

CHAPTER 1

TIRUMURAI 1-3 TIRUGNANASAMBANDAR (THEVARAM)

Tiru Gnana Sambandar - Mylapore



Singing with Saivite Saints 9

TIRU GNANA SAMBANDAR

In sacred Sirkazhi, an important town in the Chola Kingdom, there lived, a pious devotee known as Sivapada Krudayar with his virtuous wife Bhagavathiar. Both of them were ardent devotees of Lord Siva and offered daily puja to Lord Siva. Sivapada Krudayar prayed to Lord Siva for the boon of a son who would reestablish the glory of Saivism. By His grace they became the proud parents of a boy whom they named Sambandar. They brought up the child with great love and devotion, knowing fully well that he was a purposeful gift from the Lord.

One day Sivapada Krudayar and his wife took their threeyear old child with them to the temple tank to bathe. Sambandar insisted to be taken with them. They left the child on the bank and went into the water. The small boy looked at the tower of the temple and began to cry for his parents. Siva appeared as Lord Thonniappar together with Goddess Parvati and asked her to feed Sambandar with the milk of divine wisdom. Mother Parvati fondled the child and suckled him the milk of wisdom. Thus Sambandar obtained His grace and divine knowledge.

After finishing their bath, the parents came to Sambandar and found a golden cup in his hands and milk overflowing from his mouth. Sivapada Krudayar thought that somebody had given milk to his son. Hence, he asked Sambandar, who gave him the milk. Sambandar pointed to the temple tower where Siva and Parvati appeared in the sky. It is here that Sambandar sang his first *padigam* I:1 in praise of Lord Siva in *pann* Nattapadai:

*“thodudaiyasevi yanvidaiyeriyor thuvemathisudi
kadudaiyasuda laipodipoosiyen ullangkavarkalvan...”*

Sivapada Krudayar could not see the Lord, but guessed from his son's behaviour that he must have had a vision of God

1. Sirkazhi is 20 Kms from Chidambaram

10 *Singing with Saivite Saints* Siva. On the way to the temple, Sambandar composed another

Padigam set to *pann* Takkesi, 1:74: “*naravanirairivann daraittharkondrai nayandbunayanathar*

suruvajserivann kodiyonudalam podiyavizhiseythaan...” From that moment, wherever he went, Sivapada Krudayar

carried Sambandar on his shoulders. The people decorated the town nicely and received Sambandar with great devotion.

2The next day Tiru Gnana Sambandar went to Tirukkolakka and composed the *Padigam* 1:23: by clapping his hands to keep rhythm, in *pann* Takkaragam:

“*madaiyil vaalai paaya maadbaraar kudaiyum poigai kolak kaavulaan...*”

Lord Siva was so pleased with the song that He blessed Sambandar with a pair of golden cymbals, bearing the fi ve-letter word *Namasivaya*. Sambandar began to sing with the help of the golden cymbals, and it is said that even Narada and the celestials were charmed.

Sambandar went to many sthalas and then returned to Sirkazhi. There, Tiru Nilakanta Yazhpanar, an ardent devotee of God Siva and an expert musician on the Yazh met Sambandar. As per the request of the latter, Nilakanta played the Yazh. The divine sound of the instrument melted Sambandar’s heart. Yazhpanar expressed his wish to accompany Sambandar and to play the Yazh wherever he would sing in praise of Lord Siva.

3Sambandar went on a pilgrimage to Tillai temple. Tillai is another name for Chidambaram, which means *Temple* by itself. It is one of the ‘*Pancha Bhuta Sthalas*’ representing *Akasha* (ether). It is also one of the fi ve places where Lord Nataraja danced. The Tirumurais are said to have been found and restored in Chidambaram. Sages Vyagrapada, Patanjali, Upamanya, Vyasa,

2. Tirukkolakka is about 2 kms west from Sirkazhi. 3. Chidambaram is 250 kms from Chennai.

Singing with Saivite Saints 11 Suka, Tirunilakanta, Tirunalaip-povar Nayanar, Kuruva Nayanar, Kanampulla Nayanar Cantanacharya and Manickkavasagar, attained mukti there. The Chidambaram temple's Gopurams are covered with sculptures, illustrating the 108 postures of the 'Natya Sastra'.

On his way, Sambandar saw the Andanars (priests) of Tillai who appeared to him as Siva Ganas (celestial servants of Lord Siva). He sang the *Padigam* III: 1 set to *pann* Gandhara Panchamam praising them and entered the temple:

*"aadinaianaru neiyodupaalbhayir andanarpiri
yaadba chitrambalam..."*

At Pennatakam⁴, where it is believed that Siva rested after consuming the poison to save the world, Sambandar rendered the *Padigam* I: 59 in *pann* Pazhandakkaragam:

*"odungum pinnipiravi kedendrivai udaiyathaai
vaazhikai yozhiyattavam..."*

From there on, Sambandar refused to be carried by his father and decided to walk. The Lord wanted to alleviate Sambandar suffering by presenting him with a palanquin. God Siva appeared in the dream of the devotees of Tiruaratturai and told them that they would find a pearl palanquin to be taken to Sambandar who was then proceeding towards Tiru Aratturai.

The Lord appeared in Sambandar's dream too and informed him of the gift. Sambandar worshipped the palanquin and paid due respect by singing the *Padigam* II: 70 set to Gandharam *pann*:

*"piramanoor veynupuram pugali vengurup peruneer thonee puramannu
poondharai ponna sirapuram puruvajn sannbai..."*

Tiruarathurai is also known as Tirunelvayil Arathurai. Here one can see that the Nandi is slightly turned. This is 4. Pennatakam is near Virudrachalam. 5. Tiruarathurai is between Virudrachalam and Toludur.

12 *Singing with Saivite Saints* because once, the Niva River was in flood and was a threat to the devotees staying there. Nandi turned his head and glanced at the river to protect the devotees. The flood immediately subsided.

Sambandar returned to Sirkazhi after visiting a number of shrines and sang in praise of Lord Siva everywhere during his journey. His parents performed the sacred thread ceremony (Upanayanam) at the temple in Sirkazhi where Sambandar taught the priests the essence of the *Panchakshara Mantra*. He sang in *Pann Gandhara Panchamam* the *Padigam* III: 22, in which he explained the importance of the *Panchakshara Mantra*.

*“thunjalum thunjali laadba pozhdinum nenjaga
naindu ninaimin naalldhorum...”*

Meanwhile Tirunavukkarasar (Appar) who had heard about Sambandar, came to meet him at Sirkazhi. Sambandar received the other composer of Tevaram with due respects.

During the course of his pilgrimage, Sambandar came to Tirupachilasramam. The daughter of King Kollimalavan, who was a great devotee of Lord Siva, was suffering from an incurable disease. The King had tried all kinds of treatment but, in vain. In despair, he took her to the temple and placed her in front of the Lord. When Sambandar came to the temple, he saw the pitiable condition of the girl, who was lying unconscious. Praying for Lord Siva’s grace upon the girl, he sang a *Padigam* I: 44 in *pann* Takkaragam:

*“thuneevalar thingal thulangivilanga sudarsadai suttrimudithu paneevalar
kolgaiyar paaridan soozha vaaridamum palithervaar...”*

When he completed the *Padigam* the King’s daughter was cured to the surprise of all who were amazed by this miracle.

6. Tirupachilasramam is 2 Kms from Mannargudi, in Tiruvarur district.

Singing with Saivite Saints 13 At Senkunnur, during his pilgrimage, Sambandar found that the cold weather was the cause of severe fever and that many people were suffering on account of it. The people there entreated him to alleviate their sufferings. Sambandar sing the *Padigam* I: 116 in *Pann* Viyazhkkurinji:

*“avvinai kivvinai yaamendru sollu mahtariveer uyvinai naadaa
dbiruppadbu mundhamak koonamanrey...”*

7Senkunnur was also known as Tirukkotimatak Senkunnur and is named Tiruchengadu nowadays. This temple is on a hill and is called Chengodu because of its reddish hue. From the 1200 steps reaching the temple, the 60th one is considered auspicious to take an oath which is said to be granted by Lord Siva.

8After worshipping at different sthalas, Sambandar came to Tiruvavadhaturai. His father wanted to perform a big *Yajna* and informed Sambandar about his financial constraint. Sambandar went to the temple and sing the hymn, III: 4 in *pann* Gandhara Panchamam:

*“idarinum thalarinu menaturunoi thodarinum
munakazhal thozhuthbezhuvu...”*

At once a Siva Gana appeared and gave him a bag containing one thousand gold coins. The Siva Gana informed him that the gold coins would never deplete as the bag will replenish by itself. Sambandar glorified the Lord's grace and handed over the bag to his father.

According to the Siva Puranam, it is here that Tarumetevatai (Nandi) was blessed by Siva to become His

7. Tiruchengadu is in the Namakkal district and 30 Kms from Namakkal town.

8. Tiruvavadhaturai is found on the bank of river Kaveri. It is 16 Kms from Mayiladhaturai.

14 *Singing with Saivite Saints* Vahana. There is also a shrine dedicated to Rishi Tirumular who composed the Tirumantiram in this sthala. At Dharmapuram, which was the native place of Nilakanta Yazhpanar, the people glorified the Yazh player for his proficiency in music. But Yazhpanar felt that, it was due to Sambandar's grace that he was allowed to accompany him and that by himself, he was unable to reproduce on the Yazh the divine melody of the Saint's *Padigam*. To prove this, Sambandar sang a song in praise of the Lord, which Nilakanta was unable to play on his instrument. He wanted to break the instrument in desperation. But Sambandar prevented him and asked him to continue to play. From that time, this pann has been named as *Yazhmuri Pann*, which is the equivalence of today's Atana ragam. Some scholars attribute it to Neelambari ragam. There is a sculpture depicting Sambandar in a singing posture accompanied by Yazhpanar here.

Sambandar went to Tirumarugul¹⁰ to worship, when he met a young woman in distress. She narrated to Sambandar that, while she and her husband were sleeping, a poisonous snake bit the latter and he died. The wife prayed to the Lord for His mercy. Sambandar consoled her and sang the hymn II: 18 in *pann* Indalam:

*“sadaiya yenumaal saraanee yenumaal vidaiya
yenumaal veruvaa vizhumaal...”*

After completion of the song, the man was brought to life. The couple and all those present worshipped the Saint.

Sambandar went to Tiruppukalur¹¹. There he met Muruka Nayanar. During his stay he learnt about the arrival of Appar from Tiruvarur and went to meet him. This was the second

9. Dharmapuram is near Karaikkal railway station and 2 kms from Tirunallar. 10. Tirumarugul is near Karaikkal town and, north of Tiruvarur district. 11. Tiruppukalur is around 7 Kms from Nannilam, situated in Tiruvarur district.

Singing with Saivite Saints 15 time that the two saints met. At the suggestion of Appar, Sambandar visited Tiruvarur and had darshan of Lord Tyagaraja. He sang the hymns I: 91 in *pann* Kurinji:

*“chittan theliveergaal, attha naarooraip patthi
malarthoovamutthi yaagumey...”*

Sambandar returned to Tiruppukalur and met Appar again. Both decided to travel further together. They went to Tirukkatavur, where they were received by Kunkiliya Nayanar. Sambandar composed here the *Padigam* III: 8 in *pann* Gandhara Panchamam:

*“sadauidai yaanunai yadalaai nunjari kobvana udaiudai yaanumai
yaarndhavonn kannumai keylvannum...”*

¹¹Tirukkatavur is known as Tirukkadaiyur at present and situated in Nagapattinam district. Kungiliya Nayanar and Kari Nayanar attained moksha in this temple. This is the sthala where Lord Siva prevented Yama from taking the life of a young boy called Markandeya. The unique feature of this temple is that the Mrityunjaya Homam is held here to protect oneself from evil. Special pooja for the 60 and 80th birthdays, that is, the *Sastyabdhapurti* and *Satabhisekam* are conducted in this temple.

¹²Appar and Sambandar went and stayed at Tiruvizhimizhalai for some time together. During this time a severe famine struck that region. Appar and Sambandar were so moved by the sufferings of the people that they offered prayers to the Lord. God Siva appeared to them in their dream and promised to give gold coins. Both Appar and Sambandar found a gold coin, at different entrance of the temple. Appar was immediately able to get provisions for his gold coin, whereas Sambandar could not, as the gold coins were not pure. He had to exchange his coins for pure gold coins, before he could obtain the provisions. Sambandar understood that this was due

12. Tiruvizhimizhalai is 10 kms from Puntottam railway station in Tiruvarur district.

16 *Singing with Saivite Saints* to Appar's sincere service to God Siva and sang the *Padigam* I:

92 *pann* in Kurinji. "*vaasi theerave, kaasu nalguveer*

maasin mizhalaiyeer, yesa villaiye..." Pleased with Sambandar, the Lord gave him also pure gold

coins. Food was served daily to the devotees of the temple. There are two circular platforms next to the inner gopuram where Lord Siva is said to have placed the gold coins.

By that time the Queen Mangaiyarkkarasi, of the Pandya Kingdom wanted to invite Sambandar to Madurai since the King had given up Saivism and embraced Jainism. The queen sent a message to Sambandar to come to Madurai to rescue the king and Saivism from the Jain influence. Appar advised Sambandar not to go to Maduram as he himself had been harassed by the Jains. He also informed Sambandar that the planets were unfavorable. The young saint immediately told Appar that planets effect has no consequence on Siva devotees and sang the *Padigam* II: 85 in *pann* Gandharam:

*"veyuru thobleepangan vidamunda kannan
miganalla veenai thadavi..."*

The news of the arrival of Sambandar reached the Queen, who sent her minister Kulacchirai to greet him. Kulacchirai welcomed Sambandar and directed him to the Alavai temple (Madurai Meenakshi temple). At the sight of the Gopuram from a distance, Sambandar sang the *Padigam* III: 120 set to in *pann* Puranirmai :

*"mangaiyark karasi valavarkohn paavai
varivalaik kaimmada maani..."*

In the meantime Queen Mangaiyarkkarasi came to pay her respects to Sambandar at the temple. She explained the situation in Madurai and requested him to bring back the king and Saivism.

Singing with Saivite Saints 17 The Jains went to inform the king about the arrival of Sambandar. They told him that bad times have come due to the Siva devotees who had entered the city, especially one young Saivite named Sambandar. They suggested to set fire to the house where Sambandar and his devotees were residing. As the fire was intense, Sambandar sang the *Padigam* III : 51 in *pann* Kausikam :

*“seyya neytiru aalavai meyvija ayya
neyanjis alendrarul seiyenaiḥ...”*

As soon as the fire subsided, the king was afflicted by burning fever all over his body and which proved to be incurable. Sambandar was requested to cure the king with the latter’s approval. In the palace, the Jains told they will cure the left side of the king’s body and Sambandar should do the same for the right side. The Jains failed to cure the king. Sambandar sang the *Padigam* II: 66 set to *pann* Gandharam :

*“mandhira maavadu neeru, vaanavar meyladu neeru sundara
maavadu neeru, thudhikka paduvadhu neeru...”*

He then applied sacred ash on the right side of the King’s body and immediately the burning vanished. As per the king’s request, he cured the left side also.

The king was very embarrassed and acknowledged Sambandar’s greatness. He took the initiative to dismiss the Jains, but the latter did not accept defeat. They told the king that they wanted a contest with Sambandar where both parties would write down the principles of their religion on palm leaves and placed it into fire. The leaf, which remained unburnt would be accepted as the true religion. The king and Sambandar accepted the challenge. Sambandar took one of his *Padigam* I: 49, *Shogamartha Punmulaiyal* from the collection brought to him and put the leaf into fire. He sang the hymn III: 87 set to *pann* Saadhari:

18 Singing with Saivite Saints “*thaleerila valaroli thanatbezil tharuthigazh malaimagal*

kulirila valaroli vanamulai inaiyavai kulavalin...” The leaf came out unburnt, but for the Jains, immediately burnt up. Still the Jains were reluctant. They wanted a last contest. A palm leaf would be put into the Vaigai river. If it were to float, that religion would be declared victorious. The Jains wrote the most important mantra on the leaf and put it in the water. The scroll was rapidly swept away by the waters. On his part Sambandar wrote the *Padigam* III: 54 on a palm leaf and put it into the river. The leaf not only floated but, moved up against the current and was recovered upstream. Sambandar also sang this particular *Padigam* in *pann* Kausikam :

*“vaazhga andanar vaanva raaninam veezhga
thanpunal vendanu ohnguga...”*

At the same time King Kunpandyan’s hump disappeared and he stood up tall and erect. The ruler and his people renounced Jainism and proclaimed the supremacy of Saivism. Thus Saivism was reestablished in Madurai.

Soon after, Sambandar left Madurai accompanied by Mangaiyakkarasi and Kulacchirai Nayanar for Tirupparamkundram near Madurai, and rendered the *Padigam* I : 100 in *Pann* Kurinji :

*“needalarjothi venpiraiyodu niraikondrai sudalanandi
chudareriyeendi sudukaanil ...”*

Sambandar went to Appanur sthala where he composed the hymn III : 26 in *pann* Kolli:

*“pidiyelaam pinchela perungaima malartazhee vidiyaley –
thadamoozhgi vithiyinaal vazhipadum...”*

This is the shrine where a priest is said to have worshipped Lord Siva during a severe famine and cooked rice using sand from Vaigai river. The sthala is known as Appudaiyar Koil now. Afterwards, Sambandar rendered the *Padigam* I: 64 in the temple

Singing with Saivite Saints 19 of Tiruppuvanam, near Madurai. The Nataraja deity here is magnificient. The *Tandava* is Brahmataandava in this sthala. This *Padigam* is set to *pann* Takkesi :

*“araiyaarpunalu maamaru maadaravaarchadaimeyl kuraiyaar
mathiyar sudimaadbor koorudaiyaanidamaam ...*

On his way, he reached Tirunelveli which is an important town in Tamil Nadu and sang the hymn III : 92 in *pann* Saadhari :

*“marundhavai mandhira marumainan neriyavai matrumellaam
arunthuyar kedumavar naamamey chindaisey nannenjame...”*

Here Siva is known as Nellaiyappar. Sambandar continued his pilgrimage and reached the seashore of Rameshwaram and sang a *Padigam* on the Tirukkonnamalai sthala, situated in Sri Lanka. This temple named as Tirukodaiswaram was destroyed by the Portuguese in 17 Century and was rebuilt. The Kumbabhisegam was performed in 1963 and again in 1981. Tirukkonnamalai is one of the *Pancha Easwaran Sthala* in Sri Lanka. Tirukkonnamalai is known nowadays as Trincomalee and is situated in the north eastern province of Sri Lanka. The Portuguese took the Siva Murti and hide it at Tampalakamam. At this place a beautiful Siva temple stand now. The *Padigam* III: 103, sung there is set to *pann* Puranirmai :

*“niraikazha laravaj silampoli yalambu
nimalarnee rantiru meni...”*

The Pancha Easwaran Kshetras in Sri Lanka are:

- i Tiru Kodaiswaran - Trincomalee - Eastern Province
- ii Tiru Ketiswaran - Mannar - Northern Province
- iii Tiru Munneswaran - Chilaw - Western Province
- iv Tiru Naguleswaran - Keerimalai - Northern Province
- v Tiru Ponnambalavaneshwaran - Colombo - Western Province

20 *Singing with Saivite Saints* Sambandar continued his pilgrimage and proceeded to the Tirukollamputtur¹³ temple, but arriving at the bank of the Kaveri River, he found it in flood. Boats could not cross the river. Sambandar sang the *Padigam* III : 6 in *pann* Gandhara Panchamam :

*“kotta meygamaḥhun kollam poodboor
nattamaadiya nambanai yulgach...”*

Soon after the song, Sambandar crossed the river and reached the other side safely without oarsmen on the boat.

After visiting the sthala of Tiruttelichcheri¹⁴, Sambandar met some Buddhists who, after being defeated in a debate by him, converted to Saivism. At this place Sambandar sang the *Padigam* III : 22 in *pann* Kolli :

*“marundu vendillivai mandira kallivai
Purinduke kappadrm punniya kallivai...”*

Hearing that Sambandar is coming in Tiruppunturuthi, Appar went to greet him. Without being noticed by the palanquin bearers, he joined them by carrying Sambandar on his shoulder. When Sambandar enquired about Appar, the latter responded from below “Here I am”. Sambandar got down and paid respects to Appar. Sambandar proceeded to Tiruvaiyarur near Tanjavur, and sang the *Padigam* I: 36 in *pann* Takkaragam

*“kalaiyaar madhiyo dooraneerum
nilaiyaar sadaiya ridamaagum..”*

¹⁵Sambandar returned to Sirkazhi and stayed for a brief time. He went to Tiruvannamalai, after visiting many sthalas. This temple is one of the *Pancha Bbutha Sthalas* representing ‘Teja’ the fire element. There he sang the *Padigams* I: 10 in *pann* Nattapaadai:

13. Tirukollamputtur is 7 Kms from Koradachcheri. 14. Tiruttelichcheri is near Karaikkal and 65 Kms from Chidambaram. 15. Tiruvannamalai situated 185 kms from Chennai.

Singing with Saivite Saints 21 “*unnamulai umaiyaalodu mudanagiya voruvan pennagiya perumaanmalai tirumaamani thigazha...*” and the hymn I:69 in *pann* Takkesi:

“*puaarmalarakon dadiyaarthozhuvaar pugazhuvaarvaanorgal moovarapuranga lerittavandru moovarkarulseidbaar...*”

Sambandar then went to the Tiruvotturai¹⁶ temple. It is said here that Siva, seated under a banyan tree, taught the Vedas to Devas and Rishis. There Sambandar met a Siva devotee who had a problem with his palm tree plantation. The trees which were for temple purpose were not yielding fruits. The Jains ridiculised the devotee. Sambandar composed the *Padigam* I: 54 in *pann* Pazhandakkaram :

“*poothor thaayana kondunin ponnadi yebththa thaarillai yennungaal...*”

As soon as he finished the last line, the trees began to bear fruits. On seeing this miracle the Jains converted to Saivism.

Sambandar proceeded to Kanchipuram¹⁷. At the Ekambareswara temple, which is the earth element in the *Pancha Bhutha Sthalas*, he sang the *Padigam* II: 12 in *pann* Indalam :

“*maraiyaanai maasilap punchadai malguvann piraiyaanaip pennodaa nagiya pemmanai...*”

¹⁸After worshipping at several shrines Sambandar visited Tirukkalatti. This sthala is nowadays known as Sri Kalahasti. This *Pancha Bhutha Sthala* represent the element of ‘air’ *Vayu* evidenced by the flickering lamps in the main sanctum. Kannappa Nayanar attained moksha in this temple. Sambandar

16. Tiruvotturai is 30 kms from Kanchipuram 17. Kanchipuram is 71 kms from Chennai. 18. Srikalahasti is around 150 Kms from Chennai. It is on the Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu border.

22 *Singing with Saivite Saints* sang the *Padigam* III: 69, set to Saadhari *pann* in which he praised

the devotion of Kannapa Nayanar to lord Siva. “*vaanavargal thannavargal vadhaipada vanthathoru maakadalvidam*

thaanamudhu seitharul purindasivan meyvumalai thannaivinivil...”

Sambandar continued his pilgrimage to Tiruvottriyur¹⁹. Saivite Saint Siddha Pathinathar attained mukti here. He composed the *Padigam* III: 57 in *pann* Panchamam:

“*vidaiyavan vinnumannum thoḻba nindravan venmaḻhuvaat padaiyavan paaipuliṭho ludai kobvanam palkarandhai...*”

Saint Sambandar proceeded to Mayilai now known as Mylapore situated in the center of Chennai. There was a devoted Siva family whose prayers had been answered by the birth of a girl named Poompavai.

Her father, Sivanesanar wanted her to marry Sambandar but unfortunately, she was bitten by a snake and died. Sivanesanar cremated her body and kept the ashes in a pot.

After worshipping Lord Siva at the Kapaliswara temple, Sambandar met Sivanesanar who related the death of his daughter. Sambandar told Sivanesanar to bring the pot. He then sang, “Oh Poompavai, the very purpose of human birth in this world is to serve the Lord and His devotees, and to feast the eyes by seeing the festivals of Lord Siva. If this is true, arise in the presence of all. Are you going away without seeing the festivals?” Here Sambandar sang the hymn II: 47 in *pann* Seekhamaram :

“*mattitta punnaiyang kaanan madamayilai kattittang kondaan kapaales saramamarndhaan...*”

When he finished the tenth stanza, the girl got her physical body and came out of the pot. It is in this sthala that Murugan (Singaravelan) received the spear from Parvati to fi ght
19. Tiruvottriyur is 10 kms north of Chennai.

Singing with Saivite Saints 23 Surapadman. It is believed that the temple was originally on the seashore near Santhome, but was demolished by the British. The present temple is about 300 years old.

From Mayilai, Sambandar went to Tiruvanmiyur at the Marundeeswarar temple and sang the *Padigam* II: 4 in *pann* Indalam:

*“karaiyu laangkada lirpoli sangamvell lippivan thiraiyu
laangkazhi meenuga lunthiru vaanmiyoor...”*

According to the Siva Puranam the sacred cow Kamadhenu performed abhise gum with her milk here. The lingam bears the foot prints of the cow. It is also stated that God Siva instructed Saint Agastiyar on medical herbs here.

At Chidambaram, Sivapada Krudayar came to meet his son and requested him to come to Sirkazhi. His father planned to get him married on his 16th birthday to Tottir Purnampikai, daughter of Nambandar Nampi. The wedding was celebrated at Perumananallur sthala (now known as Atchalpuram), near the Panchakshara tirtham.

After the marriage rituals, Gnana Sambandar asked Lord Siva to grant him mukti by singing the hymn III: 125 in *pann* Andhali Kurinji:

*“kalloor perumanam veyndaa kazhumalam palloor
perumanam paatumai yaayttbila ...”*

A large flame appeared and Sambandar sang his last hymn III: 49 known as the ‘*Panchakshara Padigam*’ in *pann* Kausikam :

*“kaadba laagki kasindhu kan neermalgi odbu
vaarthamai nannerik kayppadbu...”*

He then walked into the fire with his wife. All those who attended the wedding are said to have attained liberation in this temple. Together with Sambandar and his wife, Tirunilanakka
20. Atchalpuram is 5 kms from Sirkazhi.

24 *Singing with Saivite Saints* Nayanar, Muruga Nayanar, Tiruneelakanta Yazhpanar, Sivapada
Krudayar and Nambandar Nampi merged into the fire and attained Moksha. The sthala is known as Muktisthalam.
Tiru Gnana Sambandar is said to have sung 16,000 *Padigams* but only 4181 of these hymns are available nowadays. His songs are under the first three Tirumurais and are in the *Viruttam* musical form.

Singing with Saivite Saints 25

TIRU GNANA SAMBANDAR TEVARAM

Padigam II : 47 – “Matdhittha Punnayang...” (Mylapore) Pann:
Seekhamaram **Talam** : Tisra Tripura

matdhittha punnayangkanan madhamayilai
kaidhittha khondhan kapali charamamarndan
ordhittha pannpin uruttira palkanattar kutdhitthal
kanade podiyo poompavai

maippayanda ongan madhanallar mamayilai
kaipayanda nittran kapaliswaram amarndan
aypassi onna vizhavu marundavargal
thuipnavung kanade podiyo poompavai

urinchaya vazhkai amanudhaiye porkkum
irunchakkiyar kalordhu turaiippa natthil
karuncholai suzhnda kapaliswaram amarndar
porunchandi kanade podiyo poompavai
kanamar cholaik kapaliswaran amarndar tenamar poompavai
patthaga senntamizhan gnana sambandan nalam pugazhnda
pattumvalar vana sambandar avarodhum vazhvarai

26 Singing with Saivite Saints

MEANING

Will you go without seeing the beauty of feeding those who have merged with Siva's divine love as He resides in the charming gardens of the seashore when honeyed blossoms of "Punnai" bloom ?

Will you go without seeing the festivities of the Tiru Onam celebrated by great saints and sages to Lord Siva, who is adored by beautiful, bright - eyed, pure women that deck Him up with vibhuti ?

Will you go without seeing the '*Pavitrotsavam*' in June-JulyAugust of the Lord of Mylai, praised by those who look sheared because of shedding their clothes (Jains) ?

Those that sing these ten verses of praise to Lord Siva residing in the forests of Mylai composed by Gnanasambandar for Poombavai will find themselves among those who have attained moksha.





Gets cymbals -
Tirukolakka
(Gopuram)



Milk of wisdom from Parvati
(Sirkazhi, Arch Water Tank)

Wedding and moksha - Achalpuram (Paintings)

