

**CHAPTER 10 HYMNS
ON LORD SIVA
THAYUMANAVAR**

Thayumanavar



THAYUMANAVAR

There lived one of the greatest saints of South India and a great poet named Thayumanavar in the earlier part of the 18 century. He was born at Tiru Maraikkadu to devout parents. His father was Kediliappa Pillai and his mother was named Gajavalli Ammaiyar. Tiru Maraikkadu is found in the Nagapattinam district and is today called Vedaraniyam. It can be reached from Tiruvarur through Tirutturaiyandi. It is said that it was here that sage Agastya witnessed, the marriage scene of God Siva and Goddess Parvati. It is also at this sthala that Tiru Gnana Sambandar and Tirunavukkarasar sang in praise of Lord Siva to open the main door of the temple, which had remained closed for years.

Kediliappa Pillai and his family shifted to Trichy, where he worked as a treasurer in the Vijayanagar Kingdom of King Vijayaraghunatha Chokkulinga Nayak. Kediliappa Pillai and Gajavalli Ammaiyar had an elder son named Siva Chidambaram, who was under the care of their relatives. They named their second son Thayumanavar because of their great devotion to the ancient rock-cut Siva temple. The Rock now known as the Rock Fort is said to have been fl own down from Kailash hence, the name '*Dakshina Kailash*'. The famous shrine of Ucchi Pillaiyar is situated on top of the Rock Fort. The Lord is known as Thayumanavar because according to the Puranam, Siva came as a mid-wife to help a devotee at the time of her delivery.

After the death of his father, Thayumanavar took up his father's profession. His father's death intensified his yearning for spiritual freedom. Though he had free access to the King's palace, and was included in royal circles, Thayumanavar preferred to be alone. One day while he went to worship Lord Siva at the Rock Fort, he met Sage Sadasiva who belonged to the Parampara of Rishi Tirumular. He fell at the feet of the master who blessed him.

1. Rock Fort is situated in Trichy, originally known as Tiruchirapally, 319 kms from Chennai.

122 Singing with Saivite Saints Thayumanavar left the palace and went to live in a hermitage on the bank of river Kaveri. Sage Sadasiva who was on his way to Pudukottai met Thayumanavar. The final conclusion of their meeting was when Sage Sadasiva wrote 'Silence is Peace, Silence is Bliss, and Silence is knowledge'.

Thayumanavar left for Ramnad, accompanied by his disciple Arulayya where he was received with due respect by the Maravas (high ranking officials of the Pandian Kingdom). Ramnad was the name used by the British for Ramanathapuram. Thayumanavar left Ramanathapuram and proceeded towards Rameshwaram. On his way, he met again his Guru near Manamadurai and received his blessings.

Thayumanavar is said to have done long and deep meditation which brought forth spontaneous hymns. These hymns were written down by Arulayya on the spot.

Siva Chidambaram met Thayumanavar in Ramnad and persuaded him to come to Vedaranniyam. Thayumanavar agreed to the request of his elder brother and proceeded to his native place with Arulayya. They visited the Madurai temple and other Siva temples on their way.

Thayumanavar got married to Mattuvarkuzhali and later was blessed with a child called Kanagasabhapati. Unfortunately, Mattuvarkuzhali did not live a long life. Thayumanavar had to educate his son and afterwards left Kanagasabhapati with his elder brother. While meditating on the shores of Vedaranniyam, the Guru of Thayumanavar came. The words spoken by his Guru was transformed into hymns by him. Thayumanavar left for Chidambaram, the abode of Lord Nataraja, sanctified by holy Saints, and composed songs on Lord Siva Peruman. The Saint spent around two months in Chidambaram and then went on pilgrimage to Kanchipuram, Tiruvottriyur, Tiruvarur, Madurai and back to Rameshwaram.

Singing with Saivite Saints 123 Severe drought and famine affected Rameshwaram at a certain period of time. Thayumanavar worshipped Lord Siva as Ramanathaswamy to get relief from this natural calamity. Thayumanavar's prayer was answered and soon it started raining in Rameshwaram. The King of Ramanathapuram was very pleased with the miracle of Thayumanavar. The latter was to be brought by the order of the King in a palanquin to be honoured. Thayumanavar rejected the King's offer and stayed in Rameshwaram and composed sublime verses. The hymns were written on palm leaves by Arulayya and Kodikkarai Gnani, his other disciple.

Thayumanavar has composed 1452 songs under 52 headings, following the sacred teaching of Rishi Tirumular, the composer of the *Tirumantiram* and the utter devotion and fervor of Saint Manickkavasagar, the composer of the *Tiruvasagam*. In his poem *Chinmayananda Guru*, he places himself in the lineage of Rishi Tirumular, who was a Siddha Yogi of the Nandinatha Sampradaya's Kailasa Parampara. All his compositions are meant to be sung same as the hymns composed in the *Tiruvasagam*.

Thayumanavar believed that God reside everywhere, in everything and in everybody. In one of his songs he stated that he was unwilling to pluck a flower to worship the Lord as he found God Siva dwelling in it too. Thayumanavar had composed 771 'Kannis'. Each 'Kanni' is made of two lines. These couplets are expressions of the great spiritual awareness of Thayumanavar. He composed the lines in such a manner that one can easily set them to ragam and talam. The poems of Thayumanavar are yet alive today and are sung lovingly in group gatherings. Thayumanavar the composer of 1452 verses, has contributed a lot to words bringing peace and joy to his hymns. The hymns of Thayumanavar bring high comfort in life when singing them. The songs are dynamic and were set in a simple literacy format that suit folk type melodies. Thayumanavar attained Samadhi on January 15, 1742.

124 Singing with Saivite Saints

THAYUMANAVAR HYMNS

Chinmayanandaguru

angaikodu malarthoovi angmadhu pulagippa anbinnaa lurugivizhineer
aaraaga vaaraadha mutthiyina dhaavesa aasaik kadarkul moozhgis
sangara suyambhuvey sambhuvey enavumozhi thazhuthazhuth
thidavinangunj sanmaarga neriyilaath thunmarkka neynaiyun
thannarul koduthaalvaiyoh thungamigu pakkugas sanaganmudhal
munivohrgal thozhutharugil veetriruppas sollariya neriyai oru sollal
lunartthiyeh soroobanubhoothikkaattis sengamala peedamer kalla
ladikkulvalar siddhaanta mutthimudhaley siragiri vilangavaru
dakshinamoorthiyey chinmayaa nandaguruvey

MEANING

With flowers in out-stretched hand, Hair standing on end in joyous thrill, Eyes melting in love, tears streaming as a river - Thus do I not immerse myself into the fervent Sea of Mukti. And so hail Thee not as "Oh! Sankara! Oh! Swayambu! Oh! Sambu!" And adore Thee not in faltering words of ecstatic joy; And pursue not the path of Sanmarga. When such indeed is my unholy condition Will you ever accept me in Thy rapturous Grace? With the holy munis, Sanaka and the rest, Seated by Thy side in prayer, Thou revealed the path indescribable by a single word And conferred the bliss of Svarupa Thou, who is seated on the crimson lotus At the foot of the wild banyan tree. Oh! Thou, the Primal Source of Siddhanta Mukti. Oh! Chinmayananda Guru! Dakshinamurthi! That is seated high on the hilltop of Sivagiri.

