

CHAPTER 2
TIRUMURAI 4-6
TIRUNAVUKKARASAR
(THEVARAM)

Tirunavukkarasar - Tiruvadikai Virattanam



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TIRUNAVUKKARASAR

thTirunavukkarasar was born as Marunikkiyar at Tiruvamur in Tirumunaippadi region now corresponding to Villupuram and Cuddalore district) in the 7 century. He is one of the four *Saiva Samaya Acharyas*, Saivite Spiritual teachers. Pukalanar, his father and Matiniyar, his mother were ardent devotees of Lord Siva. Tiru Navukkarasar had a sister named Tilakavati, who later on, is said to have greatly influenced her brother's life.

ⁱWhen Tilakavati, herself a great devotee of Siva, reached her twelfth year, she was engaged to Kalippakayar, a military commander in the Pallava army. Before the wedding could be solemnized, he was sent to the battle. At the same time Pukalanar and Matiniyar passed away. Meanwhile, Kalippakayar died on the field of the battle. Tilakavati decided to commit Sati, (dying on the husband's funeral pyre), but Tirunavukkarasar prevented her from doing so. Tilakavati decided to dedicate her life to Saivism and to look after her brother.

Tirunavukkarasar, affectionately called Appar, engaged himself in all kinds of charitable works. His involvement in social service led him to be influenced by Jainism. He went to the city of Pataliputtiram, where he was converted to Jainism. He also became one of the important religious leaders of Jainism and attained mastery over their scriptures.

²Tilakavati was hurt by the decision of her only brother. She went and settled in Tiruvadikkai Virattanam, to bring back Appar to Saivism. There, she implored Lord Virattaneswarar to shower His grace upon Tirunavukkarasar.

Appar was struck with an incurable disease called *Soolai* and experienced severe pain. He was advised by his sister, that in order to be relieved of his illness, he should sing hymns in

1. Pataliputtiram is now the town of Cuddalore, situated 183 kms from Chennai
2. Tiruvadikkai Virattanam is 2 kms from Panruti and around 180 kms from Chennai.

32 *Singing with Saivite Saints* praise of Lord Siva. Both went to the temple at Tiruvadikkai Virattanam and offered prayer to Lord Siva. Appar composed his first *Padigam* IV: 1 set to *pann* Kolli.

*“kootrayina vaaru vilakkagileer
kodumaipala seidana naanariyen...”*

As soon as he rendered the song he was cured from the disease. It was then that Lord Siva’s voice was heard naming him as ‘Navukkarasar’ meaning ‘Lord of Speech’, and restored his faith in Saivism.

The Jains at Pataliputtiram were offended by Appar conversion and ashamed of not being able to cure him. So they concocted a plan to show Tirunavukkarasar as a traitor against the Jain King Mahendra and the royal religion. The King ordered to arrest Appar. The latter sang the *Tantakam* VI: 98:

*“naamaarkekum kudiyellaam namanai yanjom
naragatthi lidarpattobm nadalai iyillobm...”*

In these verses, Appar explained that we are not subordinate to anyone. The King asked to put Appar into a burning lime kiln. Appar sang the *Kurun Thogai* V: 90:

*“maasil veenaiyum maalai madhiyamum veesu
thendralum veengila veynilum...”*

The heat of the kiln transformed into a cool breeze and stayed that way even after one week. The Jains decided to give Appar poisoned milk but again the milk was changed into nectar. The Jains advised the King to let Tirunavukkarasar be crushed by an elephant. Facing the elephant, Appar sang the *Padigam* IV: 2 in *pann* Gandharam:

*“sunnavenn sandhanas saandhums sudarthingat soolaa maniyum
vanna urivai yudayum valarum pavala niramum...”*

Soon as he finished the last line, the elephant turned away. The Jains were in disgrace. Another plan to end the life

Singing with Saivite Saints 33 of Appar was, to tie him to a stone and throw him into the sea. This was done with King Mahendra's approval. Appar praised the *Panchakshara Mantra* in the *Padigam* IV: 11 set to *Pann* Gandhara Panchamam.

*“sottrunai veydhiyan sothi vaanavan pottrunai
thirundbadhi porundak kaitbozha...”*

By the grace of Lord Siva the stone began to float and reached the shores of Tiruppapuliur, which is near Cuddalore. There Appar rendered the *Tiruvirttam* IV: 94:

*“endraalum aayenak kendhaiyu mayudan thobndrinaraai moondra
yulagam padaithukan dhaanmanat thullirukka...”*

Reaching Tiruvadikkai, Appar sang the *Tantakam* VI: 31:

*“veriviravu koovilanal thonga laanai
veeratta thanaivell eytri naanai...”* The Pallava King who had remorse for all his misdeeds

fell at Appar's feet and begged his pardon. The King embraced Saivism and built a magnificent Siva temple called Gurubharavichuram there.

At the temple of Tunkanai in Pennakatam⁴, Appar begged earnestly Lord Siva to purify his body which has been involved with the Jains. He prayed Lord Siva to have the Trident and Nandi stamped on his body and sang the *Tiruvirttam* IV: 109:

*“ponnaar thiruvadi kondrundu vinnappam pobtriseyyum
yennaavi kaappadbar kichchayun deyilirun kootragala...”*

At once, a Sivagana approached Navukkarasar and put the imprint of the Trident and Nandi on his shoulders.

Tirunavukkarasar proceeded to many shrines before reaching Chidambaram, where he sang the *Viruttam* IV: 81 “*Karunatta Kandhanai...*”, the *Padigam* IV: 23 in *pann* Kolli “*Pattanai*

3. Tiruppapuliur is around 45 kms from Chidambaram. 4. Pennakatam is 17 kms from Virudrachalam.

34 *Singing with Saivite Saints Padbam...*” and the *Tiru Kurunthogai* V:1 “*Annam Palikku...*” It

is at this point of time that Appar heard about Sambandar and went to Sirkazhi to meet the young Saint. Appar left and went to Tirunitur near Mayiladhuturai. It is in this sthala that Munaiyaduvar Nayanar attained moksha by feeding food to devotees of God Siva throughout his life. Here Appar composed the *Tirutantakam* VI: 11:

“*piravaadhey thondriya pemmaan thannai
peynaadaar avarthammai peynaathaana...*”

After several sthalas, Appar went to Tirunallur which is near Papanasam, between Kumbakonam and Tanjavur. This temple is called the *Then Kailayam* meaning the ‘South Kailash’. It is in this sthala that Amaraniti Nayanar reached Kailasha with his wife and son. In this temple, Lord Siva placed his feet on the head of Appar, blessing him. Here Appar rendered the *Tirutantakam* VI: 14:

“*ninaindhurugum adiyarai neyya vaitbaar
nillaamey theevinaigal neenga vaitbaar...*”

5After visiting some more places of pilgrimage, Appar went to Tingalur. This temple is one of the *Navagraha Sthala* representing the planet Chandra (moon). There, Appar noticed a lot of charitable work being done in his name. He was told that Appudi Adigal was devoted and greatly revered to him. Appar went to his house and revealed his identity. Appudi Adigal was full of joy and requested Appar to be his guest and invited him for food. When Appudi Adigal’s wife sent his son to fetch a banana leaf, a snake bit the latter and he died. Appudi Adigal named his son Tirunavukkarasu due to his devotion for Appar.

Appar noticed the absence of Adigal’s son and enquired. Appudi Adigal related the tragic situation. Immediately Appar
5. Tingalur is around 5 kms from Tiruvaiyur in Tanjavur district.

Singing with Saivite Saints 35 told them to bring the body of the boy and sang the *Padigam* IV:

18 set to *pann* Indalam: “*ondruko laamavar sindhai yuyavarai*

ondruko lamuya rummadhi sooduvar...” Appudi Adigal’s son was brought back to life after

completion of the *Padigam*. Appar went to Tiruvarur⁶. In this sthala, the Vinayaga Sannidhi is called *Vathapi Ganapathi* and, it is the first of the ‘*Sapta Vidanga sthala*’ where *Swayambhu Lingams* are worshipped. Here Nandi is seen in a standing posture. This temple possesses the *Panchamukha Vadyam*, a unique and rare percussion instrument. Viralminda Nayanar, Naminanti Adigal Nayanar, Serutthunai Nayanar, Kazharsinga Nayanar, and Dandi Adigal Nayanar attained moksha in this temple. Appar was received here with great joy by the Siva devotees and he composed the *Padigam* IV: 20 set to *pann* Seekamaram:

“*kaandaley karutthai ninaindhirundbeyn manampugundaai kazhaladi poondukon dozhindbeyn purampoyi naalaraiyoh...*”

Appar met Sambandar during his journey and both went to Vizhimizhalai and then to Tirumaraikkatu, known as Vedaranniyam nowadays. This temple is also one of the *Sapta Vidanga Sthala* and has the Navagrahas in a row. The special feature of this temple is that its name has been mentioned in all the seven Tirumurais of the Tevaram. It is also said in the temple’s Puranam that the four Vedas; Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva worshipped Lord Vedarameswara here.

When the two saints reached the temple entrance they found the doors of the main entrance closed. After enquiry, they were told that after the Vedas worshipped God Siva, no one chanted the Vedas.

People used to go inside the temple through

6. Tiruvarur is around 50 kms from Tanjavur.

36 *Singing with Saivite Saints* a small door. Appar sang the *Padigam V: 10* in *pann Gandhara*

Panchamam: “*mulaikodbirilampirai muzhga vellanir*

valaithezhu sadbeyinar mazhalai veenaiyar...” When Appar sung the last line the doors opened. After

worshipping the Lord, Sambandar, sang the hymns “*Atal Kantati*” and the doors were closed.

Both went to Tiruvaymur. There, Lord Siva revealed His dancing Form to Sambandar and Appar. The latter rendered the *Tirukkurun Thogai V: 50*:

“*engey yennai irundbida tbedikkon dangey vandbadaiyaala marulinaar...*”

While Sambandar went to see the Queen Mangayakkarasi in Madurai, Appar went to Palaiyarai Vatatali. This place was one of the capitals of the Chola Kingdom in the past. Appar came to this Siva temple to worship the Lord, but to his astonishment he saw that the *Vimanam* was not the same. Upon enquiry, he was told that the Jains had taken over the temple and found that they had converted it into a Jain temple and they had moved the lingam to another place. Appar prayed to Siva to do justice. Appar sat down and vowed not to eat until this injustice was corrected by Lord Siva Himself. The Lord appeared in the dream of King Rajaraja Cholan and asked him to bring back the Lingam and restore the Siva temple. The Chola King went to the temple, drove away the Jains and fell at Appar’s feet. It is said that King Rajaraja Cholan renovated this temple and gave a lot of financial assistance. Appar sang the called *Tirukkurun Thogai V: 58* there:

“*thalaiye llaamparik kunjamann kaiyarul nilaiyi naanmarai thaanmarai konnumey...*”

7. Tiruvaymur is 25 kms from Tiruvarur. 8. Palaiyarai Vatatali is near Kumbakonam and Darasuram

Singing with Saivite Saints 37 During his pilgrimage towards Tirupainzhili, near Trichy, Appar was afflicted by hunger and thirst. Lord Siva appeared in the form of a priest and offered him food and water. Both walked together towards Tirupainzhili. Arriving there, the priest disappeared and Appar realized that it was Lord Siva Himself. He left for Tiruvannamalai sthala, where he rendered the *Tirunerisai* IV: 53:

*“odbima malargal thoovi umaiyaval pangaa mikka sothiye
thulangu mendbo sudarmazhup padaiyi naane...”*

Appar went to Kanchipuram⁹. This place is a very ancient city often called the ‘Golden City’ and has been mentioned in the epic *Manimegalai*. It is also known as one of the seven sacred places of India. There, Appar worshipped Lord Ekambreswara and sang the *Tirutantakam* VI: 97:

*“andan kadandba svadu mundo
analangai yendhiya aada lundob...”*

From Kanchipuram, Tirunavukkarasar proceeded to Tiruvanmiyur, in Chennai, to the Marundeeswara Siva temple, where he rendered the *Tirukkurun Thogai* V: 82 :

*“vinnda maamalar kondu viraindbuneer anda
naayagan thannadi soozhmeengal...”*

He proceeded to Mylapore, then to Tiruvottriyur¹⁰. It is in this sthala that Kaliya Nayanar and Siddha Pattinatar attained moksha. Here Appar composed the *Tirunerisai* IV: 45:

*“vellaithtai sadaiyil vaithta veydhabi thandran paadham
mellatthaa nadaiya vendin meitharu gnaana theeyaal...”*

From Kalahasti where he sang the *Tirutantakam* VI:8, *“Vitrunendri Ada...”* Appar went to Varanasi and worshipped Lord Viswanathan. He wanted to see the Lord at Tirukayilayam

9. Kanchipuram is 71 kms from Chennai. 10. Tiruvottriyur is 10 kms from Chennai.

38 *Singing with Saivite Saints* (Mount Kailash), though he was too weak to climb the

¹¹Himalayas. Siva appeared to Appar and asked him to take a dip in the tank He created. Appar did what Lord Siva requested him to do. Hence, when Appar opened his eyes, after dipping into the water, he realized that he was actually in the tank of Tiruvaiyaru temple, hundred of miles away in the South. He entered the temple and saw Mount Kailash there. Till today, this event is celebrated in this temple as a festival, in the month of Aadi (mid July – mid August).

After visiting many sthalas, Appar went to Alavai (Madurai temple) and rendered the *Tirumerisai* IV: 62:

*“veydhiyob veda geetha vinnava rannaa vendren robdhiyey
malargal thoovi yorunginin kazhalgal kaana...”*

He received a warm welcome in the Pandyan Kingdom, by King Nindrasir Nedumara Nayanar, the Queen Mangaiyakkarasi and Kulacchirai Nayanar.

From Tirunelveli, in the South of Tamil Nadu, Appar went to Tiruppukalur which is near Nagapattinam and Nannilam, in Tiruvarur district. He decided to remove the weeds which had grown all around the temple. He saw pieces of gold and precious stones. As all these had no value for Appar, he threw them all in the tank. Appar asked Lord Siva to take him by singing the hymn IV: 105 in the Tiruviruttam style:

*“thannai charanendru thaaladain theyndhan adiyadaiya
punnaiṇ pozhilpuga loorannal seyvana keynmingalo...”*

In this sthala at the age of 81, in the month of *Sittirai*, *Sadayam* Nakshatra, Tirunavukkarasar attained moksha.

¹¹Tirunavukkarasar is said to have composed 49,000 hymns out of which only 3066 are available. His hymns come under the 4, 5th and 6th Tirumurai. They are in the musical form *Viruttam*, *Tantakam*, *Tirumerisai* and *Tirukkurun Thogai*.

11. Tiruvaiyaru is 11 kms from Tanjavur.

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TIRU NAVUKKARASAR TEVARAM

Padigam IV : 18 – “Ondrukola malar...” (Tingalur) Pann
: Indalam **Talam** : Adi

ondru kolamavar sindai uyarvarai ondru
kolamuyarum madi sudhuvar ondru
kolamidhu vendhalai kaiyadu ondru kola
mavar urvadu tanai

irandu kalammayor thozhu padam irandu
kolamilan kunkuzhai pennan irandu kolamuru
vanzhchiru manmazhu irandu kolamava
reytina tamai.

onbadu polavar vasal vaguttana onbadu
polavar marpinil nulizhai onbadu polavar
kolak kuzhachadhai onbadu polavar
paridha tanai
pattu kolamavar pambingal pambinpal pattu kolameyiru nerindu
kana pattu kolamavar kaya pattanralai pattu kolamadhiyar seygai tanai

40 Singing with Saivite Saints

MEANING

There is but One mountain (Kailash), only. He wears the crescent moon. He bears the skull of one of Brahma's head for Bhiksha and rides the single bull Nandi.

Two are His feet that are worshipped, two the earrings He wears two, the instruments in His hand, the deer and axe and two forms of male and female He has.

Nine are the openings on a living being He created. Nine are the strands of threads across His chest. His nine locks wave as He dances and permeates to nine continents. Ten are the eyes of His hooded snake, which also has ten teeth. Ten also are the teeth and hair which fell down when Ravana was vanquished by Siva. Ten are the ways of expressing devotion.

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Attached to a stone - Tiruppapuliur (Paintings)
Removing weeds around the temple - Tiruppukalur (Paintings)



42 Singing with Saivite Saints



Appar Mandapam - Cuddalore
Appar's sister Ilakavati - Tiruvadikkai Virattanam (Panruti)

