

Mudal Azhwars and the concept of Purushakaratvam of Sri

The *Nalayira DivyaPrabhandam* comprising the four thousand sweet verses in Tamil by the twelve Azhwars Saints of TamilNadu is a special Tamil heritage of immense philosophic and literary value. It is accepted and treated as equal to the Vedas and the Upanishads, the scriptures sacred to all Hindus. It is the loving experience of the Divine poured out in ecstatic poetry in the vernacular by the wise sages who revelled in the Divine and were immersed in the depths of the ocean of Divine Love. It inspired the great philosopher teacher Sri Ramanuja (1017-1137 CE) to propound the Visishta Advaitam "the Qualified Non-Dualism".

The authors of this unique collection of poetry generally hailed from the region surrounding the major rivers (Cauvery, Tamarabarani and Palaru) coursing through Tamil Nadu. Although they were from different walks of life and lived at different times, their mystic experience and their philosophical views were quite unique and similar. For them the causal principle underlying all existence is Sriman Narayana (meaning the support and abode of all souls) with all glorious and auspicious attributes, the most important attribute being His Compassion personified in his chest as "Sri". All of the cosmos is like the body of the Lord and the Lord is the life and soul of the physical world. The unconditional compassion (*Nirhetuka Kripa*) of the Lord is the means for liberation and the Lord is thus the goal and the means to the goal.

The origin of the *Nalayira Divya Prabhandam* can be traced to one eventful stormy night when three of the pioneers among the Azhwars, called the Mudal Azhwars, namely Sri Poikai Muni, Sri Bhudat Azhwar and Sri Pei Azhwar, met and came to share a common shelter from the storm in the confines of a narrow corridor (இடை கழி) at the entrance of a small house in the village

called Thirukkovalur on the banks of Pennai river. Sri Poikai Azhwar himself in his *Mudal Thiruvandhadhi* records this event.

நீயும் திருமகளும் நின்றாயால் காமர் பூங்கோவல்
இடைகழியே பற்றி யினி (Mudal Thiruvandhadhi 86).

Thirukkovalur is one of the 108 *Divya desas* or holy shrines of the Lord. The Lord resident in this holy shrine is known as Trivikrama (Ulagamalandha Perumal). The story pertains to the incarnation of the Lord as Vamana when he came in the form of a celibate dwarf in order to repossess the worlds taken over from Indra, the chief of the celestials by the demon king Maha Bali. Vamana asked for three spaces as measured by his feet and when it was granted He changed His form to cosmic proportions (Trivikrama) and took the three giant strides to measure the worlds. This legend is well known. (தர்ணிபதா3 விசக்ரமே "Trivikrama by three steps covered all the worlds" – Yajur Veda – Ashta 2-8-16). The Lord is believed to have taken His abode in this holy *kshetra* (the holy place) acceding to the prayers of the sage Mrigandu in a bygone age.

On the stormy night in question when these three great devotees met, Lord Trivikrama from the local shrine along with His consort Sri (desiring to mingle with them) took His abode in their midst remaining invisible. All the three however felt a strange pressure in the small space and wondered who the intruder could be. Then the first among the three sages, Sri Poikai muni began singing the glory of the Lord as manifested in the cosmos lighting a lamp with the shining Sun as the flame, the Earth as the vessel and the surrounding oceans as the oil and offered it as a garland of one hundred verses in the *andhadhi* style.

வையம் தகளியா வார்கடலே நெய்யாக
வெய்ய கதிரோன் விளக்காகச் --- செய்ய

சுடராழியான் அடக்கே சூட்டினேன் சொன்மாலை
இடராழி நீங்குகவே என்று.

(Mudal Thiruvandhadhi 1)

This helped to dispel the outer darkness.

Then the second of the three sages, Sri Bhudat Azhwar lighted a lamp of knowledge (ஞானச்சுடர் விளக்கு) with devotion as the base, love as the oil, the sweet mind as the wick and the knowing self as the shining flame offering all of them in the form of a garland of verses to the Lord again in a similar *andhadhi* style.

அன்பே தகளியா ஆர்வமே நெய்யாக
இன்புருகு சிந்தை இருதிரியா ---- நன்புருகி
ஞானச் சுடர் விளக்கேற்றினேன் நாரணற்கு
ஞானத்தமிழ் புரிந்த நான்

(Irandaam Thiruvandhadhi 1)

This dispelled the inner darkness as well and the Lord could no longer remain invisible.

The third Azhwar Sri Pei Azhwar described the resulting Divine vision with another garland of one hundred verses beginning with the statement

திருக்கண்டேன் பொன்மேனி கண்டேன் திகழும்
அருக்கன் அணிநிறமுங் கண்டேன் - செருக்கிளரும்
பொன்னாழி கண்டேன் புரிசங்கங் கைக்கண்டேன்
என்னாழி வண்ணன் பாலின்று

(Moondraam Thirivandhadhi 1)

"I saw Sri, the divine Mother first with my ocean like Lord. Then I saw His beautiful resplendent Form effulgent like the sun, with the

dazzling discus fierce in battle in one hand and the curved conch in the other"

Sri Venkata Natha or Vedanta Desika, the philosopher scholar of the 13 th century CE, and the most famous Acharya of Sri Vaishnava tradition was inspired by this event and the works of these great and ancient Bhaktas (*Adhi Bhaktas*) to glorify the Lord who appeared in the narrow corridor in the threshold of a house (இடை கழி - தேஃஹளீ in Sanskrit) in the form of a *stotra* called the "Sri Dehaleesa Stuti" (referred to by the author). He metaphorically characterizes their beatific vision in one of the verses.

காஸார பூர்வ கவி முக்க்ய விமர்தஃ ஜந்மா
பண்ணா தடேகஃ ஸுபஃகஃஸ்ய ரஸோ பஃஹுஸ்தே
த்வத்பாதஃ பத்ஃம மது4நி த்வதஃந்ய போ4க்யே
நூநம் ஸமாச்யதி நூதந சர்க்கராத்வம் (7)

The metaphor is as follows. The Lord Trivikrama of Thirukkavalur is like the plush sugar cane growing on the banks of the river Pennar. The three great poets were great devotees who had no other desires except the sweet nectar of the Lord's lotus feet. When they were intensely expressing their devotion, they were like the three wheels in the sugar crane crusher, squeezing out the sweet sugar cane juice from the sugar cane. Thus came out the Lord's (ஸௌ ஸீல்ய) *Sausheelya guna* (His gracious condescension). This resulted in the formation of a new form of sugar, like mixing honey with the sugar cane juice producing a rich and sweet experience of the Divine. This is a fascinating and apt description of what was revealed through Sri Pei Azhwar in his *Moondraam Thiruvandhadhi*. When the beatific vision of the Supreme Person Narayana was actualized, His inseparable Consort Sri was seen first in His golden Form.

Sri Poikai Piran (ஸ்ரீ பொய்கை ஆழ்வார்):

Sri Poikai Piran lived in the Dwaapara Age. He was the first of the Mudal Azhwars. He is said to have been born in a lotus flower in a pond (poikai) near திருவெஃகா (Thiruvekha) temple in Kanchipuram. He was the *amsa* (incarnation) of the *Pancha Janya* or the Conch of Sriman Narayana. His Avataara took place on திருவோணம் (Thiruvonam Nakshatram) in the month of ஜப்பசி (Ippasi) (Tula). His work முதல் திருவந்தாதி (Mudal Thiruvandadhi) like the similar works by his two companion Azhwars, is also set in the *andadhi* style where the end word or the syllable of each verse becomes the beginning word of the succeeding verse. The end word of the hundredth verse becomes, in turn, the beginning of the first verse, making the hundred verses a true garland of verses. Azhwar sees the *Purushottama* (the Supreme Person) in the Lord of the seven hills, Who is ever resident in the hearts of those who think of Him.

உளன்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே உத்தமனென்றும்
உளன்கண்டாய் உள்ளுவாருள்ளத்துளன் கண்டாய்
வெள்ளத்தினுள்ளானும் வேங்கடத்துமேயானும்
உள்ளத்தினுள்ளான் என்றோர் 99.

"My good heart, The Supreme being is for ever with us. He resides forever in the hearts of those who remember him. Know too, that He who rests on the waves of the milk ocean and is present on the Venkata hill, is forever there in the inner recesses of your being".
(1)

(1) Sri Poikai Azhwar's Mudal Thiruvandhadhi. Text with free translation by Sri.N.Rajagopalan, 1999, Chennai, published by Sri.N.Rajagopalan

Sri Bhudat Azhwar (ஸ்ரீ பூதத்தாழ்வார்):

Sri Bhudat Azhwar was the second of the Mudal Azhwars. His Avataara took place in திருக்கடல் மல்லை (*Mahabalipuram*), the day after that of Sri Poikai Azhwar namely on அவிட்டம் (*Avittam Nakshatram*) in the Tula month. He was considered as the *amsa* (incarnation) of the Mace or *Gada* of Vishnu, born in a blue lilly. The work of this Azhwar is இரண்டாம் திருவந்தாதி (*Irandaam Thiruvandadhi*) which is a poetic piece of high literary beauty and depth.

The Azhwar points to the grace of the Lord as the underlying cause of the entire spiritual process.

அருள் புரிந்த சிந்தை அடியார்மேல் வைத்து
பொருள் தெரிந்து காண்குற்ற வப்போது- இருள்திரிந்து
நோக்கினேன் நோக்கி நினைந்தேன் அதுஒண்கமலம்
ஓக்கினேன் என்னையும் அங்கோர்ந்து. (59)

"When the Lord cast His benevolent glance at us, His devotees, showering on us the grace of constant remembrance, making some substance out of mere straw, my ignorance dispelled, I looked closely at the reality of God and Self, and meditated on His Feet resembling the lotus flower. I then offered my soul to those feet without a thought of any other recourse". (2)

(2) Sri Bhutat Azhwar's Irandaam Thiruvandhadhi. Text with free translation by N.Rajagopalan, 2002, Chennai, Published by Sri.N.Rajagopalan

Sri Pei Azhwar(ஸ்ரீபேயாழ்வார்):

Sri Pei Azhwar is considered an "amsa" of the Lord's Nandaka, the Sword of Sri Maha Vishnu. He was born in the Dwapara age, in the Tula month in the asterism of Satabhishak. He is believed to have been born in a red lilly in a well that is attached to the AdhiKesava temple in Mylapore in Chennai. One can see that well even today where there is a temple garden. He was known as Bhraanta –Yogi or Pei Azhwar since he was intoxicated by love of God.

"பேயரே எனக்கு யாவரும், யானுமோர் பேயனே எவர்க்கும்...

பேயனாய் ஒழிந்தேன் எம்பிரானுக்கே " (*Perumal Thirumozhi* 3-8).

"All people seem to my mind to be crazy, even as all consider me mad. I am content to be mad after the Lord".

His *bhakti* is considered "Supreme Devotion" or *Parama bhakti*. The *MoondraamThiruvandhadhi* gives us a unique view of the Azhwar's heart and his intense devotion. In several verses, he instructs actively his mind and heart to follow him in his worship of the Lord and His *kalyana gunas*. All his sense organs follow his love of the Lord.

காண்காணென விரும்பும் கண்கள் கதிரிலகு

பூண்டாரகலத்தான் பொன்மேனி - பாண்கட்

டொழில் பாடி வண்டறையுந் தொங்கலான் செம்பொற்

கழல்பாடி யாந்தொழுதும் கை. (*Moondram Thiruvandhadhi* -35).

"My eyes hearken "See behold the golden frame of the Lord wearing dazzling jewels and garlands". Like the humming bees hovering around the garlands, my lips crave to sing in tune His glories and hands fold in prayer. Worship His crimson feet thus in all manner ". (3)

(3). Sri Pei Azhwar's Moonram Thiruvandhadhi. Text with free translation by. Sri. N.Rajagopalan,2004, Chennai, published by.N.Rajagopalan.

The uniqueness of the *Moondraam Thiruvandhadhi* lies in the clear expression of *Sriyapatitvam* of the Lord as well as the *Purushakaaratvam* of Sri.

Sri Poikai Piran as well as Sri Bhudat Azhwar also indicate these in their works. In *Mudal Thiruvandhadhi*, Sri Poikai Piran refers to *Sriyapatitvam* many a time, and declares, that the inner consciousness revolves around the Consort of Lakshmi,

பெயருங் கருங்கடலே நோக்குமாறு ஒண்பூ
உயருங் கதிரவனே நோக்கும்--- உயிரும்
தருமனையே நோக்கும் - ஒண் தாமரையாள் கேள்வன்
ஒருவனையே நோக்கும் உணர்வு (Mudal Thiruvandhadhi –67)

"The river naturally flows towards the ocean with the surging waves. The beautiful lotus blossoms facing the rising sun in the sky. The life force looks for the deity of death at the end of life. Similarly the inner consciousness is naturally aware of the consort of Lakshmi residing in the lotus"

and those who worship Him find their way to liberation
(மூப்புண்ணைச் சிந்திப்பார்க்கில்லை திருமாலே நின்னடியை
வந்திப்பார் காண்பர் வழி – Mudal Thiruvandhadhi -75).

Sri Bhudat Azhwar refers to "Sri" in many verses in *Irandaam Thiruvandhadhi* and declares that the grace of Sri brings the vision of the golden Form of the Lord even before the Lord's own grace

காணக் கழிகாதல் கைமிக்குக்காட்டினால்
நாணப் பருமென்றால் நாணுமே - பேணிக்
கருமாலைப் பொன்மேனிகாட்டாமுன் காட்டும்
திருமாலை நங்கள் திரு- (Irandaam Thiruvandhadhi –56)

" When intense desire to have vision of the Lord grows into a passion, how can one curb the same and appear not impatient. Even before the Lord chooses to bestow the vision of His golden Form, Sri the divine Mother will reveal that to us"

திருமங்கை நின்றருளும் தெய்வம் நாவாழ்த்தும்
கருமங் கடைப்பிடிமின் கண்டீர் - ஊரிமையால்
ஏத்தினோம் பாதம் இருந்தடக்கை எந்தைபேர்
நாற்றிசையங் கேட்டீரே நாம் (Irandaam Thiruvandhadhi – 57)

Sri Pei Azhwar however begins his *andhadhi* with a declaration at the very outset "திருக்கண்டேன், பொன்மேனி கண்டேன்". He first saw "Thiru" which stands for "Sri" in Tamil and then only he mentions that he saw the golden Form of the Lord. Sri Pei Azhwar confirms Sri Bhudat Azhwar's assertion stated above. Finally Sri Pei Azhwar ends his *Moondraam Thiruvandhadhi* indicating the easy accessibility of Sri Lakshmi's grace for us,

சார்வு நமக்கென்றும் சக்கரத்தான் தண்டுழாய்த்
தார்வாழ் வரைமார்பன் தான்முயங்கும் - காரார்ந்த
வானமரு மின்னிமைக்கும் வண் தாமரை நெடுங்கண்
தேனமரும் பூமேல் திரு 100.

" The glorious mother Lakshmi is held close in His heart by the discus wielding Lord Who has the chest wide as the mountain adorned by the cool Tulasi garland. She is like the permanent lightning streak in the dense dark clouds in the skies. She has long beautiful lotus eyes and is seated on the honey laden lotus flower. She is our refuge now and for ever".

The concept of "Sri":

The concept of "Sri" in Visishta Advaitam has been extensively commented upon by eminent Vaishanava Acharyas including Yamuna, Sri Ramanuja, Parasara Bhattar, Nanjiyar and Venkata Natha. Sri Yamuna sings the glory of "Sri" in four verses (*Chatusloki*) and the stotras of other Acharyas more or less follow the idea from these. Sri Nanjiyar's commentary on Sri Suktam is considered as an authoritative treatise. In the Dvaya Mantra Adhikara of *Srimad Rahasya Traya Saram*, Sri Vedanta Desika commenting on the meaning of Sriman Narayana quotes the following sloka (of Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar)

"ஆகாரிணஸ்து விஞ்ஞானம் ஆகார ஞான பூர்வகம்
தேநாகாரம் ஸ்ரியம் ஞாத்வா ஞாதவ்யோ ப4க3வான் ஹரி: "

"The knowledge of a qualified object is possible only through the attribute. So knowing first Sri who is an Aakara or Visheshana, the Aakari or Visheshya – the Lord is to be known".

He then gives six derivative meanings of the word "Sri" (*Shreeyathe* meaning She is sought, *Srayathe* meaning She seeks the Lord for the protection of the jivas, *Srunoti* meaning She listens, *Sraavayathi* meaning She makes the Lord listen, *Srunaathi* meaning She destroys the faults of the devotees and *Sreenaathi* meaning She fills the worlds with her *gunas* which further illustrate her *Purushakaaratvam*.

Sri or MahaLakshmi is co-eternal with the Lord and ever resident in the chest of the Lord. She not only acts to bring the grace of the Lord to the *jiva* but also actively helps in the redemption of the individual souls. In this role, She is considered as a compassionate mediator (*Purushakaara*

Bhoothai). The Acharyas point not only to the Vedas but also to the Azhwars' works as evidence or the *Pramaana* for this.

ஹ்ரீஸ்ச தே லக்ஷ்மீஸ்ச பத்ந்யௌ (*Purusha Sooktam 2-6*)

" For Thee, Bhoo Devi and Sri Devi are two consorts" The second ஈ (conjunction) indicates indirectly Neela Devi.

In *Sri Suktam* we find Sri described as the Sovereign of all the souls (ஈச்வரீ ஸர்வபூதாநாம்). In Vishnu Purana, the most authoritative among all the Puranas and so termed Purana Ratnam (jewel among the Puranas), Sri is described as the divine mother who is eternal (நித்ய), inseparable from the Lord (அநபாயினி) and all pervasive (ஸர்வகூத:).

Sri is the personification of compassion or *Daya*. Bhoo represents Bhoomi Devi who stands for forgiveness (*Kshama*) and Neela Devi is of the nature of enchanting beauty and represents the Lord's *anubhava –sukham* and is also personification of forgiveness or *kshama*.

Azhwars's verses also refer to all the three consorts of the Lord.

திருமகளும்,மண்மகளும் ஆய்மகளும் சேர்ந்தால்

(*Mudal Thiruvandhadhi-42*),

இன் துணைப் பதுமத் தலர்மகள் தனக்கும் இன்பன்
நற்புவிதனக்கிறைவன் தன் துணை ஆயர் பாவை நப்பின்னை
தனக்கிறை (*Periya Thirumozhi 2-3-5*)

Sri Thirumazhisai Piran addresses the Lord,

உரத்திலும் ஒருத்தி தன்னை வைத்து உகந்து
(*Thirucchandaviruttam –29*), meaning "O' Lord, Thou art united
with the divine mother Lakshmi who for ever resides in Thy heart,
"பொன்பாவை கேள்வா கிளரொளி என் கேசவனே (*Naanmukan*

Thiruvandhadhi -59) meaning "O' the Lord of Sri Lakshmi, whose halo adds lustre to Thee ". He further defines Brahman as the entity where Sri resides.

திருநின்ற பக்கம் திறவிது என்றோரார் கருநின்றகல்லார்க்
குறைப்பர்.திருநின்ற மார்வன் சிரீதரன் (*Naanmukan
Thiruvandhadhi* -62).

Sri Parasara Bhattar (1123-1151 CE) makes a similar statement, அபாங்காஃ பூயாம்ஸோ யதுஃபரி பரம் ப்ஃரஹ்ம ததஃபூதத் (*Sri Gunaratna Kosha* -30) meaning whichever entity gets most of the grace of the divine mother Lakshmi that entity becomes Para Brahman. Thus, Sriman Narayana is Para Brahman since Sri resides in His heart.

Also Sri Nammazhwar refers to Narayana as திருமகளார் தனிக்கேள்வன் in *Thiruvaimozhi* (1-6-9). He further points to the fact that her grace could remove the effects of the binding *karma* வேரி மாறாத பூமேலிருப்பாள் வினைதீர்க்குமே (*Thiruvaimozhi* 4-5-11). Azhwars make it immensely clear that the divine couple is the supreme goal (*Prapya* ப்ராப்ய) for rendering eternal divine service and also they serve as the *Upaya* or the means. Her grace automatically brings the goal of eternal divine service தனமாய தானே கைகூடும் (*Mudal thiruvandhadhi*- 43). The famous *Saranaagati* verse by Sri Nammazhwar அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று அலர்மேல் மங்கை உறை மார்பா (*Thiruvaimozhi* 6-10-10), in the act of self surrender made to the Lord of Thiruvenkatam is considered by the Sri Vaishnava Acharyas as the most appropriate example to follow for spiritual aspirants since it is made to the Lord of Sri invoking first the grace of Sri who is eternally resident in the chest of the Lord. In the *Saranaagati Gadyam* Sri Ramanuja first humbly approaches the divine Mother Sri and after gaining her grace only makes his surrender to the Lord.

However, the very first expression of *Sriyapatitvam* and *Purushakaaratvam* of Sri goes to Sri Pei Azhwar. " துன்னிய பேரிருள் நீங்க சோதி தோன்ற சேமமுடன் நெடுமாலைக் காணப்புக்கு திருக்கண்டேன் எனவுரைத்த தேவே" (Sri Vedantha Desika in *Prabhandha Saram*).

When all ignorance vanished and the Divine Light began to shine, Sri Pei Azhwar's description of his direct perception of the Lord, (ஸாக்ஷாத்காரத்வம்) of the Lord, revealed Sri first. As pointed out by the author, the state reached by Sri Pei Azhwar is described by Sri Periyavacchaan Pillai as the highest and the most mature state of *Parama Bhakti* resulting in " *Bhagavat svarupa Saakshaa kaaratvam*" or direct perception of the Divine. In the words of Sri Periyavacchaan Pillai, "கடலைக் கண்டவன் அதற்குள்ளுண்டான முத்து மாணிக்காதிகளைத்தனித்தனி கண்டு உகக்குமாபோலே" it is like the person who saw the ocean perceiving and enjoying all the pearls and the gems that are hidden in it.

Sri Pei Azhwar points out to us from his own experience that the Lord's grace is assured for us (அருளாதொழிமே ஆலிலை மேல் அன்று ...முன்– verse 19) and He will take His abode in the minds of those who love Him and who think of Him. Azhwar describes his own mind and heart as good since they were along with him in his path of love divine.

Mudal Azhwars and The Lord of Thiruvencatam:

Sri Pei Azhwar experiences the Lord as enshrined in the various holy shrines (Archa Form of the Lord). Among these, however, the Lord of Thiruvencatam appears to be his favourite, very similar to the other two of his companions in *Bhakti*. Sri Poikai Piran sings on the Lord of Thiruvencatam in at least 10 of the verses in the

Mudal Thiruvandhadhi (வினைச்சுடரை நந்துவிக்கும் வேங்கடமே - verse 26; பழுதொன்றும் வாராத வண்ணமே விண்கொடுக்கும் மண்ணளந்த சீரான் திருவேங்கடம் - verse 76; வெள்ளத்தினுள்ளானும் வேங்கடத்து மேயானும் உள்ளத்தினுள்ளான் -verse 99) and Sri Bhudat Azhwar also is fond of Thiruvencatam as seen in his verses in the *Irandaam Thiruvandhadhi*. (மனத்துள்ளான் வேங்கடத்தான் மாகடலான் - verse 28; வேங்கடமே யாம் விரும்பும் வெற்பு -verse 53). Sri Pei Azhwar on the other hand refers to Thiruvencatam in 19 of the 100 verses. Azhwar confirms that the Lord of all, the inner controller of this earth, the all pervasive Lord, He from whom all the Vedas emanated, the One who forms the meaning and the substance of the Vedas, the Lord of the eternal realm, the Lord of Thiruvencatam has taken His abode in His heart (பிறைவாய்ந்த வெள்ளத்தருவி விளங்கொலிநீர் வேங்கடத்தான் உள்ளத்தின்னுள்ளே உளன் -verse 39). It is of interest to note that Sri Thirumangai Azhwar calls the Lord of Thiruvencatam "செந்தமிழ் பாடுவார் வணங்கும் தேவர்", referring to the Mudal Azhwars and their *Thiruvandhadhies*. (*Periya Thirumozhi* II-8-2). Sri Thirumangai Azhwar refers here to Mudal Azhwars as "செந்தமிழ் பாடுவார்" admiring the literay beauty of their Tamil verses.

Azhwar's words confidently reiterate the way the Lord was made captive in his heart where He began to reside continually without interruption. He states that he achieved this by a meticulous search guided by the bright lamp of knowledge of true understanding that the Lord is the way.

உய்த்துணர்வென்னும் ஒளிகொள் விளக்கேற்றி
வைத்தவனை நாடி வலைப்படுத்தேன் --- மெத்தனவே
நின்றான் இருந்தான் கிடந்தான் என்னெஞ்சத்து
பொன்றாமை மாயன் புகுந்து -verse 94.

Such conviction and confidence expressed so succinctly arising from personal direct perception must have attracted the great Yogi Sri Thirumazhisai Piran. It is said that Sri Thirumazhisai Piran, took to *Bhakti marga* being influenced by Sri Pei Azhwar. The benedictory verse reads "பெருக்கமுடன் திருமழிசைபிரான் தொழுவோன் வாழியே". In fact one can see the *Guru – Sishya Bhava* in the shrine of AdhiKesava Perumal in Mylaopore even today between the two Azhwars depicting this association.

All the three *Thiruvandhadhies* by these ancient great souls expound the eternal Truth and shed bright light on superior devotion, true knowledge and afford the glimpses of that blissful *Bhagavatanubhavam* that they all felt. Perhaps for these reasons the first three *Thiruvandhadhies* are recited at the sanctum of the Lord of Thiruvekatam on the day of the Karthigai Deepam to represent the lights that they lit on that dark stormy night.