vrshagiri), whose famous water falls reveal to us your own flow."

(45) [Tirumalai is the goal sought not only by men but also by celestial beings.]

பரிந்துமலரிட்டுப் புண்டரீகப் பாதம்*
பரிந்துபடுகாடுநிற்ப* - தெரிந்தெங்கும்
தானேங்கி நிற்கின்றான் தண்ணருவி வேங்கடமே*
வானோர்க்கும் மண்ணோர்க்கும் வைப்பு. (45)

So as to be seen by all, the Lord of His own samkalpa stands aloft on Tiruvenkadam where from flow cool streams. Here peoples of the world and denizens of celestial regions prostrate and offer with loving devotion flowers at His louts-like feet and sing **hallelujah** in perfect self-forgetfulness. Tiruvenkadam is itself the greatest treasure for men and for celestial beings.

The streams and water-falls of Tirumalai are suggestive of the eternal flow of the Lord's daya dispelling the pangs of samsara and presaging the onset of bliss everlasting.

(46) [Even animals of Tiruvenkadam are engaged in rendering service unto the Lord.]

வைப்பன் மணிவிளக்கா மாமதியை மாலுக்கென்று*
எப்பொழுதும் கைநீட்டும்பாசையை* - எப்பாடும்
வேடுவனைக்கக் குறவார்வில்லெடுக்கும் வேங்கடமே*
நாடுவனைத் தாடுமேல் நன்று (45)

When the bright moon appears at the lofty peaks of Tiruvenkadam, elephants stretch out their hands to catch it and offer it as the ever bright light to the Lord, hunters surround them on all sides and **Kuravas**, bow in hand, seek to aim at the huntsmen (thinking that hunters are seeking to capture elephants engaged in the service of the Lord; for one should rush to the rescue of bhagavatas in trouble). (Alternately, it may be interpreted as follows-Hunters too are attempting to capture elephants for service to the Lord.) It would be best if all peoples of the world circumambulate the shrine and dance with joy and engage in kankarya.

நன்மணிவண்ணூர்* ஆளியும்கோளரியும்
வான்மணியும்முத்தமும் பூமரமும்* - பன்மணிநீ
ரோடு பொருதுருளும் கானமும் வானரமும்*
வேடுமுடைவேங்கடம். (47)

Tiruvenkadam with yalis, roaring lions, gold, precious gems, plentiful pearls, flowering trees and forests through which flow streams carrying along with their waters valuable gems, monkeys hunters and the like is the blast spot dearest to the heart of the blue hued Lord.

Yalis are fabulous creatures like lions referred to in Indian mythologies.

It is believed that **Nitya-suris** have taken such diverse forms as lions, flowering trees, gems, gold, rivers, forests and so on in Tiruvenkadam. Hence this is in no way inferior to **Paramapada**. In fact, it may be reckoned as even superior because, one cannot look for hunters and kuravars in Paramapada. Again, there is no scope in Sri Vaikuntha for the play of saulabhya, sausilya so on. Paramapada is the domain which receives souls that have shed their sins; while Tiruvenkadam is the region which dispels the sins of people.

(48) [**Nityasuris** who ever behold the Divine in Paramapada experience only the Lord's **paratva** and have no opportunity to enjoy

His saulabhya; for that they have to come to Tiruvenkadam. Besides it is here that the Lord loves to stay in order to dispel the hindrances of people to **bhagavad anubhava**.]

வோங்கடமே விண்ணோர் தொழுவதுவும் மெய்ப்பம்மையால்*
வோங்கடமே மெய்வினை நோய் தீர்ப்பதுவும்*- வோங்கடமே
தானவரைவீழத் தன்னாழிப்படை தொட்டு*
வானவரைக்காப்பான் மலை (48)

Tiruvenkadam is indeed the divine spot which **Nitya-suris** like to worship with devotion. It dispels our sins and diseases born of the body. Again, Tiruvenkadam is the Hill where on resides the Supreme Being who, bearing the chakrayudha protects the denizens of Devaloka by destroying the asuras, it destroys all the sin and suffering of men and grants them aisvarya.

The name Tiruvenkadam is repeated thrice to convey the idea, that it affords transcendental felicity to **Nityasuris**, **aisvarya** to gods and freedom from sin and suffering to men. Even as the Lord protects gods from the onslaughts of the asuras, He frees us from the travails of samsara. It is for this purpose, He stays in Tiruvenkadam.

(90) வீற்றிருந்து விண்ணாள் வேண்டுவார் வோங்கடத்தான்
பால்திருந்த வைத்தாரே பல்மலர்கள்*- மேல்திருந்த
வாழ்வார் வருமதிபார்த்து அன்பினராய் மற்றவர்க்கே*
தாழ்வா யிருப்பார் தமர் (90)

Those who aspired for dwelling in Paramapada and ruling there (i.e. who attained Kankarya Samrajya) are only those who offered **manya** flower at the blessed feet of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam. Those who truly understand the Lord's mind (i.e. those who realise that the Lord's one and only aim is to redeem souls) reach the still greater distinction of being hailed as truly great by god-lovers (bhagavatas)

This reminds one of yamuna's sloka-

Tvadasritanam jagad udbhava sthiti
Pranasa samsara vimochanadayah|

bhavanti lila vidhayascha vaidika
stvadiya gambhira manonu sarinah||

Stotra-Ratna, st.20

“Creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, releasing souls from samsaric life are sporting activities of Thine, likewise, the promulgation of the vedic injunctions is expressive of Thy majestic and inscrutable will - all these are solely in the interest of those who seek Thee (as Thou art the fulness of perfection and hast no wants.)

The flowers needed for worship are the qualities of mind, **atmagunas**. True worship presupposes a pure mind and acquisition of virtues. Ignorant man, it is said, goes far and wide gathering flowers for worship, little realising that the flowers that please Vishnu most are the **atma-gunas**, the flowers such as purity, control of senses and mind, truthfulness, straightforwardness, **ahimsa** and the like.

TIRUCCHANDA VIRUTTAM

60) On account of His special interest in His devotees, the Lord dwells in holy places (**divyadesas**) like Tiruvenkadam.

**செழுங்கொழுமும்
பெரும்பனி பொழிந்திட* உயர்ந்தவேய்
விழுந்து, உலர்ந்தெழுந்து
விண்புடைக்கும் வேங்கடத்துள் நின்று*
எழுந்திருந்து தேன் பொருந்து
பும்பொழில் தழைக்கொழுமும்*
செழுந்தடம் குடந்தையுள்
கிடந்தமாலுமலையே? (60)

At Tiruvenkadam luxuriant bamboos that have grown aloft bend down due to the weight of the incessant and rapid fall of dense snow; but when the sun is up and rapid fall of dense melts, the bamboos rise up again as if reaching the sky. Tirukkudantai abounds in beautiful tanks full to the brim and is rich in flower gardens filled with creepers and trees with wide-spread branches, surrounded by Swarms of bees. Is it not out of abiding love for His devotees that the consort of Sri, the Wonderworker, is graciously pleased to stand in Tiruvenkadam and to recline in Tirukkudantai?

81) Exhortation to fellowmen to worship daily the Lord who stands victorious on Tirumalai destroying the enemies of His devotees and protecting them.

கடைந்து பாற்கடல் கிடந்து, காலநேமியைக் கடிந்து*
உடைந்த வாலிதன்தனக்கு, உதவவந்து இராமனாய்*
மிடைந்த ஏழ்மரங்களும், அடங்கவெய்து* வேங்கடம்
அடைந்த மாலபா தமேஅடைந்து, நாளும்உய்ம்மினே. (81)

Reclining in **yoga-nidra** in the Milky ocean (which He had churned in Kurmavata), killing Ravana's uncle, Kalanemi (in Tarakasura War),

and in Ramavatara piercing the seven huge and closely linked trees at one stroke to infuse faith in the broken hearted Sugriva, who was plunged in despair and despondency, the Wonder Worker, the Consort of Sri, stays triumphant on Tiruvenkadam. Seek His blessed feet and attain life Divine.

NAMMALVAR TIRUVIRUTHAM

8) Nammalvar, the highly respected saint-devotee of Sri Mahavishnu superbly praises Tiruvenkadam, the sacred seat of Srinivasa on the seven hills. He describes Venkadam by this Pasuram as a charming mountain resounding with musical notes of bees, butterflies and the like. A dramatic hilarious situation seems to have taken place on the hill. A handsome hero has landed and he is hiding himself but sending signals to attract some one or the other. The hillock resembles Govardhanagiri, nay, it is the same mountain pedestal of Giridhari. It is a place of purity and prosperity, is very cool and pleasant and a playground of Lord Krishna. Some one there is collecting riches and things of divine value. That is the great Venkadam of Srinivasa.

காண்கின்றனகளும் கேட்கின்றனகளும் காணில்,

இந்நாள்

பாண் குன்ற நாடர் பயில்கின்றன இதெல்லாம் அறிந்தோம்
மாண் குன்றமேந்தி தன் மாமலை வோங்கடத்து உம்பர் நம்பும்
சேண்குன்றம் சென்று, பொருள்படைப்பான் கற்ற

திண்ணனவே (8)

This stanza admits of three possible interpretations- (i) as the heroine expressing to her companion her apprehensions that the hero contemplates long travel to distant lands in quest of wealth, (ii) as the heroine communicating her fears to the hero himself, and (iii) as the companion, guessing the hero's plan to go abroad, interrogating him about it.

The esoteric significance (**Svapadesa**) of this stanza is - A bhagavata, having resolved to go to Tiruvenkadam, approaches the Alvar with a heavy heart, to take leave of him; and in doing so he is unusally reverential in his approach and sweetness of speech. The Alvar is quick to attribute all this to the devotee's intention of going to Tiruvenkadam to have **darshan** of the Adorable Lord on whose chest ever abides the Lady of the Lotus.

10) The feelings of a bhagavata at having to part from the Alvar, for whom he has the highest reverence and for whose compositions he has the deepest respect, are expressed as the sentiments of a hero, who, in the course of his hunting expedition, happens to meet and lose his heart to the heroine who with her companion, is keeping guard over a cultivated farm in Tirumalai.

(மதியுடம் படுக்கலுற்ற தலைவன் குறையுறவு உரைத்தல்)

மாயோன் வடதிருவேங்கடநாட*வல்லிக்கொடிகாள்!
நோயோ உரைக்கிலும் கேட்கின்றிலீர் உரையீர்*நாமது
வாயோ? அதுவன்றிவல்வினையேனும் கிளியுமெளகும்
ஆயோ? அடும் தொண்டையோ?* அறையோ! இது அறிவரிதே.

(10)

Young ladies! exceedingly delicate like tender creepers growing in Tiruvenkadam in the north, the abode of the wonder working Lord! when I talk of my love-lorn state you pay no heed to it! Is it the charm of thy face or thy mellifluous speech which melts my heart as well as my parrot? Is it the beauty of thy lips, red like the **Kovai** fruit that rends my soul? It is hard to say which is the real cause. Tell me if you can.

The esoteric significance - Most revered Alvar! your mind is ever set on experiencing the **saulahya** and **sausilya** of the Adorable Lord who is the treasury of innumerable auspicious qualities, who leaving Paramapada, has made Tirumalai His abode in order to redeem the world. Like a tender creeper that can grow only by twining itself round a tree, you cherish your utter dependence (**paratantrya**) upon the Lord. We have lost ourselves in admiration of your manifold qualities. When we express our feelings of inability to part from you, you do not take any notice of them. Is it the beauty of your calm, serene countenance instinct with perfect peace (**Santi**) that has made us captive? Is it the sublimity of your compositions in which the Lord Himself is interested? Is it the charm of your speech? Or, is the melody of your song? Which of these has enslaved my mind to you it is hard to say you yourself must deign to give the answer.

15) Bhagavatas who have the highest esteem and veneration for the Alvars spiritual wisdom grow into ecstasies over it. Their eulogy is expressed in the manner of a hero extolling the exquisite beauty of the eyes of the lady-love.

(தோழி தலைவனது கருத்தறிந்து உரைத்தல்)

கயலோ நாமகண்கள்? என்று களிறு வினவிநின்றீர்!*
அயலோர நியிலும் ஈதென்னவார்த்தை?* கடல்கவர்ந்த
புயலோடுலாங் கொண்டல் வண்ணன் புனவேங்கடத்து
எம்மொடும்
பயலோ விலீர்*கொல்லைகாக்கின்ற நாளும் பலபலவே.

(15)

(Ostensibly asking whether we had seen an elephant passing this way, as a ruse to put off others) you stand transfixed to the spot saying Arn't your fish-like eyes marvellous! If others happen to hear it, what would they think of your inconsequent remark? Day after day for long we have been keeping guard over the fields of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam, dark-hued like clouds fully laden with the waters drawn from the sea. You have no part or lot in our work.

The heroine's companion understands the real intentions of the hero and tells him if you really intended to seek information about a stray elephant, why do you linger talking about the beauty of our eyes? If others come to know of it, they would mistake us. Your carrying here as if you have a share in our cultivating these fields is unbecoming of you. We have been engaged in cultivating these fields ever so long without any incident like this. Thus the companion seeing through the import of the hero's remarks, replies in a manner that would make it clear to others who might chance to be there that the hero is to understand that his love is not reciprocated by the heroine.

This stanza admits of another interpretation - you spoke of the beauty of our eyes. If others come to know of it why should we mind it! Why this pretense of inquiring about an elephant? Expecting your arrival, we have been accuyping ourselves keeping vigil over the fields

for many, many days. You have not chosen to make a visit till now. Here is a clear indication the heroine reciprocates his love.

God-love (**bhakti**) is portrayed on the lines of love (**Sringara**) in the tradition of Tamil poetry.

Esoteric significance - Those who are really appreciative of the great wisdom, the devotion, in a word, the unique greatness of the Alvar correct those who are unappreciative and admit them into their fold.

(31) In the guise of a **nayaki** pining to reach her Lord, the Alvar sends clouds as her messengers.

இசைமின்கள் தூதென்று இசைத்தால் இசையிலம்
என்தலைமேல்*
அசைமின்க ளென்றால் அசையுங்கொலாம்?* அம்பொன்
மாமணிகள்
திசைமின் மிளிரும் திருவோங் கடத்துவன் தாள்சிமய
மிசைமின் மிளிரிய போவான் வழிக்கொண்ட மேகங்களே!*

(31)

Clouds, displaying lightning proceed to the peaks of Tiruvenkadam lit up from all sides by the brilliance of the precious gems laying about are requested by the Alvar (in the guise of a lady-love) to be messengers to the Lord intimating to Him her love-lorn state. But, on finding them unresponsive, she requests them to place their feet on her (i.e. the Alvar's) head and proceed. They don't accede to that too (and the nayaki feels distraught).

Thinking that a group of devotees proceeding to Tiruvenkadam would be proper mediators (**purushakara**) to unite him with the Lord, the Alvar entreats them to be his messengers (i.e. acharyas). But on their refusing to accept that office, he requests them to place their feet on his head as being in itself a **purushartha**.

50) Bhagavatas who have gone on a pilgrimage, hearing about the Alvar's disconsolate state due to **bhagavat-vislesha**, speed back. Their anxiety to get back to see the Alvar is expressed as the most intense desire of the hero, who has been in foreign lands in quest of wealth, to return home with utmost expedition in view of the heroine's state of mind.

(தலைவன் மீண்டு வருகையில் பாகவனாடு கூறுதல்)

ஒண்ணுதல்மாமை யொளிபயவாமை* விரைந்துநந்தேர்
நண்ணுதல்வேண்டும்வலவ!கடாசி இன்று தேன்*

நவின்ற

விண்முதல் நாயகன் நீள்முடிவெண்முத்தவாசிகைத்தாய்
மண்முதல்சேர்வுற்று* அருவிசெய்யா நிற்கும் மாமலைக்கே

(50)

O Driver! before the lovely complexion of my spouse - the lady with beautiful forehead-fades, drive the chariot now to the Holy Hill where streams rising from the peak speed down to the foot resembling garlands humming with bees coursing down from the crown set with while pearls to the blessed feet of the Lord of **Paramapada**.

The hero returning home from a successful travel to distant lands urges his drives to speed the vehicle lest his spouse should be distressed at his non-return by the appointed time.

The esoteric significance:- To comfort the Alvar who has been experiencing great distress at separation from the Lord (**vislesha**) and His devotees, the bhagavatas implore their minds to return with utmost expedition to the Alvar before his resplendent FOREHEAD shining with the Sri Vaishnava emblem - the **urdhvapundram** - should lose its natural brilliance.

(60) The extreme intensity and urgency of the Alvar's desire for god-union is apparent to all persons around him. Little realising that for

the attainment of God, He is Himself the real means, they feel that without completing any of the prescribed **sadhanas** such as **bhakti**, the Alvar's importunity is unavailing. This feeling is expressed as that of a mother who, worried over the distraught condition of her daughter, ascertains from her bosom companions the true cause of her malady and says that she is too young for this affliction (**divine madness**).

(தலைமகள் இளமைக்குச் செவிலி இராங்குதல்)

முலையோ முழுமுற்றும் போந்தில
மொய் பூங்குழல் குறிய
கலையோ அரையில்லை
நாவோகுமுற்றும் கடல்மண்ணெல்லாம்
விலையோ வெனமிளிரும் கண்
இவள்பரமே? பெருமான்
மலையோ திருவேங்கடமென்று
கற்கின்றவாசகமே. (60)

Her breasts are not fully formed; the tresses adorned with flowers are short; her apparel is carelessly worn; her speech is not well-settled; her eyes do not bespeak worldly wisdom (i.e. lack the capacity to express her feelings). (All These are indications that she is as yet too young). Is it befitting such an immature youngster to be constantly stating that the Hill where the Adorable Lord resides is Tiruvenkadam?

In the language of religious symbolism, 'breasts' signifies bhakti, tresses, worship; 'dress' signifies effort; 'confused speech' failure to repeat the sacred names of the Lord (**nama samkirtana**); 'eyes-wandering' lack of **dhyana** (concentration). In the mother's opinion, her daughter is too immature to display love of God.

This stanza indicates that from the time of his birth, the Alvar's mind was rooted in God and God alone.

(67) The highest regard and admiration that god-lovers have for the Alvar's unique wisdom and devotion is expressed as the hero's infatuation for the exquisite and unrivalled beauty of the heroine's eyes.

(தலைவன் பாங்கனுக்குத் தன் வலியாழிவு சுறுதல்)

காவியும் நீலமும் வேலும் கயலும் பலபலவென்று
ஆவியின் தன்மை அளவல்ல பாரிப்பு அசுரைச்செற்ற
மாவியம்புள்வல்ல மாதவன் கோவிந்தன் வேங்கடம்சேர்
தூவியம்பேடையன்குள் கண்களாய துணைமலரே. (67)

Her gait (the heroine's) is like that of the beautiful winged swan living in Tiruvenkadam, the favourite abode of the Consort of Sri, who rides on the mighty and wonderful Garuda, the vanquisher of enemies, and who is Govinda the protector of cows. Her eyes resemble two well-matched lotus flowers. In their red lines they resemble beautiful **senkzhunir** flowers; they are dark like naidal flowers; they resemble **veil** in being sharp and piercing, and are like the **kayal** fish in shape. They resemble other flowers in several aspects and excel them all. To rend such a mind as mine so much effort is scarcely needed.

The reference to their conquering the **Senkzhunir** and **karunaidal** flowers and to the **veil** is symbolic of conquest respectively over **rajas, tamas** and **sattva gunas**. The 'sea' signifies transcendence of the **gunas** and the attainment of a deep and tranquil state.

The esoteric significance:- The Alvar has ardent devotion for the Lord who is ever engaged in **dushta nigraha** and **Sishta paripalana**, who has Garuda for His vehicle; who is the Supreme Being taught in the Vedas, who is the Consort of Sri; who is ever in association with Sri; the very embodiment of Daya; and who resides in Tiruvenkadam. It is no wonder that the Alvar, unexcelled for **jnana** and **anushthana**, has made me captive.

(81) To alleviate the distress of the Alvar, some well-intentioned people adopt certain remedies which the bhagavatas who have a better understanding of the true nature of the affliction condemn as futile. This is expressed here as the view of the companion of the heroine,

companion frankly and openly
condemns as futile the measures

adopted by the well-meaning mother
for placating minor gods and godlings.

உறுகின்ற கன்மங்கள் மேலன ஓர்ப்பில ராய்இவனைப்
பெறுகின்றதாயர்மெய்ந்நொந்துபெருர்கொல்? துழாய்
குழல்வாய்த்
துறுகின் நிலர்தொல்லை வேங்கட மாட்டவும் சூழ்கின்றிலர்
இறுகின்ற தால்இவளாகம் மெல்லாவி யெரிகொள்ளவே.
(81)

The companion who knows that the heroine has lost her soul to the Lord says that persons devoid of a proper understanding of the nature of the malady and, consequently of the proper remedy therefor, continue to adopt futile remedial measures. Perhaps the mother who has brought her forth has not experienced the birth pangs and has not taken the trouble to understand her daughter. She and her friends have not thought of applying to the heroine's tresses the **tulasi** that has adorned the Adorable Lord. Nor have they thought of taking her to the ancient shrine at Tiruvenkadam. Her delicate body and mind are being consumed by the pangs of separation from the Lord. (There being no relation between the affliction and the remedy) the malady is on the increase.

The esoteric meaning:- The real nature of the Alvar's affliction is **bhagavat Rama**; and without seeking proper remedies such as the presentation of **bhagavat prasada**, **divyadesa vasa**, and **nama samkirtana** other ministrations only aggravate the malady.

SAINT SATAKOPA (NAMMALVAR) PERIYA TIRUVANDADI

There is one stanza in this work, referring to the Lord of Tiruvenkadam. It speaks of the Lord's gracious act in entering the Alvar's mind.

கல்லும் கனைகடலும் வைகுந்த வாடும்
புல்லென் றெழுந்தன கொல்? ஏபாவம்! *- வெல்ல
நெடியான் நிறம் கரியான் உள்புகுந்து நீங்கான்
அடியேனது உள்ளத் தகம்.
(68)

The supreme Lord, dark-hued, with His resplendent divine body of unsurpassed beauty, has entered into me, never to part there from. Have Tiruvenkadam, the Milky ocean and His celestial abode, Vaikuntha, become insignificant? what a change!

Bhagavan stays in **archa** forms in temples, intently waiting for an opportunity to enter at once into the minds of men. This stanza is perhaps the basis for the celebrated author of **Sri Vachana Bhushanam** stating that if the Lord's desire is fulfilled, His interest in holy places may diminish. This is a forceful way of emphasising God's redemptive purpose.

'கல்', meaning rock, refers here to the holy Tiruvenkadam. **புல்லென்றெழுந்தன** may be taken to mean became insignificant like straw or became covered with grass due to neglect.

In **Tiruvoimozhi**, the Alvar considers himself as the special object of the Lord's grace. With great gratitude and joy he declares that the Lord has chosen the sea of the Alvar's mind for His abode in preference to Kshirabdhī, the Milky ocean. Compare **பனிக்கடலில் பள்ளிகோளைப் பழகவிட்டு ஓடிவந்து என் மனக்கடலில் வாழவல்ல மாயமனாநம்பி!---**

Periyalvar Tirumozhi, v.iv.9

It is a practice prevalent among many to recite this stanza daily before one retires to bed at night.

TIRUVOIMOZHI

I.viii-3 [The Lord dwells in Tiruvenkadam to be easy of access to all, men and **Nityasuris** alike. What a saulabhya, sausilya and vatsalya!]

கண்ணொவா னென்றும் மண்ணோர் விண்ணோர்க்கு
தண்ணூர் வேங்கட விண்ணோர் வெற்பனே. (3)

Even the eye (the controller) of the peoples of the world as also of Nitya-suris and gods (denizens of Paramapada) the Adorable Lord dwells in the cool, refreshing. Tiruvenkadam, so as to beauty of access to Nitya-suris also.

‘கண்ணொவான்’ - the eye of men and **Nityasuris** signifies that the Lord provides the facilities for jivas to perceive things, good and bad (**Sadasat**), upon proper conduct and attain the goal of life (i.e.He is the universal controller).

‘தண்ணூர் வேங்கடம்’ - the cool, refreshing Tiruvenkadam suggests that the Lord who seeks seekers (the Rakshaka) and souls who seek a Rakshaka find their desires fulfilled in Tiruvenkadam (have their tapas removed in cool Tirumalai)

‘விண்ணோர் வெற்பன்’ - the Hill of the celestial beings is so called because once peoples of the world get to Tiruvenkadam, there is no longer any distinction between men and celestial beings. such is the power of Tirumalai.

The place symbolises the **daya** of the Lord.

II.vi.9 [The prayer expressed in the previous stanza that the Lord should not leave the Alvar is now followed in this stanza by a statement that having been inseparably united with him the Lord could not leave him and that He could go nowhere else.]

எந்தாய்! தண்திருவேங்கடத் துள்நின்றாய்!
இலங்கைசெற்றாய் மராமரம்
பைந்தா னேமுருவ ஒருவாளி கோத்த வில்லா!

கொந்தார் தண்ணந் துழாயினாய்! அமுதே! உன்னைன்
னுள்ளோகமுத்தளம்
மைந்தா! வானேறே! இனிளங்குப் போகின்றதே? II, VI, 9

My Lord! Thou resideth in cool Tiruvenkadam! unerring Marksman! Thou destroyed Lanka! Thou released an arrow which easily pierced through the trunks of the seven huge trees! Thou art adorned with garlands of cool, fragrant clusters of tulasi! Lord of celestial beings! Sweet Neetar! My dearest Lord! Thou hast become inseparably united with me! Eternal Youth! (Thou hast become rejuvenated by redeeming me). How can you part from me? And where could you go?

II.vi.10. Even as the Alvar entreats the Lord never to leave him, he says, for his part, he would never, never leave him.

போகின்றகாலங்கள்போய்காலங்கள்போகுகாலங்கள்
தாய்தந்தையுயி
ராகின்றாய் உன்னைநான் அடைந்தேன் விடுவேனோ?
பாகின்ற தொல்புகழ் மூவுலகுக்கும் நாதனை! பரமம்!
தண்வேங்கடம்
மேகின்றாய்! தண்துழாய் விரைநாறு கண்ணியனே!
II.vi.10

Lord of the three worlds! (i.e. of the threefold **jivas** and three-fold non-sentient things). Thou art for ever far-famed for Thy innate auspicious qualities! The Highest Lord! (Thou hast no equal and assuredly none superior to Thee). Dweller in Tiruvenkadam! (which dispels the pangs of **samsara**). Thou wearest cool **tulasi** garlands, pure and fragrant!

In time past, present and future, Thou art a mother (intent on my happiness, in **priya-Kama**), a father (mindful of my good, i.e. **hita-Kama**), and my soul (supporter, **prana**)! Having attained Thee would I (who have understood my nature as a **dasa** and Thyself as my Master) ever leave Thee?

Neither from the side of the Alvar nor from that of the Lord is there any possibility of their communion ever snapping.

II.vii.11 The Alvar says that the Lord would never leave us.

பற்ப நாபன் உயர்வற வுயரும் பெருந்திறலோன்
எற்பரன் என்னையாக்கிக்கொண்டு எனக்கேதன்னைத்
தந்த
கற்பகம் என்அமுதம் கார்முகில் போலும் வேங்கடநல்
வெற்பன் விசும்போர்பிரான் எந்தை தாமோதரனே.

II.vii.11

Padmanabhan (the Lord with the beautiful lotus in His navel, the birth place of Brahma)! Possessor of unsurpassed and ever surging auspicious qualities such as **tejas** (unwearied energy)! A veritable tree of plenty (**Kalpaka vrksha**, wish-fulfilling tree)! Thou hast made me (the lowliest of the low) as Thy servant and offered Thyself (for being experienced by me)! The Benefactor alike of the celestial beings and of myself! Most blissful Nectar! Most generous like dark clouds, Thou dwellest in Tiruvenkadam and art greatly interested in me! (so Thou will never leave me).

III.v.8 In praise of God-lovers who, unable to contain themselves, give expression to their experience of the Divine in song, dance and the like in perfect joy and abandon.

வார்புன லந்தணருவி வடதிரு வேங்கடத் தெந்தை
பேர்பல சொல்லிப்பிதற்றிப் பித்தரென்றேபிறர்சுற
ஊர்பல புக்கும் புகாதும் உலோகர் சிரிக்கநின்றடி
ஆர்வம் பெருகிக் குனிப்பார் அமரர் தொழப்படுவாரே.

III.V.8

Repeating the numerous sacred names of my Benefactor, the Lord of Tiruvenkadam on the north noted for its many rivulets over-flowing with cool, delightful waters, of the **bhaktas** roam about as they please chanting in apparent disarray these sacred names, whether there be people around or not. Though laughed at as mad by others (i.e. by the ungodly), they dance and jump in joy and get more and more confirmed in their god-love. (The irreligious may deride them, but celestial beings would applaud and revere them).

104

III.ix.1. This is the first of a section of ten stanzas intended to reach others (**paropadesa**) that it is utmost folly to debase oneself by unabashed flattery of mortals and that the proper subject of praise is Bhagavan. In this stanza, the Alvar says that for his part, he will not design to sing the praises of anyone except the Lord.

சொன்னால் விரோத மிது ஆகிலும் சொல்லுவன் கேண்டிடு
என்னாவி லின்கவி யானொருவர்க்கும் கொடுக்கிலேன்
தென்னு தெனுவென்று வண்டுமுரல் திருவேங்கடத்து
என்னானை என்னப்பன் எம்பெருமான் உளாகவே.

III.ix.1

If I say this (i.e. that it is folly to sing the praises of mortals) it would be unpalatable, yet (as one deeply interested in your welfare) I shall not hesitate to offer this exhortation. Lend me your ears. When there is for the theme of our poetry the majestic Lord of Tiruvenkadam in idyllic surroundings, where bees ever hum in delight, when there is the Divine Father, my Master (ever intent on our **hita** and ever ready to save us) I (who am the **dasa** of the Lord and owe allegiance to none else) shall not allow my tongue to waste my poetic gifts on anyone else.

IV.V.11. Those who study these stanzas in praise of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam will have their obstacles to bhagavad anubhava completely removed by Sri.

மாரிமாருத தண்ணம்மலை வேங்கடத் தண்ணலை
வாரிமாருத பைம்பும்பொழில்சூழ் குருசுவர்நகர்
காரிமாறன் சடகோபன் சொல்லாயிரத்து இப்பத்தால்
வேரிமாருத பூமேலிருப்பார் வினைதீர்க்குமே. IV.v.11

These ten out of the thousand stanzas composed by Maran Satakopan, son of Kari of Kurukur city surrounded by green, fertile fields well watered, are in praise of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam ever cool and pleasant, because of never failing rain. Whoever studies these stanzas is sure that the obstacles to god-realisation would be completely removed through the grace of Sri, seated on ever fragrant and fresh lotus.

105

Even as continuous and heavy down pour of rain puts out forest conflagration, cool Venkadam Hill with its incessant rain will quench the fire of Samsara.

Though in this group of ten stanzas Vaikunthanatha is praised, it is here stated that they glorify the Lord of Tiruvenkadam, since **vatsalya** is the Lord's guna that is stressed, and the Lord of Tiruvenkadam is the very embodiment of **vatsalya**.

Goddess Lakshmi who ever experiences the **vatsalya** of the Lord considers the removal of obstacles to experience of the Divine Her prime responsibility.

VI.vi.11. கட்டுவழிற்சோலை நல்வோங்கடவாணனைக்
கட்டுவழிந்தென்குருசுவர்ச் சடகோபன்சொல்
கட்டுவழிலாயிரத்து இப்பத்தும்வல்லவர்
கட்டுவழிவானவர் போகமுண்பாரே. VI.vi.11

These ten out of the thousand stanzas comprising **Tiruvoimozhi** wholly superb (both in its parts and in its entirety) have been composed by Satakopa hailing from Tirukkurukoor, unique in its full splendour (because every one here knows that he is a **prakara**, a **dasa** of the Lord), on the Adorable Lord of Tiruvenkadam, ever cool and rich in fragrant flower gardens. Those who have a clear understanding of these stanzas experience limit-bliss vouched to **Nitya-suris**.

VI.ix.5 விண்மீதிருப்பாய்! மலைமேல்நிற்பாய்! கடற்சேர்ப்பாய்!
மண்மீதுழல்வாய்! இவற்றுளெங்கும்மறைந் துறைவாய்!
எண்மீதியன்ற புறவண்டத்தாய்! எனதாவி
உள்மீதாடி உருக்காட்டாதே ஒளிப்பாயோ? VI.ix.5

O Lord! Thou art seated in **Paramapada!** (out of Thy boundless compassion) Thou standest in Tiruvenkadam (so as to within the reach of all)! Thou resideth in the Milky ocean (to listen to the petition of gods! Incarnating as Rama, Krishna, and so on Thou movest about in the world giving a vision of Thy matchless beauty to all and sundry)!

Thou dwellest in all beings, sentient and nonsentient, without their knowing it! Thou dwellest in countless worlds beyond this! (That is not all) Thou residest in me (as the very self of my self)! Even when Thou art so near, Thou hidest Thy subline form from me! (Is this fair?)

VIII.ii.1. Not getting a vision of the Lord, the Alvar feels the utmost pangs of separation. This distraught condition is expressed as the feeling of a love-lorn lady pining for the hero.

நங்கள் வரிவனையாயங்காளோ!
நம்முடையே தலர்முன்புநாணி
நாங்கட்குயாவென் றுரைக்கும்மாற்றம்
நோக்குகின்றேன் எங்கும் காணமாட்டேன்.
சங்கம்சரிந் தன சாயிமுந்தேன்
தடமுலைவொன்றிறமாய்த் தளர்ந்தேன்
வெங்கண் பறவையின் பாகன் எங்கோன்
வெங்கடவாணனை வேண்டிச்சென்றே. VIII.ii.1

Dear companions wearing out striped bangles! Bashful and feeling ill at ease in the presence of our enemies (i.e. mother and others who, unable to understand my real state of mind take an unfriendly attitude) I could find no suitable words to open out my mind. Likewise, however hard I think I am unable to find a suitable reply to you too. (But then, should I ? can't you see things for yourselves?) Through ardent desire to meet the Lord of Tiruvenkadam who rides on Garuda with fierce looks (which are sufficient to scotch the enemies of the Godly folk), my bangles have slipped from my hands; my body has lost its lustre, and my breasts have lost colour and weakened.

The reference to the companions wearing bangles and to her own bangles slipping from her hands is not to indicate her fascination for ornaments; but it is intended to suggest how far she has thinned on account of her **vislesha**.

IX.iii.8 To have experience of the Divine, should one go to Paramapada? Don't we get it at Tiruvenkadam where The Lord has made Himself readily accessible to all?

இன்றிப்போக இருவினையும்கெடுத்து
ஒன்றியாக்கைபுகாமை உய்யக்கொள்வான்
நின்றவோங்கடம் நீள்நிலத்துஉள்ளது
சென்றுதேவர்கள் கைதொழுவார்களே. IX.iii.8

To root out completely all **punya** and **papa** (merit and demerit) lest they should attach to us once again and cause entanglement in bodily existence, and in order to lead one to life Divine, the Lord has from the abundance of His **daya**, chosen to reside in Venkadam Hill. True, there is this most sublime spot in this expansive world. (But what is that to you?) and those who go there offer worship and render service are **Nitya-suris**. (Am I fit to go there?)

X.v.6 Service could be rendered unto the blessed feet of the Lord only if we behold Him. This stanza offers a reply to this.

மேயான் வோங்கடம்
காயாமலர் வண்ணன்
பேயார் முலையுண்ட
வாயான் மாதவனே. X.v.6

The Lord who has the hue of Kayambhu flower, who is the Consort of Lakshmi, and who suckled the breast of the demoness, Putana, has with great zest made Tiruvenkadam His home (so that any one can behold Him and render service unto His feet)

The Lord having the colour of kayambu or of the cloud is seen in His superb form by the side of Lakshmi of golden hue.

The allusion to Putana is to suggest that all hindrances to bhagavad anubhava vanish before the Lord.

X.vii.8

திருமாலிருஞ்சோலைமலையே திருப்பாற்கடலேஎன் தலையே
திருமால்வைகுந்தமே தண்திருவோங்கடமேஎன துடலே
அருமாமாயத்துஎன துயிரே மனமேவாக்கேகருமமே
ஒருமாநொடியும்பிரியான் என்ஊழிமுதல்வன் ஒருவனே. X.vii.8

My Lord, Peerless one, the cause of time and of all existance, dwells in the Hill famed as Tirumalirumsolai, in the Milky ocean, and likewise in my head. Bhagavan, who along with His Consort, Lakshmi,

abides in Vaikuntha in the company of **nitya-suris**, and in cool Tiruvenkadam resides in my body, in my **atma-svarupa** which wallows in this expansive world of matter, in my mind, my speech and my activities, and do not leave me, even for an instant (what a **saualabhya**, **sausilya** and **vatsalya**!)

The point in stating that the Lord who has His home in Tirumalirumsolai and in the Milky ocean dwells in my head is that He makes no distinction between my head and the other two places. Likewise the dweller in Tiruvenkadam and in Vaikuntha stays in my body, **atma-svarupa**, mind, speech and so on without distinguishing between them. Such is His **saualabhya**.

Tirumalirumsolai and the Milky ocean are regarded as the Lord's **rakshana yoga nidra sthana**. Tiruvenkadam and Vaikuntha constitute His **bhogasthana**. It is here stated that the Alvar's head, body, soul and so on constitute at once **rakshana yoga nidra sthana** and **bhoga-sthana**.

In Krishnavatara, the Lord enjoyed the company of sages and of the gopi's by taking as many forms as there were aspirants. Even so, the Lord enjoys His association separately with every aspect of the Alvar.

PERIYALVAR

TIRUMOZHI

The Alvars take immense pleasure in describing the divine activities (**divya cheshtita**) of the Lord in His several incarnations such as Vamana, Narasimha, Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. Of these avataras, Krishnavatra fascinates them greatly. Periyalvar, known as Vishnuchitta, feels specially drawn to the childhood and boyhood **lilas** of Sri Krishna. Imagining himself to be Yasoda, Periyalvar expresses in unforgettable poetry the delights of proud mother enjoying these super-human deeds of the divine child.

I.iv.3 Kannan cries for the Moon, and Yasoda joins him in inviting the Moon to come at once.

சுற்றும் ஒளிவட்டம், சூழ்ந்து சோதி பரந்து எங்கும்*
எத்தனை செய்யிலும், என் மகன் முகம் நேரொவ்வாய்*
வித்தகன் வேங்கட வாணன், உன்னை விளிக்கின்ற*
கைத்தலம் நோவாமே, அம்புலீ! கடது ஓடி வா. 3

O Moon! however much the halo encircling you sheds lustre in all directions, it cannot stand comparison with the splendour of my son's most charming face (**mukha mandala**). This Wonder-worker dwells in Tiruvenkadam. Before his tender hands begin to ache run hither in haste.

I.viii.8 Yasoda longs for the child-kannan, running up to her and embracing her. She calls out to him. He accedes to her loving call and her joy is unbounded. In the guise of Yasoda, Periyalvar describes this blissful experience.

என்னிது மாயம்? என்னப்பனறிந்திலன்*
முன்னைய வண்ணமே கொண்டு, அளவாயென்ன*
மன்னு நமுசியை, வானில் சூழ்றிய*
மின்னு முடியனை! அச்சோவச்சோ
வேங்கடவாணனை! அச்சோவச்சோ. 8

My Darling with shining crown! Thou whirled and lossed aloft Namuchi (the son of Mahabali) who doggedly stood repeating “How cunning! My sire knew not your guiles! Measure as you appeared at first (i.e. as Vamana and not as the colossal Tirivikrama)”. Run up and embrace me! Run up and embrace me!

II.vi.9 Kannan insists on going at once to the woods to graze cattle. Yasoda does not like the prospect of not having his company till his return in the evening; and she tries to delay his starting as much as possible. So she says, “Don’t you require a stick to lead the cattle? I have asked the crow to get you a nice one, wait till it is brought.”

தென்னிலங்கை மன்னன், சிரம் தோள் துணிசெய்து*
மின்னிலங்கு புண், விடீண நம்பிக்கு*
என்னிலங்கு நாமத்தளவும், அரசென்ற*
மின்னிலங்காரற்கு ஓர் கோல் கொண்டு வா
வேங்கடவாணற்கு ஓர் கோல் கொண்டு வா. 9

To my Darling who wears garlands shining like lightning, who chopped off the ten heads and twenty arms of the king of Lanka (supposed to be impregnable) and who gifted that to the great and wise Vibhishana who had taken refuge under him, saying “you will hold sway as long as my name flourishes in the world” - bring him a stick! bring a stick! To the Lord of Tiruvenkadam bring a stick!

II.vii.3 To dress Kannan's tresses and bedeck the plaits with flowers of different colours and fragrance, Yasoda calls out to him mentioning separately each kind of flower that He likes most. Periyalvar, in the guise of Yasoda, invites Kannan likewise.

மச்சொடு மாளிகையேறி
மாதர்கள் தம்மிடம்புக்குக்*
கச்சொடு பட்டைக் கிழித்துக்
காம்பு துகிலவைகீறி*
நிச்சலும் தீமைகள் செய்வாய்!
நீள் திருவேங்கடத்தெந்தாய்!

பச்சைத்தமனகத்தோடு

பாதிரிப்பூச் சூட்டவாராய்.

3

My master! ascending storeys in different houses where gopis live, Thou tearest their corsets and blouses and also their costly silk sarees and playest all sorts of pranks every day. Thou stayest in the heights of Tiruvenkadam. Come here! I wish to bedeck Thy tresses with evergreen, unfading **damana** and exceedingly fragrant **padiri** flowers which will match it.

II.ix.6 The residents of Gokulam complain to Yasoda about the pranks of Kannan and request her to call him home. And she does so cajoling him, saying “Don’t be in the midst of bad people, come away.” Periyalvar calls Kannan home, impersonating Yasoda.

போதர் கண்டாய் இங்கே போதர் கண்டாய்

போதரேனென்னுதே போதர் கண்டாய்*

ஏதேனும் சொல்லி அசலகத்தார்

ஏதேனும் பேச நான் கேட்கமாட்டேன்*

கோதுகலமுடைக் குட்டனேயோ!

குன்றெடுத்தாய்! குடமாடு சுவத்தா!

வேதப்பொருளே! என் வேங்கடவா!

வித்தகனே! இங்கே போதராயே.

6

My Darling! worthy of universal praise! Thou lifted Govardhana to protect cows, cowherds and all residents of gokulam! Thou played the pot-dance! Thou art the one praised by the Veda (**vedapratipadya**); Thou stayest in Tiruvenkadam (accessible to all) please come run up to me. (On Kannan saying “No”) Don’t say ‘no’; please do come. He asks! Why do you call me? what do you want to do with me? She says, “Neighbours accuse you of all sorts of mischief and say harsh things which I am loathe to hear-I (loving you as my very self) cannot bear them. (therefore) come here without being and longer in the midst of bad folk. My Darling! without being the target of their complaint, speed up to me (who am all praise for you).

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III.iii.4 Putting himself in the place of Yosoda who is greatly disturbed in mind to find Kannan returning late in the evening after a day spent in the woods in the sun, tired and worn out, the Alvar says, “From tomorrow don’t go with the cows; stay at home.”

கடியார் பொழில் அணி வேங்கடவா!

கரும்போரேறே!* நீ உகக்கும்

குடையும் செரும்பும் குழலும் தருவிக்கக்

கொள்ளாதே போனாய் மாலே!

கடிய வொங்கானிடைக் கன்றின் பின் போன

சிறுக்குட்டச் செங்கமல

அடியும் வெதூம்பி* உன் கண்கள் சிவந்தாய்

அசைந்திட்டாய் நீ எம்பிரான்!

4

Thou resideth in Tiruvenkadam abounding in gardens with fragrant flowers! Thou art blue-hued and goest about as thou listeneth like a proud bull! Without asking for and taking your favourite umbrella (to protect Thy tender feet from hard and thorny path), and the flute (to take the flock and to call them), in Thy cagerness you followed the cows and calves to the extremely hot wooded region and went wherever they strayed. Thy tender, lotus-like feet have been scorched; Thy lovely eyes have become red. Thy body has become jaded. My dearest Darling! How can I bear to see you in this state! (Here-after, you should not go to the woods.)

V.iv.1 The five forms of the Lord-**Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Antaryami** and **Archa**-are for correcting wayward souls and accepting service from them. All His excellent gunas, such as **saulabhya, sausilya** and **vatsalya**, are revealed by the Lord residing in Tiruvenkadam. Hence, the Alvar feels specially drawn to the Lord of Tirumalai.

**சென்னியோங்கு

தண் திருவேங்கடமுடையாய்! உலகு

தன்னை வாழ நின்ற நம்பீ!

தாமோதரா! சதிரா!*

113

என்னையும் என்னுடைமையையும்
 உன் சக்கரப்பொறி ஒற்றிக் கொண்டு*
 நின்னருளே புரிந்திருந்தேன்
 இனி என் திருக்குறிப்பே? 1

Thou residest in cool Tiruvenkadam with its lofty peaks! Thou art possessed of all auspicious qualities intended for the world enjoying full and abundant life! O Damodara! (Thou bearest the mark of the thin knotted rope with which Yosada bound Thee to a wooden mortar symbolising Thy **saulabhya**.) Thou turnest the blind eye to the defects of Thy devotees! Surrendering myself and what is mine unto Thee and bearing the mark of Sudarsana as a cherished symbol of my innate dasya to Thee I remain seeking Thy grace. What is Thy pleasure? (i.e my desire has been fulfilled. I have surrendered unto Thee; and Thy desire has been fulfilled (i.e I have been reclaimed. What more is needed!)

NACCHIYAR TIRUMOZHI

Saint Andal sets her heart on the Adorable Lord. Her **bhagavat Kama** intensifies and she adopts several means for realising the goal. She observes **margazhi nonbu** so graphically described in her **Tiruppavai**. That is unavailing Andal now invokes Kama Deva for help in the realisation of her ambition to render service unto the Lord.

I.1 **தையொரு திங்களும் தரைவிளக்கித்
 தண் மண்டலமிட்டு மாசி முன்னாள்*
 ஐய நுண்மணற்கொண்டு தெருவணிந்து
 அழகினுக்கலங்கரித்து அனங்கதேவா!*
 உய்யவுமாங்கொலோ என்று சொல்லி
 உன்னையும் உம்பியையும் தொழுதேன்*
 வெய்யதோர் தழுவாமிழ் சக்கரக்கை
 வோங்கடவற்கு என்னை விதிக்கிறியே. 1

Cleaning the floor daily during the month of **Thai** and drawing floral decorations on the ground and spreading fine sand on the roads during the first part of the following month of **masi** and making the place fit for the Lord's procession I have been hoping to have the truly blessed life O Kama Deva and your brother, Saman! I bow to thee and invoke thy aid in getting me the opportunity to render service unto the Lord of Tiruvenkadam who wields the unique chakrayudha emitting fire against the enemies of His devotees.

Andal invokes Kama Deva and his brother, Saman, even as in **Tiruppavai** she invokes Sri Krishna and his brother, Baladeva. In line with this is the supplication to Sri Rama and Lakshmana-**Namostu Ramaya sa Lakshmanaya**.

Kama Deva; it is belived, helps lovers seeking reunion.

I.3 Saint Andal placates Kama Deva by the offer of flowers that he likes most in order that he may intercede on her behalf.

மத்தநன்னறு மலர் முருக்க மலர் கொண்டு
 முப்போதும் உன்னடி வணங்கி*

தத்துவாமிலியென்று நெஞ்சொரிந்து
 வாசகத்தழித்து உன்னை வைதீடாமே*
 கொத்தலர்ப்புங்களை தொடுத்துக்கொண்டு
 கோவிந்தனைன்பதோர் பேரமுதி*
 வித்தகன் வேங்கடவாணனைன்றாம்
 விளக்கினில்புக என்னை விதிக்கிறியே. 3

O Kama Deva! offering sweet smelling umattam flowers and also **murukkam** flowers thrice daily, I worship thy feet. Inscribing the name (of the **rakshaka**) ‘govinda,’ kindly aim very fragrant flowers blossoming in clusters as arrows at the wonder-working Lord of Tiruvenkadam shining as the brightest lamp so that I may attain His blessed feet. If you fail to do so, greatly disturbed in mind I would have to run you down as a false god; and people would lose faith in you.

This stanza admits of various interpretations. The more one delves into it, the greater the treasures one unearths. ‘Inscribing the name of govinda’ may mean (i) inscribe that name on the arrow so that the Lord may know that it is the name even in my mind and He may take compassion on me and grant my prayer at once, or (ii) inscribe the name in my mind so that I as an inalienable and innate **dasa**, may be inseparably united with Him. There are other significant alternatives.

Even as the the ring with name of Sri Rama etched thereon comforted Sita to ascertain extent and made her await Rama’s arrival with an army, the name of the **rakshaka** Govinda-would enable me (saint Andal) to bear vislesha for a while and await the grant of my prayer.

IV.(2) Kama Deva is entreated to use his good offices to induce the Lord to grant saint Andal’s prayer-

காட்டில் வேங்கடம், கண்ணபுர நகர்*
 வாட்டமின்றி, மகிழ்ந்துறை வாமனை*
 ஒட்டரா வந்து, என் கைப்பற்றித்* தன்னொடும்
 சூட்டுமாகில் நீ, சுவரூ சூடலே! 2

The Lord who incarnated as Vamana resides in the wooded region of Tiruvenkadam and in the city of Tirukkanapuram without any hesitation but with zest. O god who unites lovers! Kindly persuade Him to speed up to me to take my hand and to embrace me.

Even as the Lord lived in the company of rishis in Dandakaranya, and with gopis in Brindavana, He dwells in the forest region of Tiruvenkadam just as He dwelt with city dwellers in Ayodhya and in Ayarpadi in the company of shepherds, He stays in Tirukkannapuram. Whether it is forest or city, it makes no difference to Him. For the sake of the devas, He left His abode, Vaikuntha, in the company of **Nityasuris**; He appeared as Vamana and sought the gift of a piece of land from Mahabali, and blessed all peoples of by placing His blessed feet on them all. O Kama Deva! you must see to it that the Lord comes and takes hold of my hands and embraces me.

‘வாட்டமின்றி மகிழ்ந்துறை’ - without feeling any repugnance, He has left His life surrounded by **Nityasuris** and is living in the midst of **Samsari chetanas**, as the very embodiment of vatsalya. Like a lamp in Darkness, His **Saulabhya**, **sausilya** and **vatsalya** appear at their best in the mundane world.

V.2. To decide on a remedy for one’s illness, a clear account of the malady has to be made. So a description is given of the ways in which Saint Andal feels neglected.

வெள்ளை விளி சங்கு இடங்கையில்கொண்ட விமலன்
 எனக்கு உருக்காட்டான்*
 உள்ளம் புகுந்து என்னை நைவித்து
 நாளும் உயிர் பெய்து சுத்தாட்டுக் காணும்*
 கள்ளவிழ் செண்பகப்பு மலர்கோதிக்
 களித்து இசை பாடும் குயிலே!*
 மெள்ள இருந்து மிழற்றி மிழற்றுகுது
 என் வேங்கடவன் வரக் கூவாய். 2

O Kokila! by partaking of the essence (i.e.honey) of **Champak** flowers, you sing in joy. The Lord, pure and blemishless, bearing in His

left hand the spotlessly white conch (Panchajanya which invites the like minded i.e those interested in **bhagavat Kainkarya** to come forward) reveals not His divine form to me (who am extremely eager to behold it), nor does He allow me to forget it. Besides entering my mind (which is constantly thinking of Him) but without actually killing my prana, He makes me dance every day and observes me and takes delight in tormenting me. (what you have to do is) stay by my side and always and by soft and sweet words and without idle pranks, appeal to my Lord, the Dweller in Tiruvenkadam to come to me.

X.(5) To forget the pangs of separation, Saint Andal gets into the garden; but as her eyes fall on flower after flower, she is reminded of her Lord. When she closes her eyes, there is no end to her troubles. The songs of the kokila are heard and they give her no peace of mind. She tells these birds “Should you too torture me like this? Please stop singing.”

பாடும் குயில்காள்!, ஈதென்னபாடல்? *நல்வெங்கட
நாடர் நமக்கொரு வாழ்வுதந்தால், வந்து பாடுமின்*
ஆடும் கருளக்கொடியுடையார், வந்து அருள்செய்து
கூடுவராயிடில் சுவை, நும்பாட்டுக்கள் கேட்டுமே. 5

O singing **kuils!** what is this! you may sing to your heart’s content, if the Lord of Tiruvenkadam is pleased to give me blessed life. If the Lord, who has for His banner Garuda who dances in joy, is graciously pleased to mingle with me, I shall myself send for you and I shall happily listen to your songs.

Birds? you sing in perfect abandon, little realising my state of mind. What is this song? Is this the occasion for it? Am I in a mood to listen to it now? Don’t get vexed with me. I shall myself invite you to sing when the bountiful Lord is pleased to give me the truly blessed life; (Or you will know the proper occasion from the joyous sounds emanating from the wings of the dancing Garuda as he bears the Lord to this place.

X.8 unable to bear her sorrow, Saint Andal talks to the rain clouds.

மழையே! மழையே!, மண்புறம் பூசி உள்ளாய் நின்று*
மெழுகுநிறினுற்போல், உற்று நல்வெங்கடத்துள் நின்று*
அழகப்பிரானுர்தம்மை, என்வெஞ்சத்தகப்படத்
தழுவிநின்று* என்னைத்ததைத்துக்கொண்டு உற்றுவம்வல்
லையே? 8

O Rain! O Rain! O Clouds! Like smearing clay outside and taking out (through a hole) the way inside by heating it, the Lord of supreme beauty residing in Tiruvenkadam melts my soul. Can’t you make Him embrace me, just as He appears to my mind and unite me with Him and then rain in plenty?

மண்புறம் பூசி--- The way in which metal workers prepare moulds and make idols is here alluded to.

It is suggested that the Lord by embracing Andal’s body has made her soul melt.

The clouds are addressed twice lest Andal’s address should be drowned in the roar of rainfall.

TIRUPPANALVAR
AMALA NADIPIRAN

The first stanza of this hymn indicates in brief the profound truths enshrined in the sacred **Tirumantram** and **Dvayam**.

அமலனாதிபிரான் அடியார்க்குஎன்னையாட்படுத்த
விமலன் விண்ணவர்கோன் விரையார்பொழில்
வேங்கடவன்
நீமலன்நீன் மலன்நீதிவானவன் நீள்மதிளரங்கத்
தம்மான்திருக்
கமலபாதம்வந்துஎன்கண்ணினுள்ளன
வொக்கின்றதே. 1

The Adorable Lord is absolutely pure, free from all trace of blemish, the Ancient one ,the Primordial Cause of all (and therefore the Refuge of All **sarva loka saranya**), the great Benefactor (one who protects without looking for any return), the ever Blemishless (unique, distinct from all others including **nityas** and **muktas**) who made such a lowly person as myself a **bhagavata kinkara** (assigned me to the service of God-lovers), the Lord of the celestials, the resident of Tiruvenkadam with fragrant groves accessible to all (**sarva sulabha**), one who is faultless (who cannot be touched by the imperfections of suppliants and who is free from the defect of inaccessibility), one who does not notice the defects of seekers, the Dweller in **Paramapada** where righteousness ever prevails (where none deviates, nor could be diverted from,the path of righteousness), the Lord of Sri Rangam with long and high ramparts. (out of infinite compassion) His effulgent lotus-like feet (as once pure, **pavana**, and blissful, **bhogya**) have, of their own accord, come into, and stay in, my eyes.

Amalan, vimalan, nimalan and nimmalan all variants of the same word - have been used in the same stanza on special purpose, that of highlighting the extreme holiness, purity-purity in excess is of the Supreme Lord. Pure and spotless Himself, He is unaffected by the blemishes of

His seekers; and He purifies, divinises them, ridding them of their imperfections. He is at once **subha**, unsurpassably great, and **asraya**, easily accessible.

Mokshapradatva implied by அமலன் (absolute purity) and **jagat-Karanatva** signified by ஆதிப்பிரான் are the insignia of the universal rakshaka (saviour, redeemer).

The true Vaisnavite considers **bhagavat kainkarya** as finding its inevitable extension in **bhagavata-kainkarya**. Of Saint Satakopa - அடியார் அடியார் தமக்கடியார். **Mukundamala**: tvatbhrtya bhrtya paricharaka bhrtya bhrtya bhrtyasya bhrtya iti....

அடியார்க்கு என்னை ஆட்படுத்தவிமலன் - unstinting and going all out to confer the greatest gift of making me a servant of the bhagavatas. Whether Achyuta Seva leads to moksha or not, service to the devotees of Achyuta is the surest route to release, say the sacred books.

Vaikunthanatha comes to, Tirumalai-Tirupati and then reclines in Sri Rangam even as He incarnates in Madhura and then comes to live in Ayarpadi.

The following are some of the innumerable auspicious qualities of Bhagavan stressed in this stanza-moksha-pradatva, jagat-kara-natva, sarva-prakara-upakaratva, nitya-nirdoshatva, nitya-suri-nirvahakatva, nitya-vigrahatva, sarva sulabhatva, sarva-swamitva and bhogyatva.

3. மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கடமாமலை வானவர்கள்
சந்திசெய்யநின்றான் அரங்கத்தரவினையான்
அந்திபோல்நிறத்தாடையும்அதன்மேலயிணைப்படைத்ததோரெழில்
உந்திமேல தன்றே அடியேனுள்ளத்தின்னாயிரே. 3

The Lord reclining on the cool and comfortable couch, namely Adishesha, in Sri Rangam, is the Lord who, in order to enable nityas and muktas to worship (to serve Him and to enjoy His **saulabhya**, **sausilya** and the like), stands in Holy Venkadam in the north where

monkeys jump hither and thither. My blissful atma residing in the mind dwells on the twilight hued (i.e. red) raimant and on the resplendent navel above it which created Brahma.

Monkeys jumping hither and thither stand for men whose fickle mind flits from one thing to another and lack steadfastness of purpose.

TIRUMANGAI ALVAR [PERIYA TIRUMOZHI]

IV.iii.8 [The Lord who incarnated as Sri Krishna, who is preclaimed in the Vedas reveals Himself at Tiruvenkadam and at Tirunankai. By worshipping Him at these sacred places, I have attained true life.]

அன்றியவாணனாயிரம்தோளும்
துணிய அன்று ஆழிதொட்டானை*
மின்திகழ்குடுமிவேங்கடமலைமேல்
மேவியவேதநல்விளக்கை*
தென்திசைத்தில தமனையவர் நாங்கைச்
செம்பொன் செய்கோயிலினுள்ளே*
மன்றதுவாலியமகிழ்ந்துநின்றானை
வணங்கிநான்வாழ்ந்தொழிந்தேனே. (8)

Sri Krishna who by (just) touching his Discus severed the thousand arms of the irate Banasura who marched against Him having kept His grandson (Aniruddha) captive, the Lord who dwells with great relish on the pinnacles of Tiruvenkadam, the Supreme Being revealed in the Vedas as the brightest lamp, and the Lord who enjoys His stay in the midst of His numerous devotees in Tirunankai-an ornament to the southern region-beholding the Lord and worshipping His blessed feet, I (this unworthy person) have attained truly blessed life.

IV.vii.5 The Alvar sings the praises of the Lord dwelling in Tiruvenkadam and in Tiruvellakulam-ornaments respectively to the northern and southern region -and prays for the removal of his Karmas which are hindrances to the blessed life.

வேடார்திருவாங்கடம் மேயவிளக்கே!
நாடார்புகழ் வேதியர் மன்னியநாங்கவர்
சேடார்பொழில்சூழ் திருவெள்ளக்குளத்தாய்!
பாடாவருவேன் வினையாயினபாற்றே. IV.vii.5

Lord! resplendent, ever bright Mangala Dipa on Tiruvenkadam abounding in hunters like Guha ever devoted to Thee! Master of

Tiruvellakulam in Tirunankur, which is studded with groves and where propicients in the Vedas far-famed for their jnana and **anushthana** dwell! I am ever engaged in singing Thy glories. Pray dispel my Karmas and save me.

The Lord is the ever bright, self-luminous lamp on the sacred Hill shedding light all round, dispelling darkness, and illumining the right path.

V.iii.4 O Lord! incarnating as Krishna Thou slew the enemies of the Pandavas and got for them their kingdom! Thou that art resident in Tiruvellarai! Pray foster in me true and intense devotion to Thee.

வாம்பரியுகமன்னர்தம் உயிர்செக ஐவர்கட்கு அரசளித்த*
காம்பினூர் திருவோங்கட்பொருப்ப! நின்காதலை
அருள்எனக்கு*
மாம்பொழில் தளிர்கோதியமடக்குயில் வாயதுதுவர்ப்பய்த*
தீம்பலங்கனித்தேனது நுகர் திருவெள்ளறைநின்றனே!

V.iii.4

O Lord! Thou appearest in standing posture in Tiruvellarai (Svetadri), from the mango groves there of **kuyils** peck the tender shoots of mangoes and as an antidote to the sour taste lingering in their mouths regale themselves to the sweet honey of jack fruits. During the Mahabharata War Thou killed the kings opposing the Pandavas and routed the horses on whose backs they came riding, and conferred the kingdom on the Pandavas. Thou art the dweller in Tiruvenkadam filled with luxuriant bamboos! Pray grant me true devotion unto Thee.

V.v.1 This stanza is cast in the form of a description by the mother of her daughter's (the Alvar's - Parakala nayaki's) unrequited love for Lord Ranganatha.

*வெருவாதாள்வாய்வெருவி வேங்கடமே! வேங்கடமே!
என்கின்றனால்*
மருவாளால் என்குடங்கால் வாள்நெடுங்கண் துயில்மறந்தாள்*
வண்டார்கொண்ட

லுருவாளன்வானவர்தமுயிராளன் ஒலி திரைநீர்ப்பெளவம்
கொண்ட
திருவாளன்*என்மகளைச்செய்தனகள் எங்ஙனம்நான்
சிந்திக்கேனே?
V.v.1

Without any restraint my daughter constantly prattles 'Venkadam!', 'Venkadam'. My darling daughter refuses to sleep on my lap. Her long, fish-like eyes know no sleep. What the Lord having the complexion of bees that have drunk inebriating honey or that of clouds, the Soul of the **Nitya-suris**, the Consort of Sri born of the cool, roaring ocean, what all the Lord has done to my daughter I am unable even to imagine!

Without any compassion the Lord has been unmindful of my daughter's condition. How can I describe her state?

If she loves the Lord of Sri Rangam where is the appropriateness in referring to the Lord of Tiruvenkadam? That the incongruity is only seeming, not real, would be apparent when it is remembered that Paramapada natha (Para Vasudeva) is non-different from all the avataras, such as Rama and Krishna, and from the **archamurtis** in Tiruvenkadam, Sri Rangam, and other holy places. Further, it is also believed that Paramapada natha stopped at Tirumalai Tirupati before His visit to Sri Rangam. His stay on Venkadam Hill is regarded as the foundation for His subsequent residence in Sri-Rangam.

c.f. the following slokas-

- (i) Kaveri viraja seyam Vaikuntham ranga
mandiram
"Sri Vasudevo rangesah pratyaksham
paramam padam||"
(ii) Mayavi paramanandam tyaktva
vaikuntha muttamam
Swami pushkarinitire ramaya saha
modate||

In **Amalanadippiran**, Tiruppanalvar also refers to the Primeval cause of the universe both as the Lord of Tiruvenkadam and as the Lord of Tiruvarangam.

அமலனாதிபிரான் அடியார்க்கு என்னையாட்படுத்த
விமலன் விண்ணவர் கோன்விரையார்,
வொழில்வோங்கடவன்
நிமலன் நின்மலன் நீதிவானவன் நீள்
மதிலரங்கத்தம்மான்திருக்
கமலபாதம் வந்து என் கண்ணின் உள்ளான
வொக்கின்றதே. V.vi.7

“The Consort of Sri, the Lord of Tiruvenkadam who reveals Himself as Tiruvikrama who measured the world, I was blessed to worship at Sri Rangam” says the Alvar.

சிந்தனையைத் தவநெறியைத் திருமாலை*பிரியாது
வந்துஎன் மனத்து இருந்த வடமலையை*வரிவண்டார்
கொந்தனைந்தவொழிற்கோவல் உலகளப்பான் அடிநிமிர்த்த
அந்தனை* யான்கண்டது அணிநீர்த்தென்றரங்கத்தே.
V.vi.7

The Supreme Lord who is the true goal of knowledge worth the name and the object of service, faultless and uninterrupted, and who is also the **upaya** (means) for attaining the goal, the Consort of Sri, the Lord of Tiruvenkadam, the Lord who has proceeded thence to stay in my mind never to leave it and who stands in Tirukovalur surrounded by delightful flower gardens filled with swarms of bees singing with delight, is poised to measure the universe. I beheld Him in Srirangam exceedingly delightful and noted for its holy waters.

Paramapada natha incarnated in various forms to protect His devotees. For the benefit of future generations, He appears as **archa-murtis** in holy places such as Tiruvenkadam and Tirukkovalur. Not content with that, He dwells in the hearts of devotees. What a vatsalya? what a saulabhya!

VI.viii.1. For the sake of devotees who are unable to go to Tiruvenkadam for worship, He resides in Tirunaraiyur. I have been fortunate to worship Him there, says the Alvar.

மான்கொண்டதோல்மார்வின் மாணியாய்* மாவலிமண்
தான்கொண்டு தாளாலளந்த பெருமாளை*
தேன்கொண்டசாரல் திருவேங்கடத்தானை*
நான்சென்றுநாடி நறையூரில்கண்டேனே. VI.viii.1

Seeking the supreme Lord who once went in the guise of a brahmacharin covering his chest with a deer skin and got a gift of land from Mahabali and measured the universe with His feet, (seeking) the Lord dwelling in Tiruvenkadam flowing with honey from every side, I had darsan of Him in Tirunaraiyur.

The point of interest in the reference to the Lord covering his chest with a deer skin is without hiding Sri residing eternally on His chest, He could not have acted the role of a brahmacharin. Besides in the absence of the covering, lakshmi kataksha would have fallen on Mahabali and it might have been difficult to teach Mahabali his place as the Lord had intended to do. If He had gone alone(which is certainly impossible), the Lord might not have got the gift He sought.

C.f. Saint Satakopa's - “தாளாலளந்த---

திருவேங்கடத்தானை” and - “அன்று ஞால மளந்த
பிரான் பரன்சென்று சேர் திருவேங்கடமாமலை.”

The Alvar suggests, that without having to take the trouble of going a long distance to reach Tiruvenkadam, he was blessed with the opporunity to worship the Lord at Tirunaraiyur itself.

VII.iii.5 [My mind shall not meditate on any except Thee who wert pleased to come and comfort me when I was suffering extreme agony for my many and manifold sins.]

ஆங்குவெந்நரகத்து அழுந்தும்போது
அஞ்செலென்று அடியேனை அங்கேவந்து

தாங்கு *தாமரையன்னபொன்றாடி
 எம்பிராணை உம்பர்க்கணியாய்ப்பிந்திற்*
 வேங்கடத்தரியைப்பரிசீறியை
 வெண்ணையுண்டுஉரலினிடையாப்புண்ட
 தீங்கரும்பினை* தேனைநன்பாலினையன்றி
 என்மனம்சிந்தைசெய்யாதே. VII.iii.5

My Benefactor! Thou rushed to dreadful Hell (**naraka**) where I was suffering untold misery and comforted me saying “Fear not” and protected me. My master Thy lotus-like feet are most beautiful and auspicious. An ornament to the celestials, Thou residest in Tiruvenkadam, Thou tore the mouth of the asura, Kesin, who came in the form of a horse; Thou ate stolen butter and wert tied to a mortar for this theft! Thou art surpassingly sweet like the sugar-cane, delectable like honey and like purest milk; Thou resideth in Tirunarayur. My mind shall not think of any except Thee perfect in every way.

VII.x.3 [At Tirukkannamankai I worshipped, says the Alvar, the supreme Lord who is delighted to have Ardhanarisvara on one side of His body, and who is the inner Atma pervading surya-mandala, and Akasa where the full Moon shines, and who is the cause of night and day.]

எங்களுக்கு அருள்செய்கின்றஈசனை
 வாசவார் குழலாள்மலைமங்கைதன்
 பாங்கனை*பாங்கில்வைத்துகந்தான் தன்னைப்
 பான்மையைப்பனிமாமதியம்தவழ்*
 மங்குலைச்சுடரைவடமாமலை
 யுச்சியை நச்சிநாம்வணங்கப்படும்
 கங்குலை* பகலைச்சென்றுநாடிக்
 கண்ணமங்கையுள் கண்டுகொண்டேனே. VII.x.3

The Lord who bestows His grace on us, the Lord who is the embodiment of **saushilya** as revealed by His delight in having on one side of His body **Mahesa** who bears on one side of his body the daughter of Himavan, Parvati with lovely tresses casting fragrance, the

Lord who stands as the Akasa when the resplendent Moon shines, and is the pervading Atma of Suruja, the Lord who is and ornament to the highest peak of Tiruvenkadam which marks the northern border of the Tamil country, the Lord who is lovingly sought and adored by us, the Lord at once of night and day - I went in quest of Him and worshipped Him at Tirukkannamkai.

VIII.ii.3 [The mother of the Alvar describes the forlorn state of her daughter to the Lord of Tirukkanapuram. Alternately, the mother may be regarded a feeling intensely for her daughter’s state of mind.]

** அருவிசோர்வேங்கடம் நீர்மலையென்றுவாய்
 வெருவினான் மெய்யம்வினவியிருக்கின்றான்*
 பெருகுசீர்க் கண்ணபுரமென்றுபேசினான்
 உருகினான்* உள்மெலிந்தான் இதுஎன்கொலோ?

VIII.ii.3

(My daughter, Parakala nayaki) is often prattling of Tiruvenkadam, full of streams, and of Tirunirmalai; sometimes she inquires about Tirumeyyami; (and getting no answer), she stands perplexed; (on other occasions) talking of the great Tirukkannapuram she melts; her mind is enfeebled. How has all this come about! (It is all my **karma**)

IX.vii.4 [The Alvar exhorts his mind not to join the ranks of those seeking sensual pleasures, but to lead a truly worthy life, thinking constantly of the Lord who dwells in Paramapada, in Tiruvenkadam and Tiruvallavizh.]

பண்ணுலாமென்மொழிப்பாவைமார்பிணமுலையனைதும்
 நாமென்று*
 எண்ணுவாவெண்ணமதொழித்து நீ பிழைத்துயக்
 கருதியேல்*
 விண்ணுளார் விண்ணின் மீதியன்ற வேங்கடத்துளார்*
 வளங்கொள்முந்நீர்
 வண்ணனார்வல்லவாழ்சொல்லுமாவல்லையாய்
 மருவுநெஞ்சே!

IX.vii.4

O mind! give up all thought of embracing the well-formed breasts of lovely maidens with soft, melodious speech (i.e.give up all thought

of sensual enjoyment), if you intend to lead a worthy life, and settle down to chant constantly the sacred name of Tiruvallavozh dear to Paramapada natha who reveals His sublime form to the denizens of Vaikuntha and who dwells in Tiruvenkadam and who has a form of transcendent beauty resembling the wonderful sea.

IX.ix.9 Absorbed in the enjoyment of the supernal beauty of the Lord of Tirumalirumsolai, the Alvar imagines himself to be a bride who has lost her soul to the Divine and speaks as though a mother of the bride is describing her daughter's state of mind (**bhagavat prema**).

வலம்புரியாழியனை வரையாந்திரள்தோளந்தனை*
புலம்புரிநூலவனைப் பொழில்வோங்கடவேதியனை*
சிலம்பியலாறுடைய திருமாலிருஞ்சோலைநின்ற*
நலந்திகழ்நாரணனை நனுகுங்கொல்? என்நன்னுதலே.
IX.ix.9

When, indeed, will my daughter with lovely forehead attain Sriman Narayana, the Lord who wields in His hands the conch and the Discus, whose arms are mighty, like rock, who has the captivating **yajnopavita**, who is the sole subject matter of the Vedas, who resides in Tirumalirumsolai surrounded where beautiful groves abound and where flows the famous **silambu river** (Nupura ganga), (when indeed will my daughter attain) the Lord who is the treasury of auspicious qualities?

The Lord wields the Panchajanya and Chakrayudha for protecting His devotees. Even without them, He can save them with the might of His invincible arms. His yajnopavitam is a feast to our eyes. He dwells in Tirumalirumsolai so as to be easy of access to aspirants. To those who are unable to go to Tirumalirumsolai, He reveals Himself in Sri Rangam. What a **saulabhya!** what a **sausilya!**

Silambu is nupura in Sanskrit. In Trivikramavatara, as the Lord measured the worlds and the upper regions, His blessed feet went up to Satyaloka where Brahma washed His feet and the waters spilled down through His anklet (**nupura**) and flowed as the holy river Nupuraganga.

X.i.2 [Having worshipped yesterday the Lord of ravishing beauty on Tiruvenkadam let us now proceed to Tiruttanka to adore Him, says the Alvar.]

பொன்னைமாமணியை அணியார்ந்ததோர்
மின்னை வேங்கடத்துஉச்சியில் கண்டுபோய்
என்னையாளுடைஈசனை எம்பிரான்
தன்னை யாம்சென்றுகாண்டும் தண்காணிலே. X.i.2

Having worshipped on the heights of Tiruvenkadam the Lord of ravishing beauty who shines with exceeding brightness like a flash of lightning, my Master who accepted me as a servant and who is the sovereign of the universe, let us go today to Tiruttanka to adore Him.

Tiruttanka is a shrine in Kanchi-puram. The name of the presiding Deity there is Dipaprakasa.

X.x.5 [Imagining himself to be a Nayaki, the Alvar asks his parrot to entreat the Lord to come.]

சொல்லாய் பைங்கிளியே
கூடராழி வலனுயர்த்த
மல்லார் தோள்வட வேங்கடவனைவர
சொல்லாய் பைங்கிளியே. X.x.5

Green Parrot! Beseech the Lord who wields high up in His right hand the fiery Discuss and whose arms are expressive of His unsurpassed skill and might, who dwells in Tiruvenkadam in the north to come! Parrot dear! will cannot entreat Him!

XI.iii.7 [Not content with the Lord's stay in his mind, the Alvar for bahya is distressed that he is not able to behold Him with his eyes.]

கண்ணன் மனத்துள்ளேநிற்கவும் கைவனைகள்
என்னோகழன்ற? இவைஎன்ன மாயங்கள்?
பெண்ணோமும் பெண்மையோம்நிற்க அவன்மேய
அண்ணல்மலையும் அரங்கமும்பாடோமே. XI.iii.7

While Kannan (Sri Krishna) resides in my mind, still my bangles have mysteriously slipped down my hands. How inexplicable is this ! We are born women and value feminity. Not withstanding that how is it we are unable to sustain ourselves by singing the glories of the Lord who resides with relish in Tiruvenkadam and Tiruvarangam?

XI.v.10 [Intending to experience both the **paratva** (transcendent greatness) and the **saulabhya** (His easy accesibility), the Alvar to put himself in the position of two brides, each of whom commends one of these aspects.]

கள்ளத்தால் மாவலியை மூவாடிமண் கொண்டளந்தான்
வெள்ளத்தான் வேங்கடத்தான் என்பரால் காணே!
வெள்ளத்தான் வேங்கடத்தானேலும் கலிகன்றி
உள்ளத்தி னுள்ளே உளன்கண்டாய் சாழலே. XI.v.10

(one says) Comrade! the Lord, who artfully managed to get a gift of land from Mahabali, measured the worlds and obtained them, resides in the Milky ocean full of transcendent glory. (Another says) O comrade! the Lord residing in the Milky ocean is the Lord who abides in Tiruvenkadam; He may be transcendent, but you behold Him in the mind of Kaliyan (Tirumangai Alvar).

Two friends extol respectively the Lord's transcendent glories and His saulabhya and the Alvar takes delight in thereby glorifying the Supreme as being at once transcendent and immanent, as being beyond mind and speech and yet possessed of saulabhya, sausilya and vatsalya. The following verses of Periyalvar and Andal may be compared with this stanza of Tirumangai Alvar.

என்னுதன் தேவிக்கு, அன்று இன்பப்பூடியாதாள்
தன் நாதன் காணவே, தன் பூமரத்தின
வன்னுதப் புள்ளால், வலியப் பறித்திட்ட
என்னுதன் வன்மையைப் பாடிப்பற.

Periyalvar Tirumozhi, III.ix.1.

கதிராயிரமிரவி கலந்தெரித்தாலொத்த நீள்முடியன்
எதிர்இல் பெருமை இராமனை இருக்குமிடம் நாடுதிரேல்
அதிரும் கழற்பொருதோள் இரணியனாகம் பிளந்து
அரியாய்

உதிரமனைந்த கையோடிருந்தானை உள்ளவா

கண்டாருளர்

Periyalvar Tirumozhi, IV.i.1

பட்டிமேய்ந்தோர் காரேறு பலதேவற்கு ஓர்கீழ்க்கன்றாய்
இட்டறிட்டு வினையாடி இங்கே போதக் கண்டாரே?
இட்டமான பசுக்களை இனிது மறித்து நீளுட்டி
விட்டுக்கொண்டு வினையாட விருந்தாவனத்தே
கண்டோமே.

Nacchiyar Tirumozhi, XIV. 1

The Lord prefers the hearts of His devotees to Paramapada, the Milky ocean, Sri Rangan (Koil), Tirumalai and Kanchipuram (Perumal Koil) for His abode. In fact, His stay in these holy places is for the sake of looking for a favourable opportunity to enter the hearts of bhaktas.

TIRUMANGAI ALVAR TIRUKKURUN TANDAKAM

In his unregenerate days, Tirumankai so wholly engrossed in worldly pursuits that the Lord, out of compassion, wrought a change in his sense of values, granted him a vision of His form of unsurpassed beauty and revealed to him His auspicious qualities. With the Zeal of a convert, the Alvar shut himself away from things worldly and threw himself heart and soul in singing of the Lord's Svarupa, rupa, guna and the like, in bowing with reverence and in constantly thinking of Him. The Lord then taught the Alvar the **Ashtakshara mantra**. A stage came when the Alvar could not bear separation from the Lord even for a moment. His experience of the Divine expressed itself in his six compositions. Two of these hymns, namely **Tirukkurundandakam** and **Tirunedundandakam** are two variant forms of Tandakam, a special mode of lyric poetry one stanza in **Tirukkurundandakam** and three stanzas in **Tirunedundandakam** are in praise of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam.

In the following stanza of **Tirukkurundandakam** the Alvar says that those who constantly dwell in thought on the Lord's **sila gunas** are entitled to the greatest respect and veneration.

7 இம்மையை மறுமை தன்னை எமக்குவீடாகி நின்ற
மெய்ம்மையை விரிந்த சோலை வியந்திரு வரங்கம் மேய
செம்மையைக் கருமை தன்னைத் திருமலை யொருமை
யாலை
தன்மையை நினைவார் எந்தன் தலைமிசை மன்னு
வாரே.7

The most gracious Lord grants us well-being here in this world, ensures us enjoyment in the world beyond and is the unfailing means for attaining transcendent bliss; He dwells in Srirangam noted for its extensive groves; and He shines in resplendent bodily forms of different colours in the different **yugas**; without discriminatin between men and

celestial beings, He resides in Tiruvenkadam accessible alike to men and denizens of the celestial regions. Whoever contemplates on the Lord is entitled to be revered, and borne on my head.

It is said that Bhagavan appears white-hued in **Krtayuga**, red-hued in **Tretayuga**, as green in **Dwapara yuga** and as blue hued in **Kaliyuga**. c.f. **Tirucchandaviruttam**, “பாலினீர்மை செம் பொனீர்மை...” st; and **Nanmukhan Tiruvandadi**, “நிகழ்ந்தாய் பால்பொன் பசப்புக் கார்வண்ணம் நான்கும்...” st.24

TIRUNETUNTANDAKAM

Stanzas 8,9 and 16 of **Tirunedundandakam** are in praise of the Lord of Tiruvenkadam;

8. [In praise of several holy places where the most compassionate Lord resides.]

நீரகத்தாய் நெடுவரையி னுச்சி மேலாய்!
 நிலாத்திங்கள் துண்டத்தாய்! நிறைந்த கச்சி
 ஊரகத்தாய்! ஒண்துறைநீர் வெஃகா வள்ளாய்!
 உள்ளுவா ருள்ளத்தாய்! உலக மேத்தும்
 காரகத்தாய்! கார்வானத் துள்ளாய்! கள்வா!
 காமருபுங் காவிரியின் தென்பால் மன்னு
 பேரகத்தாய்! பேராதுஎன் னெஞ்சி னுள்ளாய்!
 வரமான்! உன் திருவடியே பேணி னேனே. 8

Lord of Nirakam! Dweller in the heights of Neduvarai (Tiruvenkadam)! Lord of Tirunilat tinkal tunda! in Tiruvurakam in the fertile and prosperous Kanchipuram! in Tiruvehka on the banks of the stream! Dweller in the hearts of devotees! (**yogins**); Lord of famous Tirukkaraham! of Tirukkarvanam! Dweller in Kalvanur! Dweller in Tirupperavai well-established on the southern bank of the lovable and beautiful Kaveri is much sought after by all! Thou residest in the heart of this servant of Thine without thinking of departing therefrom! (What a **saulabhya!** What a **vatsalya!** what a **Karunya!**)

Supreme Lord! I seek Thy blessed feet. May it please Thee to bless me!

Neduvarai, Tirunilat tinkal tundu, urakam, Nirakam, Vehka, Karakam, Karvanam, Kalvanur - are sacred places in Kanchipuram.

9) [out of boundless vatsalya the Lord stays in all splendour in holy places. He has given a place in His body for Ardhanarisvara.]

வங்கத்தால் மாமணிவந் துந்து முந்நீர்
 மல்லையாய்! மதிள்கச்சி யூராய்! பேராய்!

கொங்க(கு)த்தார் வளங்கொன்றை யலங்கல் மார்வன்
 குலவரையன் மடப்பாவை இடப்பால் கொண்டான்
 பங்கத்தாய்! பாற்கடலாய்! பாரின் மேலாய்!
 பனிவரையி னுச்சியாய்! பவள வண்ணு!
 எங்குற்றாய்? எம்பெருமான் உன்னை நாடி
 ஏழையேன் இங்ஙனமே உழிதருகேனே. 9

The resident in Tirukkadanmallai to whose port ships bring precious gems in plenty; Dweller in Tiruvehka (Kanchipuram) encircled by high walls! Lord of Tirupper! Lord that hast on, the right side of Thy divine body place for Siva who wears beautiful garlands of **Konrai** flowers exuding honey and has on his left-side, Parvati, the daughter of Parvataraja, Himavan! Lord, Thou descendent into world as Krishna, Rama and so on and wert engaged in wonderful protective deeds; Thou dwellest in the cool delights of Tiruvenkadam! Thou art of the complexion of coral! My Lord! where are Thou? This unworthy servant of Thine is going about seeking Thee.

16. [This stanza is cast in the form of a mother's description of the condition of her daughter (the Alvar). Imagining that the Lord is in front of Her, my daughter, says the mother, speaks to Him in mellifluous language and, finding no response she is distraught, calls out loudly to Him and sheds tears.]

கன்றுமேய்த்து இனிதுகந்த காளாய்! என்றும்
 கடவொழில்சூழ் கணபரத்துஎன் கனியே! என்றும்
 மன்றமரக் கூத்தாடி மகிழ்ந்தாய்! என்றும்
 வடதிருவோங் கடம்மேய மைந்தா! என்றும்
 வென்றசூரர் குலம்களைந்த வேந்தே! என்றும்
 விரிவொழில்சூழ் திருநறையூர் நின்றாய்! என்றும்
 துன்றகுழல் கருநிறத்துஎன் துணையே! என்றும்
 துணைமுலைமேல் துளிசோரச் சோர்கின் ருளே. 16

My daughter (Parakal Nayaki) is constantly repeating "Youthful Lord with great gusto Thou led cows to graze! My Lord sweet as a

ripe fruit residing in Tirukkannapuram surrounded by fragrant groves! Thou took great joy in playing pot dance to the delectation of all! Thou dwellest with pleasure in Tiruvenkadam in the north! Eternal youth! unrivalled Sovereign! Thou stayest in Tirunaraiyur surrounded by extensive groves! Thou dark-complexioned with dense and lovely tresses! Thou art my support! (Finding that her prayers are not bearing fruit) tears flow from her eyes drenching her breasts (says the mother of the Alvar)

Thy **rakshakatva**, **Karunya**, **saulabhya** and **sausilya** do not seem to operate in my case, says the Alvar. Thou hast been delight in grazing cows; but hast been indifferent to my protection. For redeeming of people, Thou incarnated as Rama, Krishna and so on; and for the benefit of later generations, Thou resideth in holy places as **archa-murtis**; but Thou hast forsaken me. For the sake of Sri, Thou incarnated and rooted out the asuras; but Thou hast been indifferent to my entreaties. ‘**சுத்தாடி மகிழ்ந்தாய்**’ signifies that as Krishna, the Lord participated in the pot dance to the delectation of all bystanders as also for His own delectation.

TIRUMANKAIALVAR SIRIYA TIRUMADAL

(69) In reply to her companion, the Alvar, in the guise of a nayaki (Parakala nayaki) says that by resorting to madal, she would gain her objective.

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சீரார் திருவேங்கடமே

Tiruvenkadam of exquisite beauty and loveliness where dwells the Lord out of extreme compassion and vatsalya in order to be easy of access at once to men and celestial beings...I Shall present myself and make known how heartless He has been.....

Though the Alvars signify their intention to adopt the extreme step of madal, none of them actually undertakes it. It is merely an expression of the extreme intensity of their longing for God-union.

1. Madal in Tamil poetic tradition signifies the following. The hero, a youth, handsome, strong and brave, intelligent and morally dependable chances to meet, the heroine in the course of his hunting expedition, falls in love with her. She reciprocates the love. He returns home promising to arrange for their marriage soon. Due to unexpected opposition of parents, he is unable to keep his word. A stage is reached when, unable to bear the pangs of separation any longer, the lover resorts to the last attempt of making use of *madal*. That is, the heroine rides rushing to the hero on a horse like vehicle made of stem or palm tree used by a lover whose love is not fulfilled. This is a devotional love affair of divine nature inherent in this *pasuram* of “Sirar Tiruvenkadame”.

