

**TIRUVĀYMOLI**  
**ENGLISH GLOSSARY**

**VOLUME I**

*by*

(Jñāna Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa)

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Published with the financial assistance from the Government of India,  
Ministry of Education & Social Welfare (Department of Education)

**ANANTHACHARYA INDOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

**G. D. SOMANI MEMORIAL BUILDING**

**625, CUFFE PARADE, BOMBAY 400 005**

**1981**

## BOOK II

### Second Centum—First Decad (II-1) (Vāyum tirai)

#### Preamble

In the last stanza of the preceding decad, the Ājvār who had already conjured up the vision of the Lord as having entered his body and gone right up to his head, referred to the Lord as the blue gem, overlord of the Celestials and a very attractive jewel, by himself. Each one of these features of the Lord was so fascinating that the Ājvār could not resist the immediate urge to enjoy them outwardly. The enjoyment, longed for, did not, however, materialise instantly and the Ājvār was thrown into a state of deep dejection, reduced to the abject position of a forlorn lover. The Ājvār, thus transformed into a female lover (Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī), pining for her beloved Lord, moves into a garden on the sea-shore to bemoan her separation. It may be recalled that she was in a similar predicament earlier, when she sent the birds etc, as her emissaries to the Lord—See I-4. But then, she is worse off now, not finding any one to carry her message to the Lord. The self-same stork which she had commissioned earlier now looms in her eyes as a comrade-in-distress. The stork's natural complexion is white but the Ājvār thinks that it is a case of decoloration due to the pangs of separation from the Lord, experienced by it. The Anṅil birds of opposite sex always stay together and even during sleep keep their bills locked in each other's mouth. The moment the bills get unlocked, they wake up and start crying. Unaware of this natural sequence, Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī thinks that these birds cry out their agony of separation from the Lord, like her. The wind, ever on the move, appears to the Ājvār to go about frantically in search of the Lord; the clouds, unleashing rain-water, look like shedding tears of grief due to separation from the Lord; likewise, the waning of the Moon, the surging, up and down, of the waves, the burning of the lamp and all other natural phenomena are invested by the love-lorn Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī with her own poignancy and she bemoans their lot as well. This sets the pace and pattern of this decad, pin pointing the Lord's quality of making his devotees mad with God-love.

Here is an interesting comparison: Lakṣmaṇa, while pleading that he should be allowed to accompany Śrī Rāma into exile, cited the example of the fish failing to survive without water, thereby indicating that Śrī Rāma was unto Lakṣmaṇa what water is unto fish. But here is Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī who feels that the fish, water and all things subsist on the Lord and cannot brook separation from Him! The Āḷvār addresses these Comrades-in-distress commiserating with them in their sad plight. It is worth noting that Śloka 15 and the following few ślokas in the last chapter of the tenth skanda of Bhāgavatam run in a similar vein.

vāyum tirai ukaḷum kāṅal maṭa nārāy!  
 āyum, amar-ulakum tuñcilum nī tuñcāyāl;  
 nōyum payalaimaiyum mītu-ūra emmēpōl,  
 nīyum tirumālāl nēñcam kōḷ-paṭṭāyē? (II-1-1)

### Translation

Sleep you don't, You young stork in the sea-shore garden!  
 Though my mother and Heavens too have into slumber gone;  
 The whole of your body is white with grief great;  
 Like me, have you unto Tirumāl lost your heart?

### Notes

- (i) Not falling within the mischief of 'tamas' (inertia), there is no question of the Heavens going into slumber. The wonder of it is that even the Heavens, never known to sleep, have gone to sleep, but the poor stork doesn't sleep! The (gnostic) mother would not sleep because there was a time when she was agitating her mind about finding a suitable match for her highly evolved daughter (Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī), and now again, the mother cannot sleep when the daughter is in such a state of mental agony, separated from her Lord. Even such a mother has gone to sleep but the stork wouldn't sleep. Surely, its affliction must be very heavy.
- (ii) The Āḷvār thinks that decoloration has set in throughout the body of the stork like the fast-spreading poison, and that is why it is white all over. About the



decoloration of the lover due to the gloom of separation, see notes below I-4-4.

- (iii) The soul can neither be split nor burnt, neither wetted nor dried up, and yet the Ājvār has, in several places, referred to his getting split, burnt, wetted and dried up; the inanimate mind is raised by him to the status of an animate being and he extols it and dencunes it alternately, according to its tempo and behaviour; each sense-organ, each faculty, is made to acquire an independent stature of its own, as if it is a separate animate entity by itself and these compete with each other in the matter of God-enjoyment, exceeding and even transcending their functional limitations (III-8); God-love, engendered in the Ājvār also acquires a similar stature and is said to thaw down like ice. And now, the Ājvār sees the very elements, water, wind and fire, as comrades-in-distress, and weeps along with them, bespeaking the intensity of his God-thirst, not conforming to the conventional norms of thinking and behaviour. (aphorism 132 of Ācārya Hṛdayam).

kōl-paṭṭa cintaiyaiyāyk kūrvāya aṅṅilē!  
 cēṅ-paṭṭa yāmaṅkaḷ cērātu iraṅkutiyāl;  
 āl-paṭṭa emmēpōl niyum aravu-aṅaiyāṅ  
 tāl-paṭṭa taṅ-tulāyt tāmam kāmuraṅyē? (II-1-2)

#### Translation

Ye Aṅṅil with beak sharp, down-hearted that you are,  
 Your voice is feeble and without sleep you suffer  
 During long spells of night; did you also covet  
 As I do, the cool tulaci garland at the feet  
 Of the Lord, reclining on His serpent couch?

#### Note

Just as he was addressing the stork, the Ājvār heard the Aṅṅil birds in the neighbouring palmyra tree, crying out their agony of separation, as and when their bills got unlocked during sleep, vide also the preamble to this decad. The

Āḷvār extends his sympathy to these birds, looking upon them as comrades-in-distress.

kāmuṟṟa kaiyaṟavōṭu ellē irāppakal  
nī murrak kaṇ tuyilāy; neñcu uruki ēṅkutiyaḷ;  
tī murrat teṇ ilaṅkai uṭṭiṇāṅ tāḷ nayanta  
yām urṟatu urṟāyō? vāḷi! kaṇai kaṭalē. (II-1-3)

### Translation

You languish without sleep, You roaring Sea!  
Both day and night, and your heart is watery, I see;  
Are you with grief afflicted as we are,  
Not attaining the feet of our Lord Who by fire  
Destroyed Laṅkā? May you from grief be free and prosper!

### Notes

- (i) The Sea can be said to sleep when it is silent without throwing the waves up. But the waves are surging up and down all the time, be it day or night; this sleeplessness is attributed by the Āḷvār to its separation from the Lord.
- (ii) The sea roars and it is mere sound with no meaning, just like the indistinct sound coming from a throat, choked with grief. The Āḷvār is inclined to think that the poor thing is down with grief, too deep for words.
- (iii) The Āḷvār would appear to tell the sea: "Sītā was also a woman like me, and Śrī Rāma languished without food and sleep, bundled the Sea, a herculean task indeed, and got at her. He is, however, unmindful of me. Do you also feel tortured by His indifference, as I do?"

kaṭalum malaiyum vicumpum tuḷāy empōḷ  
cuṭar koḷ irāppakal tuñcāyāl, taṇ vāṭāy!  
aṭal koḷ paṭai-āḷi ammāṅaik kāṇpāṅ nī  
uṭalam nōy urṟāyō, ūḷitōṟu ūḷiyē? (II-1-4)

### Translation

Do you from chronic malady suffer, you chill wind?  
Like me you sleep not, by day or night, but try to find

Groping thro' space, hill and dale, our mighty Lord  
Who does, in sweet array, Conch and Discuss wield.

### Notes

- (i) If the wind is chill, the Ālvār thinks it is due to delirium; if the wind moves about, all over, all the time, gathering all the dust in the process, as is its wont, the Ālvār thinks that it goes in search of the Lord with the frantic fervour of an importunate lover who dashes off, breaking all norms of feminine conduct, disfigures herself and musters public opinion for the acceleration of her union with her beloved.
- (ii) Periyālvār searched for the Lord in the milk ocean; Tirumāṅkai Ālvār went roving round Tiruvēṅkaṣam, the Hill station and other pilgrim centres down below, playing the role of the importunate lover, referred to in (1) above. And here, Nammālvār is inclined to think that the wind is also a kindred soul, exhibiting a similar behaviour.

ūjitōṟu ūḷi ulakukku nirkōṇṭu,  
tōḷiyarum yāmum pōl, nīrāy nekiḷkiṅṅa  
vāḷiya, vāṅamē! nīyum matucūtaṅ  
pāḷimaiyil paṭṭu. avaṅkaṅ pācattāl naivāyē? (II-1-5)

### Translation

Ye clouds, into tears you break for ever  
And flood the worlds; do you in sorrow dwindle  
Like me and my comrades, under the spell irresistible  
Of Matucūtaṅ, coveting Him heart and soul?  
May you from misery be free and prosper!

### Notes

- (i) It is clear from this, that Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki and comrades of her ilk are grief-stricken to such an extent that their profuse tears flood the worlds like the rain-water unleashed by the clouds.



- (ii) Matucūtaṅ (Madhusūdhā)-Lord Mahā Viṣṇu, Who slew Madhu, the demon. The Āḷvār queries whether the clouds did also come under the spell of the Lord, attracted by His glorious trait of vanquishing the evil forces, in the same way as he and others of his ilk did.

naivāya emmēpōl, nāl matiyē! nī in nāl  
 mai vāṅ iruḷ akarrāy; māḷāntu tēputiyāl;  
 ai vāy aravu-aṅaimēl āḷip perumāṅār  
 mey vācakam kēṭṭu, uṅ meynnirmai tōṅṅāyē? (II-1-6)

### Translation

Worn out like us, you withering Moon!  
 These days, the dark sky you don't illumine;  
 You have, it seems, lost your erstwhile sheen,  
 Misled by the utterance of the Lord who the discus holds,  
 Reclining on the serpent with its five hoods.

### Notes

- (i) The Moon waxes and wanes because of its different phases, but Parāṅkuṣā Nāyaki attributes the waning of the Moon and the resultant diminution of its brightness to a mental malady, on a par with her own.
- (ii) In her present state of mental depression, the Nāyaki is so sore with the Lord that she says that the Lord's utterances should not be taken at their face value. No doubt, Śrī Rāma averred that his tongue shall never lie. Unfortunately, however, the Āḷvār reproaches the Lord as being double-tongued like the serpent on which He reclines. The serpent has a double-forked tongue in each of its hoods and here is a serpent with five hoods. And then, it was with His discus that the Lord covered the Sun and converted day into the illusory night; thus, the discus was a pawn in the game, an accomplice of the Lord for carrying out the strategy. If, as Śrī Rāma, the Lord scrupulously adhered to truth, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He would not mind swerving from it, if thereby He could do a good turn to His devotees. It could not, therefore, be said that the Lord was guilty of falsehood, merely

sticking to the letter with academic zeal, without going into the spirit behind His actions. The Lord is beneficial to His devotees both ways, by adhering to the truth, as Śrī Rāma did, and swerving from it, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa did. Nampillai observed: "We seek shelter alike in Rāma's truthfulness and Kṛṣṇa's diplomacy (seeming falsehoods).

tōṅṅōm maṭa neṅcam em perumāṅ nāraṅku; em  
 āṅṅāmai colli aḷuvōmai, nī naṭuvē  
 vēṅṅōr vakaiyil koṭitāy, eṅai ūḷi  
 māṅṅāmai niṅṅiyō? vāḷi! kaṅai iruḷē! (II-1-7)

### Translation

We have unto Nāraṅgaṅ, Our Lord  
 Lost our hearts and we did our sorrows lament  
 In each other's company but step in you did,  
 Worse than our foes you are, you darksome night!  
 May you prosper and from this state be rid.

### Notes

- (i) This stanza, as worded above, does not accord with the pattern of the preceding and succeeding stanzas in this decad. Based, however, on the diction as such, Emperumāṅgar (Rāmānuja) and other Ācāryas were inclined to interpret this song, as follows: The dark night, instead of weeping along with Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī and her comrades, is worse than a foe, in so far as it prevents their seeing each other and bemoaning their common lot of separation from the Lord.
- (ii) There is, however, another method of interpreting this stanza, so as to bring it on a piece with the rest. Not knowing that darkness is an inherent quality of the night, Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī sympathises with it and exclaims, "We are already weighed down by our own calamity and here you are, exhibiting your own dire distress of darkness and adding to our miseries. May you soon be rid of this state and prosper!"



iruḷin tiṇi vaṇṇam mā nīrk kaḷiyē! pōy  
 maruḷuṅṅu irāppakal tuñcilum nī tuñcāyāl;  
 uruḷum cakaṭam utaitta perumāṇār  
 aruḷin peru nacaiyāl āḷāntu nontāyē? (II-1-8)

### Translation

You channel, the dark waters in abundance  
 You discharge, day and night, bewildered;  
 Do you also pine, with deep desire, for the grace  
 Of the Lord who the (demon in the) rolling wheel shattered?

### Note

Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī gropes her way through, in darkness, and not being able to distinguish land from water, comes to a channel discharging lots of water and making plenty of noise in the process. She thinks that the channel is also lamenting its separation from Lord Kṛṣṇa, who destroyed Śakaṭāsura and whose grace it pines for.

nontu ārāk kātal-nōy mel āvi uḷ ulartta-  
 nantā viḷakkamē! niyūm aḷiyattāy!  
 centāmarait taṭaṅ kaṇ, ceṅkaṇi vāy em perumāṅ  
 am tāmam taṇ-tuḷāy ācaiyāl vēvāyē? (II-1-9)

### Translation

You undying flame, sad indeed is your plight,  
 Your gentle soul stands withered; burnt are you  
 By the desire to get the tulacī garland, cool and bright,  
 Worn by our Lord with large lotus-eyes and lips of red hue?

### Notes

- (i) Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī returns home in a state of mental exhaustion, and sees the burning lamp. The heat of the flame, she thinks, is the one generated by its separation from the Lord, an experience identical with hers.
- (ii) The flame of the lamp is not homogeneous, being of different intensity of heat at different places or zones, as they

are called ; the flame itself comes up anew every moment, a fact which can be gathered only by inference. It is an optical illusion that the flame appears to be single, instead of an unbroken succession of different flames. Parāṅkuśa Nāyakī goes by what she sees and calls it an undying flame.

vēvu ārā vēṭkai nōy mel āvi u| ulartta  
 ōvātu irāppakal unṣālē viṭtu oḷintāy;  
 mā vāy piḷantu, marutiṭai pōy, maṇ aḷanta  
 mūvā mutalvā! iṇi emmaic cōrēlē. (II-1-10)

### Translation

Primate of perennial youth, the horse's (Kēci, the demons)  
 big mouth you split,  
 'Tween the twin trees you crawled and broke them down,  
 The worlds you measured; in you engrossed, day and night,  
 Our tender souls, with blistering malady of love struck down,  
 Have badly dried up, pray, henceforth leave us not.

### Note

Seeing the Ājvār's pangs of separation from Him, the Lord approaches the Ājvār, shedding His cool grace. Thereupon, the Lord is told by the Ājvār that his tender soul, already worn out and emaciated due to its separation from the Lord, thaws down still further in contemplation of His wondrous deeds and glorious traits. The Ājvār also fervently prays to the Lord, not to forsake him any more.

cōrāta ep poruṭkum ātiyām cōtikkē  
 ārāta katal kurukūrc caṭakōpaṇ  
 ōrāyiram conṇa avaruḷ ivai pattum  
 cōrār, viṭār kaṅṭir vaikuntam tiṇṇaṇavē. (II-1-11)

### Translation

Those that are regular in reciting these stanzas ten,  
 Out of the thousand composed by Kurukūr Caṭakōpaṇ.



Of love insatiable for the resplendent Lord, the root cause  
Of one and all, shall surely enjoy for ever, Heavenly bliss.

### Notes

- (i) It is only after the Lord came and joined the Āḷvār that He became God indeed, the Protector of one and all, *without any exception*; again, the Lord became resplendent, only after His union with the Āḷvār.
- (ii) It is also noteworthy that, In this decad, the Āḷvār has come to be identified through his boundless love for the Lord; that is why he is referred to not as mere Kurukūr Caṭakōpaṇ but as Caṭakōpaṇ of insatiable God-love.

## Second Centum—Second Decad (II-2)

### (Tinnan vītu)

#### Preamble

In the last decad, the Āḷvār was confined to the bottom-most depth of dejection and his yearning for the Lord baffled description. It was but meet that the Lord came and presented Himself before such an ardent devotee and saved him from collapsing altogether. It goes without saying that, when the Āḷvār came, face to face, with the Lord, all his erstwhile dejection and the resultant fatigue vanished altogether. The Āḷvār then made up his mind not to allow himself to be swept off once again, by contemplating the Lord's trait of 'Saulabhya' (easy accessibility). He would rather tackle the other plank, safe and steady, namely, the Lord's overlordship and transcendent glory and sustain himself.

No doubt, in the opening decad of the first centum also, the Āḷvār spoke about the Lord's Supremacy and transcendent glory. But that was in a different key altogether. There it was direct postulation, as such, running parallel to the Vedic texts. Here, the Āḷvār establishes the Lord's Supremacy through an elimination of the claims of the possible contenders for this position of Supereminence, citing the relevant anecdotes from the 'Itihāsas' and 'Purāṇas.' There it was confined solely to the 'Para' or transcendent state of the Lord in the High Heavens whereas here, the



Supremacy of the Lord is brought out in His 'Vibhava' or incarnate state. Speaking about the Avatāras (Incarnations), the Lord's wondrous deeds can bear endless repetitions, without satiety. Every time the same trait or deed is repeated, there is a freshness about it, with a new aroma.

tiṅṅaṅ viṭu mutal muḷutum āy,  
 eṅṅiṅ mītiyaṅ, em perumāṅ,  
 maṅṅum viṅṅum ellām uṅṅa uṅṅa nam  
 kaṅṅaṅ kaṅ allatu illai ṅr kaṅṅē. (II-2-1)

#### Translation

There is no God other than my Sire, Kaṅṅaṅ,  
 (Whose traits and possessions) defy enumeration,  
 The granter of 'Mokṣa', the supreme bliss firm and fine,  
 Who at once ate up all the worlds, for their sustentation.

#### Note

The Ājvār affirms that Lord Kṛṣṇa who enthralled him by His innumerable auspicious traits, is the Supreme Lord of the whole Universe, the granter of Mokṣa, the final bliss. During the period of deluge, He did sustain all the worlds by keeping them within His stomach and this is referred to here, as His having eaten them up. This 'eating up' actually connotes that the Lord sustains the worlds and their contents within His stomach with the same relish as one has for food. The minor deities, Brahmā, Rudra and others, are also among those, so sustained by the Lord. Need it be specifically said that the one who sustains is superior to those sustained?

ē pāvam! paramē! ēḷ ulakum  
 i pāvam ceytu aruḷāl aḷippār ār-  
 mā pāvam viṭa, araṅkup piccai pey  
 kōpāla kōlariēṅṅu aṅṅiyē? (II-2-2)

#### Translation

Who but Kōpālaṅ, the mighty Lion,  
 Who unto Araṅ gave alms and from heinous sin

Redeemed, can the seven worlds graciously sustain,  
 Ridding them of all sins? What a pity, none can  
 Describe His glory, well beyond enumeration!

### Notes

- (i) In the preceding stanza, the Āḷvār averred that there is none superior to Kōpālaṅ (Lord Kṛṣṇa). When some persons questioned the propriety of such an assertion in the face of the Vedic texts glorifying Brahmā, Rudra and other Celestials, the Āḷvār turned round and said: "Well, you had better examine the record of performance of each of them and judge for yourselves. When they all got into trouble, each in his own way, they all sought asylum in Lord Maha Viṣṇu. Could there still be any misgiving about His supremacy over all the rest?"
- (ii) The Āḷvār feels very much vexed that, in the midst of his God-enjoyment, he should have to leave the track and tackle these deluded enquirers, wasting much precious time in explaining the much-too-obvious, the difference between a priceless gem and poor clay.
- (iii) The ill-effects of the sins committed by us, in a trice, can hardly be liquidated even after the sufferings of ages and yet it is the Lord's redemptive grace that grinds them to a halt.

ēraṅṅai pūvaṅṅai, pūmakal-taṅṅai,  
 vēṅṅiṅṅi viṅ toḷat taṅṅuḷ vaittu,  
 mēl-taṅṅai mīṭṭa nimirntu,  
 maṅ-koṅṅa, māl-taṅṅiṅ mikkum ōr tēvum uḷatē? (II-2-3)

### Translation

Could there be a God greater than Tirumāl, our Lord,  
 Who has on His person lodged Ēraṅ (Rudra) and Pūvaṅ  
 Brahmā

Besides Pūmakāḷ (Lakṣmī, the lotus-born), whom the Devas Worship, who upwards grew and measured all the worlds?

### Notes

- (i) See notes below I-3-9 regarding the positions taken up by the exalted Rudra and Brahmā, on the Lord's person.

The Celestials adore the Lord's condescending grace in accommodating, on His broad person, besides Śrī Mahālakṣmī, Rudra and Brahmā.

- (ii) As Tṛvikrama, He encompassed all the worlds.  
These are convincing proofs of His supremacy over all the rest.

tēvum epporuḷum paṭaikkap pūvil nāṃmukaṅgaip paṭaitta  
tēvaṅ em perumāṅgukku allāl, pūvum pūcaṅaiyum takumē?  
(II-2-4)

### Translation

Can one worship and with flowers decorate  
Any one other than 'Emperumāṅ' (our Supreme Lord)  
Who, the lotus-based, four-headed Brahmā, ushered,  
The Devas and the rest to create?

### Notes

- (i) Worship can be offered only to the Supreme Lord and being of exquisite charm, He alone is worthy of decoration.
- (ii) Here is an interesting anecdote:

Prior to his absorption into the Vaiṣṇavite fold, Empār, the illustrious Preceptor (a cousin of Śrī Rāmānuja) was, for some time, serving in the Śivā temple at Kālahasti, under the appellation of "Uḷḷaṅkai Keṅarnta Nāyaṅār". One day, when he stood perched on a tree, gathering flowers for the diurnal worship of the Deity, right underneath, Śrī Tirumalai Nampī, his uncle, was discoursing on this particular stanza to his disciples. The votary, high up on the tree, burst out with an emphatic 'NO', in reply to the question put in this stanza, jumped down, tore off his Rudrākṣa necklace



(worn by the votaries of Rudra and fell at the feet of the learned discourser, seeking refuge in him.

takum cīrt taṅ taṅi mutaliṅḷḷē  
mikum tēvum ep poruḷum paṭaikkat  
takum kōlat tāmaraik kaṅṅaṅ, emmāṅ  
mikum cōti mēl aṅivār evarē?

(II-2-5)

**Translation**

Does one Know of any other, more radiant  
Than our lovely lotus-eyed Lord, omniscient and omnipotent,  
Who, by His resolve unique, could bring into being  
The Devas, (men) and all other things?

**Note**

One of the fundamental characteristics of the Supreme Lord is 'Puṅḍarikākṣatva' (i.e.) His being lotus-eyed. These tell-tale eyes will straightaway proclaim His supremacy. Enthralled by His bewitching looks, the Āḷvār swears that He is the Supreme Lord. c.f. Śloka 12 of the hymnal gems of Yāmuna, where

He queries:

“ Who but Śrīman Nārāyaṇa is the red lotus-eyed?  
Who but He is Puruṣottama, the highest?

evarum yāvaiyum ellāp poruḷum  
kavarvu iṅṅit taṅṅuḷ oṭuṅka niṅṅa  
pavar koḷ ṅāṅa-veḷḷac cuṅar mūrṭti-  
avar em āḷi am paḷḷiyārē.

(II-2-6)

**Translation**

He Who, in His stomach, holds with ease,  
The sentient beings, the non-sentient things and all these,  
Is the lovely Lord, of Knowledge immense;  
Dear to me, He of exquisite form lies on the *watery expanse*.

**Note**

This may refer either to the Lord reclining on the milk-ocean or on the watery expanse, during the deluge.

paḷli ālilai ēḷ ulakum koḷḷum  
 vaḷḷal val vayigḡup perumāṅ  
 uḷuḷ āṛ aḡivār-avaṅ-taṅ  
 kaḷḷa māya maṅakkaruttē?

(II-2-7)

**Translation**

Who indeed can plumb the unfathomable mind  
 Of the Lord Supreme who could hold the worlds seven  
 In His stomach, big and tough,  
 And repose on a tender fig- leaf?

**Note**

Only the Supreme Lord is capable of achieving the seemingly impossible, blending within Himself the incompatibles, such as holding inside His stomach all the worlds and lying as a tender babe on a fig- leaf floating on the watery expanse. None can indeed probe His mysteries and comprehend them. It can only be said that nothing is beyond Him and there lies the clue to His supremacy.

karuttil tēvum ellāp poruḷum  
 varuttitta māyap pirāṅ aṅḡi, yārē-  
 tiruttit tiṅ nilai mūvulakum tammul  
 iruttik kākkum iyalviṅarē?

(II-2-8)

**Translation**

None but Māyappirāṅ (the Benefactor great of mysterious prowess)  
 Can by a mere resolve create Devas and all else.  
 Who else can His natural affinity possess  
 To preserve by sheer will all the three worlds?

**Note**

This cuts across the popular notion that Brahmā is the functional Deity for creation and Viṣṇu, the Deity for sustentation. Actually, Mahā Viṣṇu controls all the three functions of creation, preservation and dissolution, and Brahmā and Rudra are mere functionaries on His behalf.

kākkum iyalviṇaṅ kaṇṇa-perumāṅ  
 cērkkai ceytu, taṅ untiyuḷḷē  
 vāyṭṭa ticaimukaṅ intiraṅ vāṇavar  
 ākkiṅāṅ, teyva ulakukaḷē.

(II-2- 9)

**Translation**

Lord Kaṇṇaṅ Whose nature it is to protect,  
 Did (at the time of dissolution) collect  
 All the worlds into His navel and then create  
 Ticaimukaṅ (Brahmā), Intiraṅ and Vāṇavar (Devas) and their  
 worlds (holy and bright).

**Notes**

- (i) Lord Kṛṣṇa is Supreme, because He controls all the three functions of creation, sustentation and dissolution. It was to dispel the undesirable gloom and grant the coveted felicities that the Lord incarnated as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- (ii) At the time of dissolution, one and all, without any exception, get inside Him. This is then followed by re-creation of the worlds and that way, the cyclic process goes on, epoch after epoch.

kaḷvā! emmaiṇuṅ ēḷ ulakum niṅ-  
 uḷḷē tōḷḷiya iṅaiṇa! eṅṅu,  
 veḷ-ēṅṅaṅ nāṅmukaṅ intiraṅ vāṇavar  
 puḷ-ūrṭi kaḷal paṇintu, ēṭṭuvarē.

(II-2-10)

**Translation**

Veḷḷēṅṅaṅ (Rudra), Nāṅmukaṅ (Brahmā), Indra and Vāṇavar  
 (Devas) congregate  
 And worship at the feet of the Lord with that bird (Garuḍa) as  
 His mount  
 And unto Him, pray 'Iṅaiṇa' (by your resolve), you brought  
 out  
 The seven worlds and us all and yet you will hide out,  
 Like a thief, your greatness and to us for favours resort''.



## Notes

- (i) The Celestials, including Rudra, with the white bull as his mount, the four-headed Brahmā, Indra and others of that exalted band, seek various boons from Mahā Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, and their power to grant, in turn, the wishes of their votaries is thus derived from Him alone. And yet, they wish to tickle their vanity by making it appear that even the Supreme Lord seeks favour from them. It is noteworthy, Lord Kṛiṣṇa just tickled the vanity of Rudra when He sought from the latter that He be blessed with a son through His consort, Rukmiṇī. It is for this that the Lord has been referred to, in this stanza, as a thief.
- (ii) Divya Kavi (The poet, *par excellence*), Piḷḷai Perumāḷ Ayyangār exclaims: " Oh, Lord, what a paradox that you, from whom all things emanate, are dubbed a thief for having stolen butter! Actually, we are the thieves, who think and act as if we are our own, not realising that we belong to you, the rightful owner ".

ēṭṭa ēḷ ulakum koṇṭa kōlak  
 kūṭṭapaṅk kurukūr caṭakōpaṅ col  
 vāyṭṭa āyirattuḷ ivai pattuṭaṅ  
 ēṭṭa vallavarkku illai ōr ūṅamē.

(II-2-11)

## Translation

For those who learn and laud these songs ten,  
 Out of the thousand bequeathed unto us, by Kurukūr Caṭa-  
 kōpaṅ,  
 In adoration of the enchanting Lord, who did span  
 With ease, the worlds seven, drawbacks there will be none.

## Notes

- (i) Those, who learn these ten songs and enter into their spirit will be firm in their conviction that Mahā Viṣṇu is the Supreme Lord; they will thus be free from the drawbacks of (i) not looking upon Mahā Viṣṇu as the Supreme Lord and (ii) looking upon Deities other than Mahā Viṣṇu, as Supreme. For the matter of that, the

solitary episode of Trivikrama, of charming beauty, measuring effortlessly all the worlds in just three strides, is enough to assert Mahā Viṣṇu's Supremacy.

- (ii) The Lord's Supremacy has been set out, in this decad, under various counts, namely, destruction of the sins of devotees and ridding them of distress, being lotus-eyed, friend-in-need, achieving the impossible and blending the incompatibles, laudation by the exalted celestials, Rudra, Brahmā and others, control of all the three functions of creation, sustentation and dissolution and so on.

## Second Centum—Third Decad (II-3)

### (Ūnil vāḷ uyirē)

#### Preamble

In the first decad of this centum, we saw the Āḷvār in dire distress. Towards the end, the Lord, however, deigned to present Himself and once again, the Āḷvār is in rapturous rapport with the Lord. In this decad, he gives vent to the joy of reunion with the enchanting Lord. In strict sequence, this should have been the second decad instead of being the third. The Āḷvār's immediate reaction, on seeing the Lord come back to him, was, however, that one of such super eminence, the overlord of the Celestials, should have at all deigned to mingle with one so low. And, therefore, he straightaway expatiated on the Lord's transcendental glory, in the second decad.

ūṇil vāḷ uyirē! nallai, po! unṅaiṅ perṅu,  
vāṅulāṅ perumāṅ, matucūtaṅ, eṅ ammāṅ,  
tāṅum yāṅum ellām taṅṅullē kalantoḷintōm:  
tēṅum pālum neyyum kaṅṅalum amutum ottē. (II-3-1)

#### Translation

Oh, ye mind, dwelling in the fleshy body,  
You are indeed good; because of you, It (this vassal)



Could with Matucūtaṅ, my Lord, mingle, chief of Celestials  
And into Him dissolve like honey, milk, nectar and candy.

### Notes

- (i) In this decad, where the Āḷvār gives vent to his joy of communion with the Lord, the one he was pining for, praise is first bestowed on his forward mind which had overtaken him in its flight to God, seeking the bliss of union with Him. This is like a prince, restored back to his lost kingdom by some one, thanking that person first. The word 'Uyir' (soul) in the original text, by implication, refers to the mind, the principal adjunct, stirring up one's thoughts either way.
- (ii) The last line refers to the blend of all that is delicious and it can either be an admixture of all these delicacies or the mixture of like things only, (i.e.) honey with honey, milk with milk, nectar with nectar and so on.

ottār mikkārai ilaiyāya mā māya!  
ottāy ep poruṭkum, uyir āy, eṅṅaip perṅa  
at tāy āy, tantai āy, aṅiyātana aṅivittu,  
attā! ni ceytana aṅiyēṅ aṅiyēṅē.

(II-3-2)

### Translation

There's none above you, Oh, Lord of wondrous traits!  
And none equal to you, and yet forms you'd take  
Like all others; you are the life-giver  
To one and all, the Mother that yielded me, the Father  
And Preceptor, 'tis beyond me to list out all your favours.

### Notes

- (i) While patting on the back of his forward mind, in the preceding song, the Āḷvār realised that even such an evolved mind was but the Lord's gift and, therefore, he passed on to sing the glory of God.
- (ii) When this song was discoursed upon, by that great preceptor, Empār, the question was raised by some one in the learned assembly as to who is the first spiritual



preceptor for every Individual. Some said, "The Guru who imparts the requisite spiritual knowledge", while some others observed "It is the Śrī Vaiṣṇava who puts us on to the spiritual preceptor for acceptance". Empār, however, clarified: "Indeed, the Lord, seated in the region of our heart, is the first Preceptor, hidden and unseen though, for it is He who, from His vantage position inside us, granted us the impulse not to resist but to yield to the good offices of the visible preceptors outside and of the helpers who put us on to such preceptors.

aṟiyāk kālattuḷḷē aṟimaikkaṇ aṇṇu ceyvittu,  
 aṟiyā mā māyattu aṟiyēṇai vaittāyāl;  
 aṟiyāmaik kuṟaḷ āy, nilam māvali mūvaṟi eṇṇu  
 aṟiyāmai vañcittāy, eṇṇatu āviyuḷ kalantē. (II-3-3)

### Translation

Wonderful 'tis, you got into my mind,  
 And in me, in (the clutches of) this mystic land,  
 Still immature, did instil the desire to serve you around,  
 Even as you did on the sly, obtain the land  
 Of three strides from Māvali (Mahābali), as Vāmaṇa, the little  
 lad.

### Note

The present versification conforms to the interpretation given by Śrī Rāmānuja, duly changing the prose order of the text, as in the original, quite in keeping with the current milieu. Śrī Rāmānuja was taught the meaning of this song by his spiritual Instructor (Tirumālai Āṇṇāṇ), as follows, without any change in the prose order of the poem (as in the original text).

"You instilled in me the desire to serve you at a time when I was hardly evolved and yet, you have kept me wallowing in worldly life, the hot-bed for ignorance, instead of promoting my God-love and providing the necessary incentives therefor".

Śrī Rāmānuja had, however, no hesitation in pointing out to the learned Instructor that, put that way, it would be a reproach against the Lord and would, therefore, be a misfit in this decad, where the Ājvār gives vent to the joy of Union with the Lord and sings His glory.

ṇpatu āviyuḷ kalanta peru nal utavik kaimmāgu  
 ṇpatu āvi tantoḷintēṅ; iṅi miḷvatu ṇpatu uṅṅē?  
 ṇpatu āvi āviyum nī, poḷil eḷum uṅṅa entāy!  
 ṇpatu āvi yār? yāṅ ār? tanta nī koṅṅākkīṅaiyē. (II-3-4)

### Translation

My Sire, Who did in your stomach sustain  
 The worlds seven, you dissolved into my soul;  
 For this great good, my soul I offer you, in return,  
 There isn't any going back; but what is my soul?  
 Who am I? what is yours indeed, you have taken,  
 You are the Giver great, the Soul of my soul.

### Notes

For all the good done to him by the Lord, the Ājvār wanted to recompense Him and so, he offered his soul to the Lord, adding, with extra gusto, that it was a firm offer from which he would not recant. A little introspection, however, made him realise that there is hardly anything which does not belong to God and there is, therefore, no question of surrendering the soul to the Lord to whom it rightly belongs. What is it that is being surrendered and whose was it before the surrender? To surrender to the Lord that which already belongs to Him would be tantamount to the assumption of an ill-conceived right of ownership of the thing surrendered, in derogation of the divine right of ownership.

These very sentiments were echoed by Saint Yāmuna in śloka 52 and 53 of 'Stotra Ratna' (hymnal gems). Well, the dilemma in which Saint Nammājvār and Saint Yāmunācārya were caught up, is bound to present itself to every one of us, as long as we live in this abode. Scared by the horrors of earthly existence, one is tempted to surrender one's soul to the Lord, as if it is one's own and could be



bartered away in this manner, and then the correction follows, based on the realisation of one's essential nature and the inter-relationship between Man and God. Surrendering oneself unto the keeping of the Lord, with the full awareness and awakening of one's essential nature (svarūpa), as the Lord's own, solely dependent on Him, stands, however, on a different footing.

iṇi yār nāṇaṅkaḷāl eṭukkal eḷāta entāy!  
kaṇivār viṭṭu-iṅṅamē! eṅ kaṭal-paṭā amutē!  
taṇiyēṅ vāl-mutalē! poḷil eḷum eṅgam oṅṅāy  
nuṅi ār kōṭṭil vaittāy! nuṅa pātam cērnṅēṅ. (II-3-5)

#### Translation

My Lord, mere learning, however profound, Can't comprehend  
Thee,  
Unto your lovers you are the fountain of heavenly bliss;  
You are my nectar, not that stuff from the Saltish sea,  
But the very source of life for this lover peerless;  
On your pointed tusk, you lifted the worlds seven,  
As the Boar unique and so have I your feet now attained.

#### Note

The Āḷvār rejoices that he has been reclaimed by the Lord from the Ocean of Samsāra, even as He reclaimed the Earth from under the Oceanic waters, after slaying Hiranyākṣa, the golden-eyed demon.

cērnṅār tīvaṅkaṭku aru naṅcai, tiṅ matiyai,  
tīrnṅār-tam maṅattup piriyātu avar uyiraic  
cōrnṅē pukalkoṭāc cūṅarai, arakkiyai mūḱku  
irntāyai, aṅiyēṅ aṅaintēṅ, mutal muṅṅamē. (II-3-6)

#### Translation

Unto your devotees, you vouchsafe a mind steady and bright,  
Never apart from the devout, you are their very life and beacon  
light,



A deadly poison for their sins, the devil's (Sūrpaṅkhā's) nose  
 you smote,  
 From the earliest time this vassal is at your feet.

### Notes

- (i) The Ājvār affirms that he always belonged to the Lord and rejoices, now that he is in the Lord's company, forgetting all the pangs of the earlier separation.
- (ii) It is said that one has to inevitably pass through the reactions of one's past actions. But this is true only in the case of those who are not devoted to the Supreme Lord, while, in respect of the devout, He operates as a deadly poison, destroying all their sins.
- (iii) Steadfastness of mind is indeed one of His great gifts. Here is a nice illustration.

When king Ambarṣa was doing *Tapas*, in devout contemplation of Lord Mahā Viṣṇu, the Lord appeared before him, disguised as Indra and insisted that the King should ask of him boons. As Indra was not the Deity the King was meditating upon, the latter resented the former's intrusion and requested him to get away, his exalted position notwithstanding

- (iv) When a lustrous gem is reclaimed from the slush into which it had got sunk for long, it shines again as before, as this sheen is nothing new and the lustre always belonged to it. Similar is the case with the Ājvār who always belonged to the Lord, but stands reclaimed only now.

muṅṅ naḷ yāḷ payil nūḷ naraṃpiṅṅ mutir cuvaiyē!  
 paḷ-naḷār payilum paraṅṅē! pavittiraṅṅē!  
 kaṅṅalē! amutē! kār mukilē! eṅṅ kaṅṅā!  
 niṅṅ alāl ilēṅkāṅ; eṅṅai nī kuṅṅikkoḷḷē.

(II-3-7)

### Translation

You are the delectable melody, chaste and matured,  
 From the ancient lyre, and by the eminent adored;

Oh, Lord! pure and Supreme, sweet like nectar and cane juice  
 My cloud-hued Kaṇṇā! I do seek refuge  
 In none but you, take note and make me yours.

### Notes

- (i) Notwithstanding the assertion, as in the last song, that he belonged to the Lord from time immemorial, the Ājvār apprehends the frightful possibility of getting separated from the Lord, over again, and he, therefore, entreats Him to note that he cannot brook separation from Him Who is sweetness itself. The sweetness of music which attracts the cow, the infant and the snake alike, is proverbial, and the Lord is the very source of this sweetness.
- (ii) That the Lord is pure needs no special mention but what is emphasised here is that He purifies worldlings like us and makes us fit to join the rank and file of the pure souls in the yonder Heavens.

kuṛikkoḷ ṅaṅaṅkaḷāl eṅai ūḷi cey tavamum  
 kiṛikkoṇṭu, ip piṅappē cila nāḷil eytiṅṅaṅ yāṅ-  
 uṛikkoṇṭa veṅṅey pāl oḷittu uṅṅum ammāṅ piṅ  
 neṅikkoṇṭa neṅcaṅāyp piṅavit tuyar kaṭintē. (II-3-8)

### Translation

Right in this birth and in a short space  
 Have I attained what others achieve down the ages  
 Through deep penance and Knowledge intense,  
 Freed from the miseries of birth, all by the grace  
 Of my Lord, who stole and ate from hanging hoops  
 Milk and butter, with my mind unto Him very close.

### Note

The Ājvār could attain the Lord right now, not by following the disciplines, rigid and rigorous, but solely by His Grace which alighted on him while contemplating the boyish pranks of the Lord, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, eating stealthily, the milk and butter, stored up in hanging hoops, in the pastoral village of Gokula.



kaṭi vār taṅ am tuḷayk kaṇṇaṅ, viṇṇavar perumāṅ,  
 paṭi vāṇam iṅanta paramaṅ, pavittiraṅ cīr,  
 ceṭi āṅ nōykaḷ keṭa, paṭintu kuṭaintu āṭi,  
 aṭiyēṅ vāymaṭuttup parukik kaḷittēṅ. (II-3-9)

### Translation

Sporting the Cool tuḷacī garland, full of fragrance,  
 Kaṇṇaṅ, Chief of Celestials, has no equal,  
 Even in heaven; unto Him, pure and supreme, this vassal  
 Could come close and get rid of sins, vast and dense,  
 Revelling and singing profusely His traits auspicious.

### Note

The Āṭvār rejoices that he could partake of the heavenly bliss even here, as the Lord is right with him in all His celestial grandeur, the dense sins which stood between him and the Lord having been eradicated, root and branch, by His grace. It is a case of the immaculate Lord purifying one and all falling within the purview of His sweet, spontaneous grace.

kaḷippum kavarvum arṅṅu, piṅṅappu piṅi mūppu iṅṅappu arṅṅu,  
 oḷikkōṅṅa cōṭiyumāy uṅṅaṅkūṭuvatu eṅṅu kolō-  
 tuḷikkaṅṅa vāṅ, in nilam-cuṅṅar-āḷi ceṅṅku ēnti-  
 aḷikkaṅṅa māyap piṅṅaṅ aṭiyārkaḷ kuḷāṅkaḷaiyē? (II-3-10)

### Translation

Oh, when shall I enter and enjoy the holy gatherings  
 Of devotees of the wondrous Lord, holding the conch and  
 discus radiant,  
 Protector of Heaven and Earth, the light that all knowledge  
 illumines,  
 Getting rid of pleasures worldly and the resultant sufferings,  
 Birth and death, old age and pestilence?

### Note

In the preceding song, the Āṭvār gave vent to his supreme joy, exclaiming that the very heavenly bliss had come to him, right here.



The Lord asked the Āḷvār whether there was anything more He could do for him. The Āḷvār replied:

“ My Lord, there is no doubt that I have found Heaven on Earth. But then, the fear whether the present enjoyment can go on for all time without interruption, haunts me situated as I am, in this material body, with all the ailments flesh is heir to, surrounded by the material world, swayed by the wayward senses. And, therefore, this body should go and the scene shifted to the uncontaminated High Heavens where I could enjoy the holy company of the ‘ Nityas ’ (ever-free angels) and the ‘ Muktas ’ (the released souls) ”.

kuḷām koḷ pēr arakkāṅ kuḷam vīya muṅintavaṅai  
kuḷām koḷ teṅ kurukūrc caḷakōpaṅ terintu uraitta  
kuḷām koḷ āyirattuḷ ivai pattum uṅaṅ pāṭi,  
kuḷāṅkaḷāy, aṭiyīr! uṅaṅkūṭiniṅru āṭumiṅē. (II-3-11)

#### Translation

Dance, ye devotees! in a body, singing diligently, these songs  
ten,  
Out of the cluster of thousand learned songs of Caḷakōpaṅ,  
Chief of the apostles of Ten Kurukūr, in adoration  
Of the irate Lord, who routed the demon (Rāvaṇa) and his  
battalions.

#### Note

In this end-stanza, there is a departure from the usual pattern of setting out the benefits of learning and singing the ten songs in each decad. The Āḷvār emphasises the importance of these ten songs being sung in a chorus by the devotees, as an end in itself. It may also be construed that those who learn these ten songs will have the felicity of singing them in the holy company of devotees, unlike the Āḷvār, who languished for want of such an association. It is worth repeating here the following exhortation of Nampiḷḷai, the great Preceptor:

“ Until you reach the Eternal Land, the few of you who are devoted to the Supreme Lord, should, during the few days

of your stay in this abode, sink all petty differences, based on lust and lucre, and sing, in one voice, the Lord's glory, for your common enjoyment and edification".

### Second Centum—Fourth Decad (II-4) (Āṭi āṭi)

In the penultimate song of the last decad the Ājvār expressed his desire to sing profusely the glory of the Lord in a chorus. Looking around, he, however, found the prospect of mustering persons from the rank and file of the worldlings for this purpose pretty bleak. He had, therefore, no option but to shift the venue of his enjoyment to the high Heavens and sing the Lord's praise in the company of the 'Nitya Sūrīs' there. This ardent longing of the Ājvār was, however, not realised there and then and once again the Ājvār was thrown into deep dejection assuming the overtones of a frustrated feminine lover in a state of despondency. The Ājvār had got into such a state on two earlier occasions, namely I-4 and II-1. On the first occasion he sent some birds as his emissaries to the Lord, while, on the second occasion, all things around seemed to suffer, like him, the pangs of separation from the Lord and he, therefore, wept along with those comrades-in-distress. But now his grief is so deep and poignant that all that is said in this decad is put in the mouth of the mother who questions the Lord how He could reduce her love-intoxicated daughter to such a parlous state and asks Him to clarify His intentions as to what exactly He proposes to do about the poor little victim.

No doubt, it is the Ājvār who sings, and yet, this assumes the form of a mother's dialogue with the Lord indicating an extremely critical state so far as the Ājvār is concerned. This is like the swollen river Kāvērī or Gangā branching off into rivulets, going by different names but carrying the same water as in Kāvērī or Gangā. The necessity for the mother's intervention here, in this decad, unlike the two earlier decads referred to above can be understood if we probe into the genesis of each of these three decads. It is a matter of common knowledge that the grief over the loss of a thing varies in direct proportion to the value one attaches to the



thing lost. For example, as between the loss of a silver piece and a gold piece, the latter causes a far more grievous feeling of privation. If the same person, later on, lost a necklace set with costly gems and rubies it would be the worst blow. And now let us analyse the cause of the Āḷvār's grief at the commencement of each of the two earlier decads. In I-3-10 the Āḷvār wanted to adore and embrace the Lord's pair of feet which spanned the entire Universe during His Avatār as Trivikrama. But he couldn't get at those feet and, in the grief that ensued, he sent the birds on an errand to the Lord as in I-4. Again, in I-10-9, the Āḷvār devoutly longed for communion with the Lord in His Iconic form in the pilgrim centre, Tirukkurunṅuṭi (deep south in Tamiḷ Nādu). Non-materialisation of this ardent desire brought on grief far more intense than on the earlier occasion in view of the relatively greater importance of the thing now lost, namely, communion with the Lord in His Iconic manifestation, a veritable ocean of innumerable excellences vis-a-vis His Incarnate form which is like the river, once in spate, now turned dry or turgid. And now what is the position? In II-3-10 the Āḷvār pined for entry into the gatherings of the devotees and singing profusely the glory of the Lord in their steadfast company. But this did not happen immediately, and naturally, the loss is the worst so far on the analogy of the successive loss of silver, Gold and gem-studded necklace. So great is the importance attached to the company of the Godly. This accounts for the induction of the mother into the scene.

It might be questioned why this decad complains at the door of the Lord instead of being couched as an appeal to the band of the devotees on the Yonder side, whose company the Āḷvār pines for but could not have. Well, the complaint was always lodged with the King, the aggrieved party rushing to the Palace gate even though the gems and rubies were looted by robbers in the jungle. As a matter of fact it is only the Lord who grants us all felicities including participation in the gatherings of the Godly and hence, the appeal at His door.

āṭi āṭi akam karaintu, icai  
 pāṭip pāṭik kaṇṇir malki, eṅkum  
 nāṭi nāṭi, naraciṅkā! eṅṅu  
 vāṭi vāṭum iv vāḷ-nutalē.

(II-4-1)



## Translation

This young dame of forehead bright,  
Keeps rattling, with a mind worn out;  
Looking out all over she sings and sings,  
Cries out, " Oh, Narasiṅkā!" and sinks.

## Notes

(i) The mother exclaims:

" Alas! my daughter feels let down by the Lord who, as Narasiṅha (Man-Lion), came to Prahlāda's aid. Restive and rattling, she looks out for Him everywhere, her heart melts down in contemplation of the Lord and she cries out for Him in melodious notes expressive of her melancholy".

(ii) The tears flowing down the cheeks of Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī in torrents remind us of Hanumān's query to Sītā, the Divine Mother in captivity, why tears were rolling down her cheeks.

(iii) Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī is looking out here, there and everywhere for the Lord who, she is sure, will never fail to succour His devotees. As Narasiṅkā He had studiously stationed Himself in every nook and corner, pillar and particle. While discoursing on this song, Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭar said:

" Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī is looking for the Lord even in the folds of her sari." Had He not once got on to the hip of the Ājvār in the course of His ascent to the Ājvār's head? (I-9-4).

(iv) Says the gnostic mother: " My daughter is indeed worried, over and over again, whether the Lord would help only Prahlāda and not her. She has not, however, given up hopes as yet and that is why life is still sticking to her". Face is the index of the mind and Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī's lingering hopes are reflected on her forehead.

vāḷ-nutal im maṭavaral, ummaik  
 kāṇum ācaiyuḷ naikingāḷ; viḷal  
 vāṇaṅ āyiram tōḷ tuṇittir! ummaik  
 kāṇa, nīr irakkam ilirē.

(II-4-2)

**Translation**

To behold you (of beauty exquisite),  
 Who, the thousand arms of mighty vāṇaṅ smote,  
 This young lady of forehead bright  
 Stands consumed by a burning desire,  
 But your grace on her you don't confer.

**Notes**

- (i) " Oh, Lord Kṛṣṇa, You secured Uṣā, the daughter of the mighty Bāṇāsura for Aniruddha, your grandson, after chopping off the Asura's thousand sinewy shoulders. And yet you would not relent in the case of my daughter and relieve her distress".
- (ii) Reference has again been made to the bright forehead of Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki only to betray the mother's surprise at the Lord's indifference even to one of such fascinating charm.
- (iii) *Mother to the Lord:*

" Oh, it is all topsy-turvy my daughter pining for you!  
 It should be the other way around. It is indeed the Owner who should be all agog to get at his property."

The Lord retorts saying, " Well, your daughter's desire to get at me may be all right but the impediments to the realisation of her desire are heavier still".

But then, the mother is not prepared to swallow this. She asks Him " For one who smote the thousand arms of the mighty Bāṇāsura, is it at all difficult to cut out these impediments?"

irakka maṇattōṭu eri aṇai  
 arakkum meḷukum okkum ivaḷ;  
 irakkam eḷir; itaṅku eṅ ceykēṅ-  
 arakkaṅ ilaṅkai ceṅṅirukkē?

(II-4-3)

**Translation**

You, who the demon's Laṅkā did rout,  
 Relent not for this dame of tender heart,  
 Who is like unto wax set on fire;  
 Oh, what can I do for her?

**Note****Mother to the Lord**

"What you did to reclaim Sitā from her captivity in Laṅkā, how you languished without food and sleep days on end, how you banded the roaring sea and routed Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā, lock, stock and barrel have been chronicled by sage Vālmīki in his immortal Rāmāyaṇa. And so it is well within the Knowledge of my hapless daughter. Therefore it is she feels tormented why she couldn't get a similar treatment at your hands. Oh, what a contrasting picture! my daughter of melting tenderness of heart, like the wax come in contact with fire, and you, absolutely hard-hearted and unrelenting. What can I do, in between? There is no remedy for this situation except the influx of your sweet grace. I daresay you who did so much for Sitā, will not lay yourself open to the charge of cruel partiality and terrible discrimination by not coming to my daughter's aid, at once."

ilaṅkai ceṅṅavaṇē! eṅṅum; piṅṅum,  
 valam koḷ puḷ uyarttāy! eṅṅum; uḷḷam  
 malaṅka vev uyirkkum; kaṅṅir mikak  
 kalaṅkik kaitoḷum niṅṅu ivaḷē.

(II-4-4)

**Translation**

Says unto you my daughter, oh, Lord,  
 "Laṅkā, (for Sitā's sake) you destroyed  
 And on your banner is the mighty bird (Garuḍa)";  
 With a mind agitated and breathing hot,



Tears well up her eyes and badly upset,  
And stunned she stands, with joined palms.

### Notes

#### Mother to the Lord

- (i) "I thought I had consoled my daughter saying that she should sustain herself meditating on your meritorious deeds as Śrī Rāma with the firm belief that you will, some day, succour her as you did Sītā. Even Sītā had to wait for quite some length of time before she was reclaimed from her captivity in Laṅkā. But suddenly my daughter has started crying as before. But then, She says that you were pining for Sītā all the time, but you just can't remember this poor girl. It is not as if you lack the means of locomotion if only you wished to come and meet my daughter. She is well aware that the mighty Garuḍa, moving at supersonic speed, is always at your disposal. And so she concludes it is sheer indifference on your part. On the other hand she is very much agitated and bursting with tears. Nevertheless, with joined palms she is worshipping You. I just don't know what to do".
- (ii) It is worth noting that, whatever be the mood and mode of speech of the Ājvār, be he calm or agitated, his basic stance as the Lord's sole servitor (Śeṣatva) remains quite *in tact*; in other words, his essential nature (svarūpa) does not undergo any modification. That is how reference is made to the Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki's worshipping posture even in such an extremely critical state of mental cogitation (see, in this connection, aphorism 119 of 'Ācārya Hṛdayam').

ivaḷ irāppakal vāyverit taṇa  
kuvaḷai oṇ kaṇṇa nīr koṇṭāḷ; vaṇṭu  
tīvaḷum taṇ am tuḷāy koṭīr-eṇa  
tavaḷa vaṇṇar takavukaḷē?

(II-4-5)

### Translation

Day and night this girl keeps babbling  
And in her flowery eyes tears are swelling;

You don't on her bestow your tulaci garland, cool and lovely,  
Swarmed by bees; What has happened, (I can't see)  
To you of disposition pure and your quality of mercy.

### Note

#### (i) Mother to the Lord

"Well, if you don't relent even in such a precarious condition of my daughter what indeed has happened to your quality of mercy? Has it dried up altogether?"

My daughter is talking about you all the time whereas it should be the other way round. We know from Hanumān's report to Sītā how you kept pining for her, spending sleepless days and nights, thinking and talking about her all the time. Oh, what a pity! the eyes of my daughter which should shed tears of joy are bursting with sorrow. After all, what does she want from you? Nothing more than the cool tulaci garland from your person in replacement of the withered ore on her feverish body, consumed by the pangs of separation from you. Actually, she envies the bees gaily swarming your garland studded with honey, and even wishes that she had been born as one of those fortunate bees".

(ii) Reference has been made by the mother to the Lord's purity of disposition and quality of mercy in this context rather sneeringly. Śrī Parāśara Bhṛṅgar would put it that the mother means to say, "Well, if there were a few persons like you the girls would indeed prosper very well!"

takavu utaiyavaṇē! eṅṅum; piṅṅum,  
mika virumṅum pirāṅ! eṅṅum; eṅṅatu  
aka-uyirkku aruṭē! eṅṅum-uḷḷam  
uka urukinṅgu uḷḷē.

(II-4-6)

### Translation

Says my daughter, with a mind thawing,  
Right from the inner core of her being,  
"Oh, Lord! you are indeed merciful,



You are my highly coveted Benefactor,  
And to my inner soul, the nectar ''.

### Notes

- (i) In the preceding stanza the mother complained about a heartless Lord, who had put her daughter in such a parlous predicament. But no sooner had the mother opened her mouth, with such a reproach on her tongue than the daughter (Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki) gagged it effectively, despite her pangs of separation from the Lord, by proclaiming that the Lord is an inexhaustible fountain of grace and a highly coveted Benefactor. To dub Him as devoid of mercy would be just as inconceivable as the ocean getting emptied of all its water.
- (ii) A close parallel to this can be found in Rāmāyaṇa, Sundara Kāṇḍa, 26-13 where, even while bemoaning her captivity in Laṅkā, Sitā extolled the great qualities of Śrī Rāma and lamented that one of such excellence had not so far come to her rescue merely because she lacked the requisite felicity, being totally devoid of grace because of the offence thrown by her, once at Rāma and a much greater offence at Lakṣmaṇa later on. This clearly shows that there can be absolutely no flaw or drawback in the Lord warranting His being given up on any account, even in trying moments of separation from Him. As a matter of fact, what is sought to be classified as a drawback in the Lord, if at all, is just the mental agony inflicted by Him on the devotees when He doesn't favour them with His nectarean presence. But even this has a purpose behind, forming, as it does, part of the Lord's technique of shock-treatment whereby the devotee's appetite for God is whetted.

uḷuḷ āvi ularntu ularntu, eṇa  
vallalē! kaṇṇaṇṇē! eṇṇum; piṇṇum,  
vella nirk kiṭantāy! eṇṇum-eṇa  
kaḷvi tāḡ patṭa vaṅcaṇaiyē!

(II-4-7)



**Translation**

Enticed by the Lord is my daughter  
 And her inner soul is fully dried  
 And yet from me she tries to hide  
 And cries out, "Oh, my liberal Lord,  
 Kaṇṇā, resting on oceanic waters".

**Notes**

- (i) With an aching heart the mother gives expression to her daughter's enticement by the Lord and her present critical condition. The soul which is inherently incapable of being burnt or dried up, is said to have been dried up in Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki's case. And yet, she tries to keep her mother off the track and lauds her beloved Lord.
- (ii) Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki says her Lord is a great Benefactor, a liberal donor and all that, just like a person in deep thirst calling repeatedly, 'water, water' or chewing up bits of refined camphor.
- (iii) In Viṣṇu dharma, one is advised to meditate on Lord Narasimha, while moving about in a frightfully dark night, to ward off evils; likewise, one, in dire distress or deep thirst, should think of the Lord reclining in the milky ocean.
- (iv) Śrī Rāma had exclaimed that he couldn't be away from Sītā, the dark-eyed, even for a trice.

The Lord's position vis-a-vis Parāṅkuṣa Nāyaki should also be just the same and yet, the mother witnesses things happening in the reverse order here and she, therefore, calls it a mere treachery.

vañcaṇē! eṅṅum; kaitoḷum; taṇa  
 neñcam vēva neṭitu uyirkkum-viṅal-  
 kañcaṇai vañcaṇai ceytir! ummait  
 tañcam eṅṅu ivaḷ paṭṭaṇavē!

(II-4-8)

**Translation**

Oh, Slayer of heady Kañcaṇ, here is my daughter  
 Who in you refuge sought and is now in great distress;

The heavy sigh she heaves, her heart blisters ;  
 And yet, with folded hands she does your treachery own,  
 How You made her your vassal, to her unknown.

### Notes

(i) When the mother complained in the previous song about the treacherous enticement of her daughter by the Lord, Par nku a N yaki could not bear this affront to her beloved Lord. Uttering the same word, 'treachery', as the mother did, the N yaki gives it a different complexion. The Lord's treachery lies in the great good He has done her by making her His vassal *unknown to her*.

(ii) The daughter's distress, referred to by the Mother, can be analysed as follows:

She does not go after food and raiment like the worldlings;  
 Nor does she enjoy the heavenly bliss like the celestials in  
 Heaven;

She cannot wait patiently till, one day, the final goal is  
 reached;

Nor does the Lord finish her off as He did the heady  
 Kamsa, upsetting all his nefarious plans.

How tantalising, and that too, for one whose sole refuge  
 is the Lord! This is the mother's complaint.

pa a-p tu e u-p tu a iy l; virai  
 ma tu alar ta -tul y e num-cu ar  
 va a v y nuti n miy r! numatu  
 i tam e kol, iv   aikk ?

(II-4-9)

### Translation

Neither Sun-rise nor Sun-set, my daughter knows  
 And yet her mouth utters "tulaci, cool and fragrant,  
 Studded with honey", Oh Sire, holding the discuss effulgent,

Sharp and round! what indeed do you propose  
To do with this girl who is so innocent?

### Notes

- (i) Unlike the worldlings who know day and night too well, earning by day and spending by night those earnings on worldly pleasures, Parāṅkuśa Nāyikī is altogether ignorant of Sun-rise and Sun-set. Does it mean that she is not sentient? She is no doubt sentient as her mouth constantly utters the words 'tulacī cool and fragrant, studded with honey'.
- (ii) When the Lord was indifferent to the above observations of the mother she asked Him;

"Sire, the effulgent discus in your hand is ever ready to go into action, helping your devotees and destroying the evil-doers. What precisely do you intend to do with my daughter? Will you get rid of her as you did Hiranya and his brood?

or

Will you elevate her to the rank of the celestials on the Yonder heaven and enjoy her bewitching beauty, enhanced still further by the conch and discus in her hands?

or

Will you put her back among the worldlings buried in earthly pleasures oblivious of their essential nature and their relationship with you?"

ējai pētai irāppakal taṅa  
kēl il oṅ kaṅṅa nīrkoṅṭāḷ; kiḷar  
vāḷvai vēva ilaṅkai ceṅṅiḷ ival  
mālai nōkku oṅṅum vāṭṭēṅminē.

(II-4-10)

### Translation

Leṅkā's spectacular wealth you routed, Oh, Sire,  
This poor girl's eyes of peerless beauty shed tears



Day and night; may you keep, at least,  
The youthful looks in her eyes in tact!

### Notes

#### Mother to the Lord

“The tears welling up my daughter’s eyes day and night resemble the water drops around the lotus leaf shining like pearls, a sight indeed for you which you cannot afford to miss. Actually it is you that had worked her up to such a pitch and would you not like to behold and enjoy the fruits of your labours?

Is it not a sight for Gods, the rapturous ravishment of the love-smitten Saint, when his whole being thrills with love and his eyes swim with pearls of tears?

If you think that there are heavy impediments in the way of your joining my daughter can’t you eradicate them even as you routed the demoniac Rāvaṇa’s Laṅkā? Well, if you are intent upon destroying my daughter also, please do not go the whole hog out as you did in the case of Rāvaṇa, but spare at least her bewitching looks which is about all that remains of her now.

If she passes away we will lose her. But mind you, you will lose your very source of sustenance. You are known to subsist on the sweet looks of your consorts. It is up to you now not to run into a personal loss of such a magnitude”.

vāṭṭam il pukaḷ vāmaṇaṇai icai  
kūṭṭi, vaṇ caṭakōpaṇ col amai  
pāṭṭu ōr āyirattu ip pattāl aṭi  
cūṭṭalākum am tāmamē.

(II-4-11)

### Translation

Those that recite these songs ten,  
Out of the thousand melodious songs of Caṭakōpaṇ,  
Graciously composed and grammatically clean,  
In adoration of Vāmaṇaṇ of undying renown,

Will have the fortune great,  
To offer lovely flowers at His feet.

### Notes

- (i) Those that recite these ten songs will be endowed with the bliss of rendering perennial service at the feet of the Lord in the company of the 'Nitya Sūris' in Heaven, the very bliss coveted by the Ājvār at the end of the last decad, without passing through any of the sufferings undergone by the Ājvār.
- (ii) In the first song of this decad reference was made to Parāṅkuṣa Nāyakī withering down. Actually her condition reflects the state of the Lord as well. And now that mention is made of Vāmaṅgaṅ of undying fame, it can be inferred that He rose to His full stature by responding to the mother's call to preserve her daughter's looks, the very source of His sustenance. And so He is back again face to face with the Saint.
- (iii) Mention has been made here of Vāmaṅgaṅ, in particular, as He was known to be very keen about the reclamation of His possessions even if it involved His having to seek alms. And now, will He lag behind even after the mother had begged of Him to take particular care of His very source of sustenance?

## Second Centum Fifth Decad (II-5) (Am Tāmattu Anpu)

### Preamble

The sufferings undergone by the Ājvār, as set out in the last decad, are comparable to the titanic struggle of Gajendra, the elephant, with the crocodile. Even as the Lord rushed, with an aching heart, to the pond post-haste on hearing the alarum raised by the elephant the Lord felt exceedingly remorseful that He did not rush to meet the Ājvār as soon as the latter became critical of His nonchalance, that is, His not rushing to his aid despite His having the mighty Garuḍa to carry Him anywhere at supersonic

speed. See II-4-4. By way of making amends for this remissness, the Lord has now come to the Āḷvār, in all His splendour and paraphernalia and is at the height of His joy in the blessed company of the Saint. Beholding the joyous Lord, the Saint feels immensely delighted and relates, in this decad, his ecstatic experience.

am tāmattu aṅṅu ceytu eṅ āvi cēr ammāṅṅukku  
 am tāmam vāḷ muṭi caṅku āḷi nūḷ āram uḷa ;  
 centāmaraittaṭam kaṅ; ceṅkaṅi vāy ceṅkamalam ;  
 centāmarai aṭikaḷ; cemponṅ tiru-uṭampē. (II-5-1)

### Translation

The Lord stands in my soul stationed,  
 Looking upon it as the lovely Heaven, wears He a pretty  
 garland,  
 The dazzling crown, conch and discus, sacred thread  
 And chain; His eyes are like red lotus ponds,  
 His lips and feet also like lotus red, aglow is His person like  
 red gold.

### Notes

- (i) It is the Lord's will that the Āḷvār should be kept in this abode a little longer for the benefit of humanity at large. The Āḷvār, however, aspired to enter the gatherings of the celestials in the yonder Heaven and sing the Lord's glory profusely and for ever in their holy company. See II-3-10. As a compromise, the Lord meets the aspiration of the Āḷvār by conferring on him the heavenly bliss longed for by him right here. The Āḷvār rejoices that the Lord exhibits unto him all that love which He bears for the celestials and describes the Lord's glowing features.
- (ii) Tirumālai Āṅṅāṅ, referred to earlier, told Śrī Rāmānuja, while studying this song, that he had heard it said by his preceptor, yāmurā-ārya, that the Āḷvār rejoices in this song as the Lord has joined him along with the entire band of 'Nityā Sūris' as aspired for by him. But Śrī Rāmānuja opined that this song relates how the Lord's person, His jewels, weapons etc, all of which



lacked lustre and were as good as non-existent before He mingled with the Ājvār, now shine with extra brilliance which fascinated the Ājvār so much.

- (ii) Yet another version is: In that section of the Vedās, known as the 'Antarāditya Vidya,' the Lord is said to shine inside the Sun, assuming a body glittering like gold, lotus-eyed, bejewelled and so on; the Lord has now entered the Ājvār's person with all that splendour.

tiru-uṭampu vāṅ cuṭar; centāmarai kaṅ; kai kamalam;  
 tiru iṭamē māvam; ayaṅ iṭame koppūl;  
 oruvu iṭamum entai perumārku arañḇē; ḍ!  
 oruvu iṭam onṅri, enṅuḷ kalantāṅukkē. (II-5-2)

### Translation

Oh, what a wonder! the Lord who holds on His chest  
 Tiru (Lakṣmī), whose navel is Brahmā's seat while the rest  
 Is by Arañ held, has with me mingled, leaving vacant  
 No space in my body; beams my Sire's body with rare brilliance  
 And aglow like the lotus red are His eyes and hands.

### Notes

- (i) Lakṣmī, the Divine Mother, stands ensconced on the Lord's chest; Brahmā, the demi-urge, appointed by the Lord to create all the fourteen worlds, would not budge from His navel and the rest of the Lord's body is occupied by Arañ (Rudra). One so great has now come and taken possession of the entire body of the Ājvār. Thrilled by his contact with the Lord's exquisite person, the Ājvār describes His lustrous body. When He casts loving glances at the Ājvār, the latter sees His lotus eyes proclaiming His overlordship (Sovereignty and Supremacy). Apprehending the frightful possibility of the Ājvār once again resiling, overwhelmed by the Lord's Sovereignty, the Lord catches hold of the Ājvār by the hand. At once, the Ājvār describes the lotus hand that gripped him.

- (ii) While discoursing on this song, the great Preceptor, Nañciyar feelingly remarked:
- (iii) "The Āḷvār, who is our greatest well-wisher, speaks of the Lord's body beaming with brilliance. Indeed, there is hardly a sin as heinous as denying the Lord, His form and attributes, even as there is no favour done by the Lord to us, so great as this one of our being kept outside the pale of such a heresy".
- (iv) It is noteworthy that it is not a mere fantastic visionary but Saint Śaṭakōpa, endowed by an Omniscient Lord with knowledge, full and complete, shorn of doubts, despair, discrepancies and deviations, (See I-1-1) that goes into raptures over the Lord's exquisite Form. Compare also, Lord Rāma offering His body, in embrace, to Hanumān, the glorious emissary, on the latter's return from his pioneering visit to Laṅkā, deemed by the Lord as the choicest gift, He could māke, befitting the particular context. Surely, it was not an illusory or fictitious body that the Lord palmed off as the choicest gift but one most coveted by Himself and specifically assumed by Him for the purpose of His avatāra.

eṅṅuḷ kalantavaṅ ceṅkaṅi vāy ceṅkamalam;  
 miṅṅum cuṭar-malaikkuk kaṅ, pātam, kai kamalam;  
 maṅṅum muḷu ēḷ ulakum vayiṅṅiṅ uḷa;  
 taṅṅuḷ kalavātatu ep poruḷum tāṅ ilaiyē. (II-5-3)

### Translation

The One, in me mingled, sparkles like a dazzling mount,  
 Like unto the lotus red are His mouth, eyes, feet and hands,  
 His stomach does all the worlds seven sustain,  
 There's scarcely a thing that doesn't in Him converge.

### Notes

- (i) Not only Lakṣmī, Brahmā and Rudra, but whatever exists subsists in Him alone. Even so, it is now made to appear that the Lord cannot subsist except by

mingling with the Ājvār, who has, in this context, given Him yet another name (like Nārāyaṇa Vāsudēva) namely, 'The one in me mingled'.

- (ii) The Lord is in full bloom and joy only after He mingled with the Ājvār and has acquired stability like a mountain. The Lord's resplendent person, eyes, mouth, hands and feet, all resembling red lotus, are indeed far more attractive now, than ever before, having acquired new dimensions. Little wonder then, the Ājvār is never tired of describing the Lord's exquisite form and His charming features, as reoriented.

ep poruḷum tāṅ āy, maratakak kuṅṅam okkum;  
 appoḷutait tāmaraippūk kaṅ pātam; kai kamalam;  
 eppoḷutum nāḷ tīnkaḷ āṅṅu ūḷi ūḷitoḅum  
 appoḷutaikku appoḷutu eṅ ārā amutamē. (II-5-4)

#### Translation

The Lord, who in Him all things contains,  
 Like unto an emerald mount shines;  
 With eyes, feet and hands, like red lotus in fresh bloom,  
 A non-satiate nectar unto me He is, at all times,  
 Thro' days, months, years and aeons.

#### Note

In his preamble to this song, the illustrious Nampillai says: Seeing the Ājvār comparing repeatedly the Lord's eyes, lips, hands and feet to red lotus, some persons asked him why he went on repeating the same thing. The Ājvār rejoined, "Well, I cannot help saying so, for every moment, down the days, months, years and a whole epoch, there is a freshness about Him, like the lotus in fresh bloom and hence there is no room for satiety nor is there any question of an insipid repetition of something, stale and static.

ārā amutamāy alāviyuḷ kalanta  
 kār ār karumukil pōḷ eṅ ammāṅ kaṅṅaṅukku  
 nērā vāy cempavaḷam, kaṅ pātam kai kamalam;  
 pērāram nīḷ muṭi nāṅ piṅṅum iḷai palavē. (II-5-5)



**Translation**

The non-satiate nectar, the cloud-hued Lord,  
 Has into my worthless soul entered;  
 Can the fruits red compare with the lips of *Kṛṣṇaṅ*, my Sire;  
 Or the lotus flower match His eyes, hands and feet, ever?  
 Many indeed are His jewels, the crown, tall and majestic,  
 The necklace huge, waist band and all that.

**Note**

The Āḷvār who was hitherto comparing the Lord's lips to red fruits and His eyes, hands and feet to the red lotus flower, has now a closer look at the Lord inside him and finds that the Lord is of matchless beauty and incomparable excellence and that the things hitherto compared with Him, stand nowhere. Then the Āḷvār beholds the vast array of jewels on the Lord's person and starts enumerating them, only to give it up as impossible. The Lord's crown, tall and majestic, proclaims His sovereignty over the entire Universe, comprising the two Vibhū is 'Nitya Vibhūti' (Eternal Land) and the 'Līla Vibhūti' (Sportive Universe).

palapalavē āparaṅgam; pērum palapalavē;  
 palapalavē cōtī vaṭivu; paṅpu eṅṅil,  
 palapala kaṅṅu, uṅṅu, kēṅṅu, uṅṅu, mōntu iṅṅam;  
 palapalavē nāṅgamum: pāmpu-aṅai mēlārṅkēyō! (II-5-6)

**Translation**

The Lord who on serpent bed reclines,  
 (Has acquired inside me dimensions new);  
 Were I to pause and examine His union  
 With me, an endless variety unto me He unravels,  
 Of jewels, Forms exquisite and how in me He revels  
 Thro' the sensual channels many with appropriate Know-how.

**Notes**

- (i) The Āḷvār feels that the Lord, in union with him, is not satisfied with His assumption of a single form, a single set of jewels, a single method of enjoyment of the Āḷvār through the senses of seeing, smelling etc,

or single type of knowledge but wants to enjoy the Ājvār in myriad ways, employing different techniques, assuming different forms, displaying different sets of jewels, so on and so forth.

- (ii) As Nampīṭṭai puts it, the Lord wants to enjoy the Ājvār, assuming many forms, as Sage Śaubbhari did, with regard to his umpteen wives. The Lord exhibits the same ardour in His enjoyment of the Ājvār as the emancipated soul does, on reaching Heaven, for enjoying the Lord.

pāmpu-aṇaimēl pākkaṭaluḷ paḷḷi amarntatuvum,  
kāmpu aṇai tōḷ-piṅṅai-ikkūāy ēru uṭaṅ ēḷ ceṅṅatuvum,  
tēm paṇaiya cōlai marāmaram ēḷ eytatuvum,  
pūm piṇaiya taṅ-tuḷāyp poṅ muṭi am pōr ēṅē. (II-5-7)

### Translation

Trim and lovely, like the martial bull, my Lord,  
Sporting the gold crown and the tulaḷai garland,  
Cool and well-knit, on the serpent-bed reclined  
In the milk-ocean, tamed all at once the bulls seven  
For the sake of Piṅṅai of shoulders fine and pierced the trees  
seven.

### Notes

- (i) In terms of the new technique adopted by the Lord, as set out in the previous song, the Lord exhibited a few of the wondrous deeds performed by Him long back and the Ājvār records them here, as envisioned by him.
- (ii) According to one tradition, Nappiṅṅai, the charming shepherdess, believed to be an incarnation of Goddess Nilā Devi, was a niece of Yāśodhā. Her father had set up a precondition for any one seeking her hand, namely, the taming of seven unruly bulls, all at once. Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed seven different forms, tackled these bulls effectively and tamed them to win the charming bride. A Demon named Kākrēmi had been slain by the Lord in a previous Yuga. The seven sons of the

demon swore vendetta against the Lord and were reborn as seven bulls, determined to kill Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

poṅ muṭi am pōr ēṅṅai, emmāṅai, nāl-taṭam tōl  
 taṅ muṭivu oṅṅu illāta taṅ-tuḷāy mālaiyaṅai,  
 eṅ muṭivu kāṅātē eṅṅu kalantāṅai,  
 colmuṭivu kāṅēṅ nāṅ; colluvatu eṅ? collirē. (II-5-8)

### Translation

Majestic like the warring bull is my Lord,  
 Sporting the gold cown, of sinewy shoulders four,  
 Of limitless glory, wearing the cool tulacī garland;  
 Mingled He with me, not minding my status poor,  
 Falter do I as I attempt to sing His glory interminable,  
 Better tell me how to laud (my Lord), ye worldlings voluble!

### Notes

- (i) The Āḷvār says that it is beyond his capacity to describe the condescending love of One, so great, mingling with him, so low.
- (ii) The Lord's crown and tulacī garland proclaim His sovereignty. If His glory is limitless, there is also no limit to the Āḷvār's abjectness and yet He has chosen to mingle with the Āḷvār. By His deeds and traits, the Lord enthralled the Āḷvār who, however, finds that words are not adequate to describe his experience. On the other hand, the worldlings revel in their own spheres and wax eloquent. The Āḷvār turns round and asks them how they could freely indulge in all that rhetoric, when he himself suffered from tardiness of expression, overawed.

collir eṅ ammāṅai; eṅ āvi āvitaṅai;  
 ellai il cir eṅ karumāṅikkac cuṭarai:  
 nalla amutam, peṅṅku ariya viṭum āy,  
 alli malar virai ottu, āṅ allāṅ; peṅ alaṅē. (II-5-9)

### Translation

Better sing the praise of my Sire,  
 The Soul of my soul, the lustrous sapphire,



Of auspicious qualities endless, the delectable nectar,  
The Ordainer great of ' Mokṣā ', difficult to attain,  
Sweet like the fragrance of the lotus flower,  
Neither the male nor the female we know of.

### Notes

- (i) Although the Āḷvār found himself speechless, yet he could not resist the urge to sing the Lord's praise, in the company of the worldlings. And, therefore, he exhorts them to desist from the worldly affairs, at least for a while, and sing the Lord's glory along with him.
- (ii) Being a ' Puruṣa ' (Male), the Lord is certainly not a female and being a ' Puruṣottama ' (gem of a male), He is very different from the other males, we know of. That is why it has been said here that He is neither the male nor the female *of the known variety*.

āṇ allāṅ; peṇ allāṅ; allā aliyum allāṅ;  
kāṇaḷum ākāṇ; uḷāṅ allāṅ; illai allāṅ;  
pēṇuṅkāḷ, pēṇum uru ākum; allāṅum ām:  
kōṇai peritu uṭaittu em pemmāṅaik kūṅṭalē. (II-5-10)

### Translation

'Tis indeed very difficult to sing precisely, my Lord's glory  
Neither male nor female is He nor the eunuch neutral,  
He exists not, nor does He not exist;  
Him the naked eye can't see and yet He assumes  
The form the devout desire while unto others He is just  
inaccessible.

### Note

In Ṛig Veda, ' Āraṇyaka ', the Lord is said to be quite apart, that is, different from the rest. Therefore it is, the Āḷvār says that He is neither male nor female, nor the 'in-between'. A Tamil Pundit, who was listening to Śrī Parāśara Bhṛṅṅar's discourse on this song, observed that it smacked of the doctrine of nothingness (Śūnya), as the Lord could not be brought under any of the three known categories of beings. But the learned discourser pointed out that, in this song, the

Lord has not been referred to, in the neuter gender but described only in the masculine gender, as a male, who is, however, very different from other males and hence not the male, we know of.

kūḡutal oṅḡu āṛāk kuṭak kūtta ammāṅaik  
 kūḡutalē mēvik kurukūrc caṭakōpaṅ  
 kūḡiṅa antāti ḍr āyirattuḷ ip pattum  
 kūḡutal vallār uḷarēl, kūḡuvar vaikuntamē. (II-5-11)

### Translation

Those that can recite these stanzas ten,  
 Out of the thousand sung by Kurukūr Caṭakōpaṅ,  
 Keen to recount the traits, beyond description,  
 Of (Lord Kṛṣṇa), the great pot-dancer, will the high heaven  
 attain.

### Notes

- (i) Those, conversant with this decad, will attain Heaven without undergoing any of the sufferings, passed through by the Āḷvār as set out in the last decad. It is like the sons enjoying, with ease, the property acquired by the father, by dint of hard labour and sufferings.
- (ii) It is not the Lord's transcendental glory that baffles description but His easy accessibility and wondrous deeds like pot-dancing etc., during His Avatār as Lord Kṛṣṇa. If, however, the Āḷvār could manage to talk about the Lord's 'Saulabhya' or simplicity galore, it is indeed the victory of his faith, his deep love for God, infused in him by the Lord Himself.

## Second Centum—Sixth Decad (II-6) (Vaikuntā Manivaṅṅanē)

### Preamble

As set out, in the last decad, the Āḷvār is experiencing the Supreme bliss of Union with the Lord, like Heaven transplanted right here. And what about the Lord? In the supreme joy of



His union with the Ājvār, the Lord is exploring new avenues of regaling him as well as those associated with him. What a fine reciprocity?

In II-3, the Ājvār pined for the company of the Lord's devotees and now the Lord's love for the Ājvār extends to his devotees as well. But at the same time, He also apprehends the possibility of the Ājvār slipping back to his old ways and shrinking away from Him, overwhelmed by His transcendent glory. The Ājvār feels the Lord's pulse all right and hastens to assure Him that he would not give up his Lord on any account and that his present grip on Him is very tight indeed.

Śrī Nampillai likens the Lord's apprehension, referred to above, to Śrī Rāma's apprehension whether the extremely happy days, he and Śīta had in Citrakūṭ in each other's delightful company, would at all go on for all time, being too good to last long.

vaikuntā! maṇivaṇṇaṇē! eṇ pollāt tirukkuṇalā! eṇṇuḷ maṇṇi,  
 vaikum vaikal tōṅum amutu āya vāṅ ēṅē!  
 cey kuntā arum timai uṇ aṭiyarkkut tirttu, acurarkkut timaikal  
 cey kuntā! uṅṅai nāṅ piṭittēṅ; koḷ cikkeṇavē. (II-6-1)

### Translation

Of sapphire hue, oh, Vaikunta! (Lord of Heaven)  
 My lovely midget (Vāmana)! in my heart, steadfast you remain,  
 Oh, Chief of celestials! unto me You are nectarean,  
 Every fleeting moment; You redeem Your devotees' dire sins  
 And to the Acuras You just pass them on.  
 Kuntā (Immaculate Lord)! firm unto You I hold on, please note.

### Notes

- (i) In the last decad, even while enjoying the bliss of the Lord's union with him, the Ājvār referred to himself as worthless (II-5-5) and as being lowly without limit, even as there is no limit to the Lord's greatness (II-5-8). Naturally, expressions such as these roused the suspicion of the Lord that the Ājvār, whose company He covets so much, might once again be caught up in a vein of abject humility and want to run away from Him. But



the Ālvār assures an agitated Lord that He could trust him, when he says that he won't think of leaving Him at all. Here is a picture, in the reverse order, if one recalls a similar assurance held out by Lord Kṛṣṇa to an agitated Arjuna. (Gītā XVIII-66).

- (ii) Reference to Vāmana, in the second line of this stanza, is given a beautiful turn by Nampiḷḷai. Vāmana Mūrti's charming personality and wonderful comportment, baffling description, were lost on all else except the Ālvār, who was enthralled by these qualities of the Lord and could get Him lodged in his heart. This was indeed a great loss to Indra, who was mindful of his only gain merely, the return of his lost kingdom and to Mahābali, whose only concern was to maintain his reputation as a great donor. There was absolutely no question of the others then on the scene, the ungodly Śukrācārya, who was made to lose his eye, and Namuṣi, who was hurled, high up in the sky, having been attracted by Vāmana's entralling charm. The sole beneficiary is, therefore, Nammālvār, in whom such a charming Lord now stands enshrined.
- (iii) The grip of the Ālvār on the Lord is said to be so tight that even the Lord cannot shake him off, if He wished to do so.

cikkeṇac cīṅitu ōr iṭamum puṅappaṭāt taṅṅuḷḷē ulakukaḷ  
okkavē viḷuṅkip pukuntāṅ; pukuntatarpiṅ, [ēṅkum  
mikka ṅāṅa vellac cuṅar-viḷakkuāy, tuḷakku arṅu, amutamāy,  
pakkam nōkku aṅiyāṅ, eṅ paināmaraik kaṅṅaṅē (II-6-2)

### Translation

With all the worlds in His stomach, neatly compressed  
(And all His regal duties, duly disposed)  
The resolute Lord has got inside me and thus transposed,  
His radiant Knowledge, in spate, shines forth like the lamp  
bright;  
Feeling firm and secure, with the assurance from me got,

My nectar, the lotus-eyed Lord, sees not  
This side or that (and is in me so rapt).

### Notes

- (i) In the original text of this stanza, mention has been made of the Lord having gulped down all the worlds and kept them secure in His stomach, before entering the Ājvār's body. What the poet intends to say is that the Lord attended not only to this particular duty but all His other regal duties, as well, so that, once He enters the Ājvār's body, His rapport with the Ājvār may go on undisturbed, unlike the worshipper, ostensibly in front of the Deity in the Sanctum Sanctorum, but anxious, all the time, about the safety of the pair of new Sandals, left by him at the temple gate.
- (ii) The Knowledge of the Omniscient Lord is said to have acquired new dimensions after His entering the Ājvār's body and thus shines with extra brilliance. And then, so completely rapt and engrossed with the Ājvār is the Lord that He wouldn't turn His attention elsewhere, not even when Lakṣmī, the Lord's favourite spouse, puts her fair arms round His neck and draws Him extremely close to her breast. The following anecdote is very apt and can easily drive home the point.
- (iii) On being informed by his preceptor, Maṇakkāl Nampi (Śrī Rāma Miśra), that one Kurukaikkāval Appaṇ had a Yogic secret to communicate, Āḷavantār (Yāmuna) journeyed all the way to Kaṅkaikonṭa-Cōḷapuram, to meet the said Yogi. As Appaṇ was seated, deeply engrossed in Yoga, facing a wall, Āḷavantār dared not disturb the Yogi and kept himself behind, at some distance. Lo! Appaṇ suddenly turned round and enquired whether some one belonging to the 'Coṭṭai' clan was standing behind. While humbly introducing himself as one of the said pedigree, Āḷavantār begged the Yogi to disclose how the presence of one staying well behind was at all



perceived. Appaṅ revealed that, while holding a rapport with him, the Lord would not allow Himself to be disturbed by any one including His alluring and most-beloved spouse, Lakṣmī, and yet, pressing his neck, the Lord turned round, thrice or four times, in the hind direction. The Yogi was well aware that such an extra-ordinary preference was shown by the Lord only to members of the 'Cēṭṭai' family and hence his enquiry, as above. Ājavantār was the grandson of Śrīmaṅ Nāthamuṅi of 'Cēṭṭai' pedigree (the family name). This shows that next to Nammālvār, affection of such great magnitude was lavished by the Lord, only on Śrīmaṅ Nāthamuṅi and his descendants.

tāmaraiḱ kaṅṅaṅai, viṅṅōr paravum talaimakaṅai, tuḷāy viraip  
 pū maruvu kaṅṅi em pirāṅai, poṅmalaiyai [alar  
 nām maruvi naṅku ētti uḷḷi vaṅaṅki nām makiḷntu āṭa, nāvu  
 pā maruvi niṅkat tanta pāṅmaiṅē! vaḷḷalē! (II-6-3)

### Translation

Adored by the Celestials, the lotus-eyed Lord,  
 My benefactor great wearing the tulaci garland,  
 Knit with fragrant flowers, a veritable mountain of gold,  
 Him even we could well extol, singing thro' songs,  
 by us composed,  
 And dancing in ecstasy, meditate and worship, how generous  
 of Him indeed!

### Notes

- (i) Entranced by the sweet glances from His lotus eyes, the celestials keep singing His glory, all the time. It was indeed very generous of the Lord, as the Ālvār would put it, that He could likewise enable even him, so low, to meditate on Him and compose songs in His praise and sing besides revealing to him, out of His own free will and grace, His exquisite beauty, bedecked with tulaci garland, ever cool, ever lovely and ever fragrant.



- (ii) Reference to the Lord, as a mountain of gold, shows that He is firmly established inside the Ājvār, firm as a rock.

vajjalē! matucūtaṅā! eṅ marakata malaiyē! uṅai niṅaintu,  
eḷkal tanta entāy! uṅṅai eṅṅaṅam viṭukēṅ— [ukantu,  
veḷlamē purai niṅ pukaḷ kuṭaintu āṭip pāṭik kaḷittu, ukantu  
uḷla nōykaḷ ellām turantu, uyntu pōntiruntē? (II-6-4)

### Translation

My generous Lord! Matucūtaṅā! my delectable emerald Mount!

My Sire! unto me You granted a mind, in you engrossed,  
Immersed in Your oceanic traits singing in merriment  
Your glory great and dancing; from all ills and evils released,  
You I have attained, how shall I give you up indeed?

### Note

In the preceding song, the Ājvār was again harping on his lownliness while acknowledging the many favours done to him by the Lord. Naturally, such expressions of the Ājvār's abject humility make the Lord ill at ease but the Ājvār hastens to assure Him that, as the recipient of His spontaneous grace in the form of multifarious favours, he shall not give up the Lord, on any account. These favours include, of course, the removal of many an impediment in the way of their union, not the least of which is the Ājvār's inferiority complex, even as the Lord slew the demon, Madhu. All the erstwhile miseries and shortcomings of the Ājvār stand drowned in the rapturous enjoyment, currently going on, singing and dancing in great merriment. There is, therefore, no question of his giving up such a generous Lord.

uyntu pōntu, eṅ ulappu ilāta vem tiṅṅaiḷai nācam ceytu,  
antam il aṭimai aṭaintēṅ; viṭuvēṅō— [uṅatu  
aintu paintalai āṭu aravu-aṅai mēvip pārkaṭal yōka nittirai  
cintai ceyta entāy! uṅṅaic cintai ceytu ceytē? (II-6-5)

## Translation

My Sire! in thoughts of universal welfare absorbed,  
 You rest in the milky ocean, on Your five-hooded serpent-bed;  
 Meditating on You, ever and anon, I stand delivered  
 From my endless sins deadly and now in your perennial service  
 ushered  
 Will I from you ever try to get severed?

## Notes

- (i) Totally absorbed, that he is, in the daily service of the Lord, the Āḷvār avers that there is no question of his giving Him up.
- (ii) Ādiśeṣa (First servant) on whom the Lord rests in 'Yoga Nidrā', the highest form of psychic activity or self-activation, is steeped in the enjoyment of perennial service unto the Lord, in many ways. Through each of his five heads, he gives vent to his joy, like the river in spate branching off into canals. Even as those under the influence of liquor dance about, Ādi-śeṣa, intoxicated with God-love, gives expression to it by making his heads (hoods) dance with joy.

uṅṅaic cintai ceytu ceytu, uṅ neṭu mā moḷi icai pāṭi, āṭi, eṅ  
 munnait tivaṅkaḷ muḷu vē arintaṅṅaṅ yāṅ;  
 uṅṅaic cintaiyiṅāl ikaḷnta iraṅiyaṅ akal mārvaṅ kiṅṭa eṅ  
 munnaiḱ kōḷariyē! muṭiyātatu eṅ eṅakkē? (II-6-6)

## Translation

Mighty Narasiṅka! my primordial Lord!  
 You split the broad chest of Iraṅiyaṅ, the demon,  
 Who inwardly despised you but here am I, fully delivered  
 From my age-long sins meditating on you, ever and anon,  
 Dancing and singing sweetly your glory great  
 Is there at all anything, this vassal of Yours cannot get?

## Notes

- (i) Lord: Oh, Āḷvār! is there any thing more I can do for you?



Ājvār: Sire! what is there I haven't got from you? My age-long sins have been rooted out, with a mind solely rivetted in you, I go on singing your great glory and dance in ecstasy. What more do I need?

The Lord is more keen to reward people than to punish them. Even if one's praise of Him is only lip-deep, the Lord generously takes it at its face value, without probing deeper and exposing the hollowness. His omniscience and omnipotence notwithstanding. On the other hand, when one throws affront at Him, He does not straightaway punish without probing whether the offence was really meant or only casual. That is why Lord Narasiṅka explored Hiranya kaśipu, limb by limb, joint by joint, whether there was in him any love lurking for Him anywhere inside the demon. Unfortunately, there was none and the demon had to be vanquished.

muṭiyātatu eṅ eṅakkēl iṅi? muḷu ēl ulakum uṇṭāṅ ukantu vantu  
aṭiyēṅ uṭpukuntāṅ; akalvāṅum allāṅ iṅi;  
ceṭi ār nōykaḷ ellām turantu, emar kiḷ mēl eḷu piṅappum  
viṭiyā vem narakattu eṅḡum cērtal māṅṅarē. (II-6-7)

### Translation

What is there, this vassal cannot henceforth attain?  
The Lord, who gulped down all the worlds seven,  
Entered my mind with great relish, never again  
To part from me; those unto me connected for generations,  
Seven above and seven below, will from their sins dense  
Be freed, and never again shall they enter the cruel abyss,  
bottomless.

### Notes

- (i) The bottomless (endless) abyss or eternal hell, referred to here, is the 'Samsāra', the sty of worldly life, in which the worldlings are wallowing, caught up in its interminable labyrinth.
- (ii) In the preceding song, the Ājvār declared that there was nothing he could not attain. When asked by some persons whether he had got everything, the Ājvār



affirmed that the Lord's benevolent grace did not stop with him alone but extended to all those connected with him, the preceding and succeeding generations alike—that being the case, what more would he need?

māḡi māḡip paḷa piḡappum piḡantu, aṡiyai aṡaintu, uḷḷam tēḡi,  
 iḡu il iḡpattu iru vellam yāḡ mūḷkiḡaḡ;  
 pāḡip pāḡi acurar-tam pal kuḷaḡkaḷ nḡru eḷa, pāy paḡavai oḡru  
 ēḡi viḡḡiruntāy! uḡḡai eḡḡuḷ nākkēḷ entāy! (II-6-8)

### Translation

Passed I thro' several gates of birth,  
 From time to time and now at your lovely feet,  
 With a mind, pure and chaste,  
 Immersed am I in the bottomless ocean of mirth.  
 Mounted on that bird unique, leaping afar, my Sire,  
 Routing the Asura hordes! pray leave me never.

### Notes

- (i) Reference to the unique bird (Garuḷa) here is very significant. Even as the Lord presses Garuḷa into service, all the time and never gets parted from him, the Āḷvār prays that the Lord should take service from him for all time, keeping him in close proximity.
- (ii) What is it that the Āḷvār did, to attain the feet of the Lord? "Absolutely nothing" is the answer. He went on, taking birth after birth, till one day, the Lord's spontaneous grace alighted on him and took him to His vicinity, like unto the twig in the mid-ocean getting washed ashore, by successive waves.

entāy! taḡ tiruvēḡkaṡattuḷ niḡḡāy! ilaḡkaḷ ceḡḡāy! marāmaram  
 paḡntāḷ ēḷ uruva oru vāḷi kōtta villā!  
 kontu āḡ taḡ am tuḷāyḡḡāy! amutē! uḡḡai eḡḡuḷḷē kuḷaitta em  
 maintā! vāḡ ēḡē! iḡi eḡkup pōkiḡḡatē? (II-6-9)

### Translation

My Lord! gracing Tiruvēḡkaṡam, you stand on the cool  
 mountain,  
 You routed Laḡkā, pierce you did the tough trees seven

With a single arrow, lovely tulaci garland, bushy and cool  
 You sport, my Nectar! into me dissolved you, my darling!  
 Chief of Celestials!  
 Is there anywhere You can get away hence?

### Note

**Ālvār to the Lord:** "Unto me, who was steeped in ignorance, you revealed yourself and your excellence and worked me upto the present pitch, when I just cannot exist without you. Will it be just and proper for you to get parted from me, at this stage? As a matter of fact, you stepped on Mount Tiruvēṅkaṭam, only to get hold of this vassal. Even as you routed Rāvaṇa and his Lakṣhā, you eradicated my conceit and arrogance. Even as you instilled confidence in Sugrīva, before slaying his brother, Vāli, by piercing the cluster of seven 'sāl' trees, with a single arrow, you whetted my love for you by exhibiting your auspicious traits. Having mingled with me, *in toto*, without reservation of any kind, how can you at all get parted from me hereafter and where else will you go?"

The fact of the matter is that the blending of the two is so perfect that they are no longer two separate entities but just a single entity.

pōkiṅṅa kālaṅka], pōya kālaṅka], pōku kālaṅka], tāy, tantai,  
 ākiṅṅāy! unṅai nāṅ aṭaintēṅ, viṭuvēṅḍo? [uyir  
 pākiṅṅa tol puka] mūvulakukkum nāṅṅē! paramā! taṅ  
 mēkiṅṅāy taṅ-tuṅay virai nāṅu kaṅṅiyaṅē! (II-6-10) [vēṅkaṭam

### Translation

Having got you, shall I ever leave you, the Super-eminent?  
 Lord of all the three worlds, you grace Tiruvēṅkaṭam, the cool  
 mount,  
 Cool tulaci garland of fragrance sweet you do sport,  
 Of eternal fame, far-reaching, You are unto me dear  
 As Father, Mother and Soul, at all times, past, present and  
 future.

### Notes

- (i) *Lord to the Ālvār:* "Well, you are asking me, not to leave you. But my anxiety is about you, whether you might



once again run away from me, struck down, by your feeling of lowliness. Please, therefore, assure me that you will not leave me and go”.

*Āḷvār to the Lord* : Reply as in the stanza, above.

- (ii) A doubt might be raised how the Āḷvār could talk about the benefits he would be receiving, in future, as well. Well, the Lord is the Sole Benefactor, at all times, past, present and future. After all, the present is itself, the future of the past and will, in turn, become the past of the future. Time-sequence makes no difference at all, the Lord being the constant Benefactor, at all times.

kaṇṇi taṅ am tuḷāy muṭik kamalat taṅam peruṅ kaṇṇaipa  
 naṅṅi, teṅ kurukūre caṭakōpaṅ māraṅ coṅṅa [puka]  
 eṅṅil cōrvu il antāti āyirattuḷ ivaiyum ōr pattu icaiyoṭum  
 paṅṅil pāṭa vallāravār kēcavaṅ tamarē. (II-6-11)

#### Translation

Those that sing tunefully these songs ten,  
 Out of the thousand composed by Kurukūr Caṭakōpaṅ  
 Scion of Māraṅ, singing the glory of the Lord, with large  
 lotus-eyes,  
 Wearing on His crown the tulacī garland, cool and nice  
 Will join the rank and file of Kēcavaṅ's (the Lord's) devotees.

#### Note

The glory of the Lord, referred to here, in particular, is His boundless love (vyāmoha) for His devotees, like that shown unto the Āḷvār. To become His devotee, one has only to sing these ten songs, tunefully. Caste, creed and colour shall not stand in his/her way.

### Second Centum—Seventh Decad (II-7) (Kēcavaṅ tamar)

#### Preamble

In the seventh stanza of the last decad, the Āḷvār had mentioned that the Lord's benevolent grace did not stop with him alone but overflowed its continents and extended to all those connected with



him in the preceding and succeeding generations as well. Overwhelmed by this extraordinary benevolence of the Lord the Ājvār expatiates on it in this decad.

Of the numerous auspicious traits of the Lord extension of His love and care not only to His devotees but all those associated with them, is indeed exemplary.

After Rāvaṇa was slain by Śrī Rāma, Vibhiṣaṇa was called upon to perform the funeral rites of his brother. But then Vibhiṣaṇa demurred, saying that he would not do any such thing for such a great sinner as Rāvaṇa. Śrī Rāma (the very personification of Grace) had, however, no bitterness towards Rāvaṇa and all the bitterness was only on the part of Rāvaṇa, an one-sided affair! Now that Rāvaṇa was dead he would no longer repel Śrī Rāma's good offices, that is, if Vibhiṣaṇa performed the funeral rites at Śrī Rāma's bidding. If Vibhiṣaṇa still demurred and declined to act, Śrī Rāma would do it himself; if Vibhiṣaṇa was a brother unto Rāma, so was Rāvaṇa, as Vibhiṣaṇa's brother. There are several other instances where the Lord extended the area of His benevolence, bringing within its purview all those associated with His devotees. This is being illustrated in this Tiruvāymoḷi.

The Lord's twelve principal names, Keśava, Nārāyaṇa etc., are dealt with in these stanzas, in the same order in which these names are recited by the devotees in the course of their diurnal prayers. There are, therefore, 13 stanzas in this decad (12+1 end-song), as against the usual 11 stanzas (10+1 end-stanza).

kēcavaṅ tamar kiḷ mēl emar ēḷ eḷu piṟappum;  
mā catir itu peṟṟu nammuṭai vāḷvu vaykkinṟavā!  
īcaṅ, eṅ karumāṇikkam, eṅ ceṅkōlak kaṅṅaṅ, viṅṅōr-  
nāyakaṅ, em piṟaṅ, emmāṅ nārāyaṇaṅālē. (II-7-1)

#### Translation

My delectable blue gem, Master of all,  
Of red-lotus-eyes lovely, Chief of the Celestials,  
Nārāyaṇaṅ, my Lord and Benefactor has elevated  
As *Kēcava's* (His) devotees, all with me associated,

Seven generations, up and down, how grand  
Is the growth of our spiritual wealth indeed!

### Notes

- (i) 'Kēcava' yields three meanings, viz.:
- One with lovely locks of hair,
  - Slayer of Kēśi, the demon—Śrī Kṛṣṇa and
  - Progenitor of Brahmā and Śiva.
- (ii) Reference to seven generations, up and down, follows the trend in the Vedic texts.
- (iii) The spiritual growth resulting from the Lord's spontaneous grace is indeed astounding; the progress made by our own efforts will but be tiny in comparison.

nāraṇaṅ; muḷu ēḷ ulakukkum nātaṅ; vēta mayāṅ;  
kāraṇam, kiricai, karumam, ivai mutalvaṅ; entai;  
cīr aṇaṅku amarar piḡar palarum toḷutu ētta niṅgu  
vāraṇattai maruppu ocitta pirāṅ; eṅ mātavaṅē. (II-7-2)

### Translation

Nāraṇaṅ, the Supreme support of all the worlds,  
Does ordain everything, Cause, effect and action; the Vedās He  
pervades,  
And is by the exalted Celestials and all else adored;  
Mātavaṅ, who the giant tusker slew, is my beneficent Lord.

### Notes

- (i) 'Nārāyaṇa', as a \*compound, brings out the meaning that the Lord is the In-dweller of all things and creatures having name and form:
- (ii) The †compound of the word reveals the Lord as sustaining the whole universe.

\* 'Bahuvrīhi'.

† 'Tatpuruṣa'.







effulgent Person. The Lord is free from the twin flaws of (1) expecting anything in return from His beneficiaries and (2) doing good to the devotees for their sake instead of for His own benefit. The candy which we know of, is exposed to two kinds of flaws, namely, use of faulty ingredients and faulty preparation. But the Lord is a flawless candy, which attracted the Āḷvār and kept him wholly absorbed in it.

- (iii) 'Govinda, my Lord'—The Āḷvār thinks that the Lord incarnated as Kṛṣṇa, (Govinda), only to enthrall him.

kōvintaṅ kuṭakkūttāṅ, kōvalaṅ eṅṅu eṅṅē kuṅittu  
tēvum taṅṅaiyum pāṭi āṭat tirutti, eṅṅaik koṅtu, eṅ  
pāvam-taṅṅaiyum pāṅak kaṭtu, emar eḷ eḷu piṅappum  
mēvum taṅṅaiyam ākkīṅāṅ: vallaṅ empirāṅ viṭṭuvē. (II-7-4)

#### Translation

Kōvintaṅ, the pot-dancer, cowherd, the Supreme Lord,  
So do I His glory sing and dance, by Him enthralled  
And blest, my sins were chased out and those  
With me connected for generations, recipients of His grace,  
He has made; how potent is Viṣṇu, my benefactor great.

#### Notes

- (i) The Āḷvār is lost in admiration of the immense prowess of Lord Viṣṇu, in redeeming him and placing him on a par with the Ever-free angels in Heaven (*Nitya Sūrts*), a literal transformation of a base metal into gold. All his sins destroyed, he has been endowed with a mind steeped in the hilarious enjoyment of the Lord's glory. His amazing simplicity (*Saulabhya*) as Govinda and His transcendence (*Paratva*), side by side. And what more? All those connected with him, Seven generations, back and forth, have been blest likewise. They have been rendered worthy of His grace, looking upon Him as the Sole Refuge, true to their essential nature. Sage Vaṣiṣṭha who accompanied Bharata to Chitrakūṭa to persuade Śrī Rāma to get back to Ayodhyā, told Śrī Rāma: 'ātmānaṁ nāti vartetā' This literally means 'Don't

exceed yourself'. Some interpret 'ātmānam' as Bharata, dear to Rāma like his own life. Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, however, interprets it as 'Don't exceed or give up your essential nature of doing the bidding of your devotees (āṣṛta pāratantṛya)'.

- (ii) 'Govinda' has been repeated twice in Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasra-nāma, yielding two different meanings, viz. (i) The recipient of praise and (2) The redeemer of the Earth (hidden by an Asura). The better known meaning is one possessing cows. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was coronated as 'Govinda' by Devendra, after the former's glorious protection and preservation of the pastoral life of the whole community *in tact*, by holding aloft Mount Govardhana for a whole week. This is indeed a unique wealth acquired by the Lord, come down to Earth, which cannot be had even in the Eternal Land, Śrī Vaikuṅṭha.
- (iii) *Pot-dancing*: Even as the affluent Brahmins resort to the performance of 'Yāgas', the Shepherds, in affluence, indulge in sports like pot-dance-with pots piled one over the other, on the head and both the shoulders. The dancers will throw up pots alternately using both hands, without disturbing the equilibrium of the piled-up pots. Lord Kṛṣṇa, as a member of the cowherd community, naturally participated in all such sports and revelled, rather excelled!

viṭṭu ilaṅku ceṅcōtit tāmarai pātam, kaikaḷ, kaṅkaḷ;  
 viṭṭu ilaṅku karuṅ cuṭar-malaiyē tiru uṭampu;  
 viṭṭu ilaṅku matiyam cīr caṅku; cakkaram pariti;  
 viṭṭu ilaṅku muṭi ammāṅ matucūtaṅṅ-ṅaṅakkē. (II-7-5)

### Translation

Sporting the majestic crown, exceedingly bright,  
 My lord, Matucūtaṅ's eyes, hands and feet are very smart.  
 Like the lotus, red and broad; His body like blue mount Shines,  
 His Conch is like the Moon bright and His discus, a veritable  
 Sun.



## Note

Tirumālai Āṇṭāṅ told Rāmānuja that this song reveals how the Āḷvār was attracted to the Lord through the display of His exquisite personal charms and ascribed this interpretation to his Master, Śrī Āḷvaṅtār (Yāmuṇa) Śrī Rāmānuja was unusually quiet and when asked by the Instructor whether he had nothing to say against, as he very often did, Śrī Rāmānuja signified his approval through his broad, bewitching smile. But Śrī Paṇḍāra Bhakṣar would put it differently and say, "The song reveals the extra brilliance displayed by the Lord's person after making the Āḷvār and his associates His own". Whereas the former interpretation makes the Lord's personal charms the cause or instrument for wearing away the Āḷvār and bringing him into the Lord's fold, the latter shows it as the effect, the result of bringing the Āḷvār and his association unto the Lord's fold.

matucūṭaṇai aṅṅi maru ilēṅ eṅṅu ettālum kārumam iṅṅi,  
tuti cūḷnta ṛāṭalkaḷ ṛāṭi āṭa n'ṅṅu, ūḷi ūḷitṅṅum  
etir cūḷal pukku, eṅaiṭṭōr piṛappum eṅakkē aruḷkaḷ ceyya  
viti cūḷntatāl: eṅakkēl ammāṅ tirivikkiramaṅaiyē. (II-7-6)

## Translation

In none but Matucūtan do I take refuge,  
On and on I sing, as an end in itself, hymns of His glory;  
This is because of Tirivikkiramaṅ's grace extraordinary,  
Who took births alongside, to set me right, down the ages.

## Note

The Āḷvār has passed through a staggering cycle of births. The Lord also incarnated every time, in order to get hold of the Āḷvār, but only now He could get hold of him and bring him up to the required standard. A pertinent question is asked at this stage as to why the Omnipotent Lord should not have grabbed at the Āḷvār straightaway if He was so keen on getting at him, instead of following such a tedious and time-absorbing process. No doubt, the Lord could have adopted the short-cut, suggested above, in His unbridled independence, for there is none to question Him. But an



unreserved and unqualified amnesty would result in wholesale emancipation, *en masse*, which would cut across the very foundation of the Śāstras. The Lord is, therefore, on the look-out for some pretext or the other to reclaim the Subject through His extra-liberal standards. With this object, He also incarnated every time the Ālvār was born but failed in His mission all along. Now, at long last, He has succeeded.

We can take it that this song reveals either the Lord's extreme grace or the Ālvār's extreme humility.

tirivikkīraṃ, centāmaraiḥ kaṇ emmāṇ, eṇ ceṅkaṇi vāy  
 uruvil-polinta vellaip paḷiṅku niṟattanaṇ eṇṇu eṇṇu ulli,  
 paraviṇ paṇintu paḷ ūḷi ūḷi niṇ pāta paṅkayamē  
 maruvit toḷum maṇamē tantāy: vallaikaṇ, eṇ vāmaṇaṇē.  
 (II-7-7)

### Translation

Vāmaṇaṇ, my Lord, in just three strides you measured  
 The whole universe, as Tirivikkīraṃ and in me ushered  
 A mind rivetted to your lotus feet, days on end adoring you,  
 My red lotus-eyed Master with sparkling teeth, how capable of  
 you!

### Notes

- (1) *Ālvār to the Lord*: How capable of you, how gracious! you have endowed me with a mind which adores You and sings your glory all the time as an end in itself.
- (2) Śrī Nampillai has it that it was not a case of reconditioning the Ālvār's mind so as to make it God-bent but one of fitting him with a new mind altogether, one picked out from the Lord's strong room where valuables are stored up.

vāmaṇaṇ! eṇ marakata vaṇṇaṇ! tāmaraiḥ kaṇṇiṇaṇ!  
 kāmaṇaip payantāy! eṇṇu eṇṇu uṇ kaḷal pāṭiyē paṇintu,  
 tū maṇattanaṇāyṇ piṟavit tuḷati niṅka, eṇṇait  
 tī maṇam keṭuttāy; uṇakku eṇ ceykēṇ? eṇ ciritarāṇē. (II-7-8)

## Translation

Oh, Cīrītaṅ, My Lord, You redeemed my foul mind  
 And rid me of life's miseries, and now with a mind pure,  
 I worship Your feet, Sing and adore you as the Sire  
 Of Kāmaṅ, Vāmaṅ, my lotus-eyed Lord, the emerald mount  
 And so on; (this great good of Yours) how can I recompense?

## Notes

- (i) The Lord is referred to as the Father of Kāmaṅ (Manmatha), because He begot through Rukmiṇī Devī, a Son by name Pradhymna of exquisite beauty, said to be an 'Amśa' or incarnation of Manmatha, the minor-deity inducing amorous love.
- (ii) What was the Āḷvār's mind like before it was redeemed? Śrī Nampīllai says that it was hardly fit for reconditioning, as such, erratic like the one going in for ambrosia as well as poison, feeling attracted towards God as well as the petty pleasures of the sensual world. The Lord's grace has now operated in two ways, namely, bestowal of a mind solely rivetted to the Lord's lotus feet after throwing away the *erstwhile mind*, damned beyond redemption.

cīrītaṅ, ceyya tāmaraik kaṅṅaṅ eṅṅu eṅṅu, irāppakal vāy  
 verii, alamantu kaṅkaḷ nīr malki, vevvuyirttu uyirttu,  
 marīiya tīviṅai māḷa, iṅṅam vaḷara, vaikal vaikal  
 irii, uṅṅai eṅṅuḷ vaittaṅai; eṅ iruṭikēcaṅē! (II-7-9)

## Translation

My (Lord) Iruṭikēcaṅ, how gracious of You indeed!  
 Lodged in me, every moment my joy you expand,  
 Having rid me of all my erstwhile sins dense;  
 Day and night, with hot tears in my rolling eyes,  
 I kept crying, Oh, Cīrītaṅ, Oh, lotus-eyed,

## Note

*Āḷvār to the Lord:*

"I was crying out for you all the time, with tears welling up my eyes, breathing hot, but all my erstwhile miseries you



have now irrevocably cut out so that I go on enjoying you, and my joy grows by leaps and bounds every moment”.

Well, this is the interpretation, current from the days of Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭar who gave out this meaning. The earlier preceptors held that the Lord cut out the dense sins of the Ājvār and made him cry out in ecstasy the Lord's names with tearful eyes, day and night, breathing hot, besides promoting this God-love of his every moment.

iruṭikēcaṅ, em pirāṅ ilaṅkai arakkar kulam  
muruṭu tirtta pirāṅ, emmāṅ, amarar pemmāṅ eṅgu eṅgu  
teruṭiyākil, neñcē! vaṇaṅku; tiṅṅam aṅi; aṅintu,  
maruṭiyēlum viṭēl kaṅṭāy! nampī-paṅṅanāpaṅaiyē. (II-7-10)

### Translation

My mind, if in you there's any clarity left,  
Worship my Lord, Iruṭikēcaṅ, Chief of celestials aloft;  
Know for certain and act, He is our Benefactor great,  
Who rid Laṅkā of its tough rākśasa clan,  
Shrink not from Him still, unto Paṅṅanāpaṅ, the perfect,  
hold on.

### Notes

- (i) By addressing his mind in this manner the Ājvār was only disclosing to the Lord his firm hold on Him.
- (ii) Slaying the ten-headed Rāvaṇa is on a par with the redemption of the Ājvār's mind which, aided by the five motororgans and five sense-organs, was holding fiendish sway over him, launched into the Sea of Samsāra. Śrī Nampīllai likens the bestowal, on the Ājvār, of a God-bent mind free from the devilish clutches of the senses in lieu of his erstwhile foul mind, to the destruction of Rāvaṇa and installation of Vibhīṣaṇa on the throne of Laṅkā.
- (iii) The Ājvār says unto his mind: “How can you, my mind, get out of the ken of Padmaṅābha, the perfect Lord with all auspicious attributes, and come to grief? The



Lord is perfect in every respect, You know, His attributes, His form exquisite and His benefaction unto us”.

paṅṅanāpaṅ, uyarvu aṅa uyarum perum tiṅalōṅ;  
eṅṅaraṅ eṅṅai ākkik koṅṅu, eṅṅakē taṅṅait tanta  
kaṅṅapakam; eṅ amutam; kāṅ mukil pōlum vēṅkaṅṅa nal  
veṅṅpaṅ; vicumpōṅṅ pirāṅ; entai tāṅṅōṅṅaraṅṅē. (II-7-11)

### Translation

On Paṅṅanāpaṅ's navel sprouted the lotus  
Whence all worlds came, of matchless prowess,  
And in me wholly absorbed, He is the 'Kaṅṅapaka' tree,  
That yielded me and then gave itself unto me;  
Chief of Celestials, Vēṅkaṅṅam is His favourite abode, He's my  
nectar,  
The cloud-hued Lord, Tāṅṅōṅṅaraṅṅ is my loving Master,

### Notes

- (i) The Āṅṅvār says that the Supreme Lord, with none above Him, is also the humblest; having made the Āṅṅvār His vassal, the Lord is wholly absorbed in him, making it appear that He knows no one else.
- (ii) The 'Kaṅṅapaka' tree is the legendary wish-yielding tree. Even as there is a vast gulf between the Lord's attributes and the comparable material in each case, the Lord, taken as the 'Kaṅṅapaka' tree, differs from it in the following essential respects:
  - (a) the supplicant is also the Lord's creation;
  - (b) the Supplicant gets absorbed in the Lord;
  - (c) the supplicant gets not only all that he wants but gets the Lord Himself, who is thus the extraordinary tree, giving itself to the Seeker; and
  - (d) the Lord Himself becomes the object of enjoyment by His devotees.

tāṅṅōṅṅaraṅṅai, taṅṅi mutalvaṅṅai, nāṅṅalam uṅṅṅavaṅṅai  
āṅṅōṅṅ taram aṅṅiya oruvarkku? eṅṅṅē toṅṅum avarkaṅṅ  
tāṅṅōṅṅaraṅṅ uru āṅṅiya c'vaṅṅkum ticaimukaṅṅkum  
āṅṅōṅṅ taram aṅṅiya-emmaṅṅai eṅ āṅṅi vaṅṅṅaṅṅaiyē. (II-7-12)

## Translation

Tāmōtarāṅ, my peerless, primordial Lord,  
 Of oceanic hue, who devoured all the worlds,  
 Even exalted Ticaimukāṅ (Brahmā) and Civāṅ cannot scan and  
 comprehend,  
 Though on His person they stay and worship Him  
 And venture to think that they can His glory fathom.

## Note

The Lord cannot be comprehended through one's own effort by any one, including the exalted Brahmā and Śiva, although they stay right on His body and are inclined to be presumptuous, venturing to attempt the impossible. But He is fully comprehended by the Ājvār and devotees like him to whom the Lord has, on His own, vouchsafed all that knowledge, clear and concise, full and complete. The Lord who is the causeless cause, the Progenitor of the entire Universe, combines in Him the triple aspects unknown to many, namely, (1) He is the vassal of His devotees, (2) He is the originator of the Universe and (3) the friend-in-need, succouring one and all, in times of distress. Even the Ājvār cannot fully comprehend the many favours done to him by the Lord, although one so great, had disclosed to the Ājvār, so low, the vast array of His oceanic traits, like compressing an ocean inside the tiny mustard.

vaṅṅa mā maṅic cōtiyai, amarar talaimakaṅṅai,  
 kaṅṅaṅṅai, neṅumālaiṅ teṅ kurukūre caṅakōpaṅ  
 paṅṅiya tamiṅ-mālai āyirattuṅ ivai paṅṅiraṅṅum  
 paṅṅil paṅṅiru nāmap pāṅṅu aṅṅal-tāṅ aṅaivikkumē. (II-7-13)

## Translation

These tuneful songs on the Lord's twelve names, numbering a  
 dozen,  
 Out of the thousand Tamil hymns yielded by Teṅkurukūr  
 Caṅakōpaṅ,  
 Setting out the love, intense and unlimited, of Kaṅṅaṅ,



Lustrous like the blue gem grand, Chief of *Amarars* (celestials) (Unto His devotees), will unto the Sire's feet bind (the chanters).

#### Note

In this end-stanza, the Lord's love, intense and unlimited, for His devotees is emphasised. This provides the impetus for the Lord looking upon His devotees as His sole objects of enjoyment. Contact with this decad (Tiruvāymoḷi) is enough to render one, such a beloved devotee of Lord Kēcavaṅ.

### Second Centum—Eighth decad (11-8) (Aṅaivatu Aravu-aṅaimēl)

#### Preamble

In the last decad, the Āḷvār was overwhelmed by the Lord's extraordinary benevolence which did not stop with him alone but overflowed its continents and extended to those connected with him, seven generations, back and forth. In other words, the heavenly bliss enjoyed by the 'Nityās' in Heaven could be shared by him and his associates, right here. In his boundless compassion for the suffering humanity, caught up in the vortex of worldly life and sensual pleasures, the Āḷvār would naturally like to seize this golden opportunity and get the area of benevolence extended, by getting the 'Samsārts' (worldlings) also associated with him as fellow-devotees. And so, he turns round and advises them to get into the Divine fold, seeing that the Lord is the one and only granter of Mokṣa, the final bliss, ridding them of the terrific involvement in worldly life, with its dreadful cycle of birth and death. It may be recalled that, once before, vide I-2, the Āḷvār addressed the fellow-beings with whom he wished to share all that exalted knowledge about the Divine order, imparted to him by a self-revealing God.

The earlier Ācāryas had held that, in this decad, the Āḷvār propagates the Lord's Supremacy. But Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭar was inclined to think that the Lord's prowess of granting 'Mokṣa' is being talked about in this decad. As a matter of fact, the Lord's Supremacy has been dealt with in this very centum, in the Second decad, and there is no need to repeat it here so soon. Further, this decad is replete with expressions relating to the grant of Mokṣa.



In any case, it makes no difference either way, as God-head (*Īśvara-tva*) and the prerogative of granting Mokṣa (*Mokṣa-pradatva*) go hand in hand, vested solely in the Supreme Lord.

Towards the end of this decad, as can be seen from stanza ten, the Ājvār, however, feels frustrated by the unresponsive world around, jogging on in just the same way as before, all his advice having fallen on deaf ears, like the advice tendered by Mālyavāṅ and others to Rāvaṇa. The Ājvār would, therefore, profitably revert to the enjoyment of the Lord as before, which got interrupted for a while because of his misplaced sympathy for those around, totally impervious to his wholesome advice. At the same time, it was no mean consolation for him that, in the process, he escaped getting contaminated by them and becoming one of them. Great indeed is his jubilation that he could still retain, *in tact*, the priceless wealth of God-love and God-enjoyment, like that of a person who clears a dacoit-infested area without being robbed and molested.

ṇaivatu aravu-ṇaīmēl; pūmpāvai ākam  
 puṇarvatu; iruvar avar mutalum tāṅē;  
 iṇaivaṅ ām ep poruṭkum; viṭu mutal ām-  
 puṇaivaṅ piṅavikkāṭal nintuvārkkē. (II-8-1)

### Translation

The Supreme Lord who does on serpent-bed repose  
 And hold Pūmpāvai (Lakṣmī, the lotus-born) in embrace  
 Is Progenitor of them both (Brahmā and Śiva); He freely des-  
 cends  
 Among all and sundry, Granter of Mokṣa, the raft (sure and  
 certain)  
 He is, to swim across (Samāra) the difficult and dreadful ocean.

### Notes

- (i) This stanza is an epitome of the contents of this decad.
- (ii) The first two lines of the stanza bring out the setting in the Eternal land of absolute bliss (*Nitya Vibhūti*). So far as the "*Līla Vibhūti* (Sportive Universe) is concerned, the Lord is depicted as the originator of one and all, including those two calling for special attention, the

exalted Brahmā and Rudra and yet He incarnates among all and sundries, as if He is of their own species and mingles with them freely.

Being the granter of Mokṣa, He is the raft, safe and sound, to get hold of for those who are keen on crossing the ocean of 'Samsāra' with its terrific involvement in the cycle of birth and death and seek His help, finding that, by themselves, they can hardly cross this ocean, vast and deep.

nintum tuyarp piṅavi uṭpaṭa maggu ev evaiyum  
nintum; tuyar illā viṭu mutal ām:  
pūn taṅ puṅal-poykaḷ yāṅai iṭar kaṭinta  
pūn taṅ-tuḷāy eṅ taṅi nāyakaṅ puṅarppē. (II-8-2)

#### Translation

Contact with my unique Lord, wearing tulacī garland  
Cool and nice, the Redeemer of the elephant,  
In great distress, in the cool and lovely pond,  
Will help to ford "Samsāra", the dreadful ocean,  
The breeder of all ills and attain the blissful heaven.

#### Notes

- (i) In this stanza, the Āḷvār says that the Lord, as such, is not necessary for the attainment of Mokṣa and some kind of contact with Him will suffice. Such a contact will help one both ways, namely, obtaining relief from the otherwise incurable maladies of birth etc, and attaining the 'Eternal Land' of absolute bliss without the slightest tinge of sorrow.
- (ii) Swimming across the ocean of *Samsāra* is a never-ending process; if the ocean is interminably vast, the swimming also is interminably long, a perennial process. It is only the Lord's redemptive grace flowing through contact with Him, in some form, that will cut the gordian knot and take one out of this otherwise unfordable ocean.



puṇarkkum ayaṅ ām; aḷikkum araṅ ām;  
 puṇartta taṅ untiyoṭu ākattu maṅgi:  
 puṇartta tiruākit taṅ mārvil tāṅ cēr  
 puṇarppaṅ perum puṇarppu eṅkum puḷaṅē. (II-8-3)

### Translation

The Lord is (also) 'Ayaṅ' who from His navel emerged  
 And created the worlds, on His person duly lodged,  
 And 'Araṅ', the destroyer too; on His winsome chest  
 There's Tiru; perceptible indeed are His herculean tasks many.

### Note

The Supreme Lord not only discharges the functions of 'Ayaṅ' (Brahmā), the Creator and 'Araṅ' (Śiva), the destroyer, standing within them as their Internal Controller but also assigns specific portions of His body for their occupation. And then, there is 'Tiru' (Lakṣmī), inseparably lodged on His winsome chest. And then, He reposes on the vast expanse of water, contemplating the ensuing creation of the universe. The herculean deeds performed by Him through Brahmā and Rudra and on His own, are most perceptible indeed.

puḷaṅ aintu mēyum poḷi aintum niṅki,  
 nalam antam illatu ṅr nāṭu pukuvīr!  
 alamantu viya acuraraic ceṅṅāṅ  
 palam muntu ciril paṭimiṅ ḍvātē. (II-8-4)

### Translation

Those of you who the interplay want to quell,  
 Of the senses and sense-objects, so as to enter  
 The Eternal Land of perfect bliss, will do well  
 To enjoy the traits auspicious of the Lord, for ever;  
 How He tortured and slew the Asuras, think it over.

### Notes

- (i) Here is the Āḷvār's recipe for discarding the sensual pleasures, petty and transient, and entering the Eternal Land of perfect bliss:

"Be steeped in the enjoyment of His auspicious traits for ever".

- (ii) Unlike several other processes which are difficult and tiresome in the initial stages and are pleasurable only in the final stages of fruition, contemplation of the Lord's auspicious traits is an ecstatic experience, right from the beginning. It is also noteworthy that there are no inhibitions and injunctions restricting such enjoyment to certain days only or parts of the day as in the case of sea-bath etc.
- (iii) This abode of ours is the harrowing land of eternal miseries whereas the Heaven is just the opposite—the Eternal Land of absolute bliss. The Ājvār does not subscribe to the doctrine of philosophy which conceives of 'Mokṣa', as but the mere disembodiment of the soul on emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths. His concept of 'Mokṣa' is the eternal joy of constant service unto the Lord, in the yonder heaven, with no tinge of the erstwhile sorrows, partaking of the bliss of unlimited dimensions, fresh and exquisite, every moment, flowing from the Lord who is an inexhaustible fountain of bliss.
- (iv) The Lord will destroy our sins and remove all impediments in the way of our union with Him, even as He tormented and destroyed the Asuras.

ōvāt tuyarp piṅavi uṭṭaṭa marṅu ev evaiyum  
 mūvāt taṅi mutalāy mūvulakum kāvalōṅ,  
 mā āki, āmai āy, miṅ āki, māṅiṭam ām-  
 tēvāti tēva perumāṅ eṅ tirttaṅē.

(II-8-5)

### Translation

The Supreme Lord, the causeless cause of the flowing universe, Its creation, sustentation and destruction, Chief of the Celestials, My Tirttaṅ (Who sanctified me) did come down as a Horse, Tortoise, Fish and Man, and protected the worlds, one and all.

### Note

The routine of the Universe falling under the three major compartments of creation, preservation and dissolution, goes on uninterruptedly because of the ever-alert and omni-



potent Lord who directs and controls them all. No doubt, He dowered on all of us, limbs and sense-organs to put us on a career of gainful activity with a view to attaining Him, but even if we stray away from Him He is such an indefatigable cultivator who doesn't lose heart when the yield is low or next to nothing, but goes on with His cultivation, hoping for better days. That is why He takes all the trouble to incarnate in various forms and goes on with His work of resuscitation.

tīrttaṅ ulaku aṅanta cēvaṅimēl pūntāmam  
cērtti, avaiyē civaṅ muṅimēl tāṅ kaṅṅu,  
pārttan telintoṅinta paintuṅāyāṅ perumai  
pērttum oruvarāl pēcak kiṅtantatē? (II-8-6)

#### Translation

Is there any need at all for others to deliberate  
The glory of (Lord Kṛṣṇa) wearing tulacī garland, Tīrttaṅ (The  
Immaculate),  
At whose lovely feet which spanned the Universe, Pārttaṅ  
placed a garland  
And saw it (a little later) on Śiva's head, getting clarity of mind?

#### Note

In the battle against the "Kauravas", Arjuna needed the weapon known as 'Pāśupada astra' which could be had from Śiva after due propitiation. The compassionate Kṛṣṇa, however, told Arjuna the short-cut whereby he could offer at the former's feet the garland intended for Paśupati (Śiva). Arjuna did accordingly and that very night, Śiva appeared in Arjuna's dream, wearing that very same garland on the head and presented the weapon in question. Reference has been made, in this song, to the spanning of the whole Universe by the Lord as it was then that Brahmā washed the Lord's feet to the accompaniment of Vedic chantings, and the sacred water that flowed down the Lord's feet was held by Śiva on his head (Nāṅmukaṅ Tiruvantāti-9). Is there at all any need to dispute the self-evident glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa?

kiṭantu iruntu, niṅgu, aṭantu, kējal āy, kiḷṭu pukku  
 iṭantiṭum; taṅguḷ karakkum; umiḷum;  
 taṭam perun tōḷ ārat taḷuvum; pār eṅṅum  
 maṭantaiyai māḷ ceykiṅṅa māḷ ār kānpārē? (II-8-7)

### Translation

Lying, sitting and standing, measuring the worlds,  
 Getting into the waters deep and lifting up the Earth,  
 As the Boar gigantic, holding with Him all the worlds  
 And then spitting them out, embracing dame Earth  
 On His broad shoulders complacent, who can comprehend His  
 love for Mother earth?

### Notes

(i) Many indeed are the wondrous deeds of the Lord, done out of His great love for Mother Earth, the Sportive universe (*Līlā vibhūti*).

(ii) *Lying, sitting and standing*:

There are several ways of appreciating these postures of the Lord. These are set out below:

(a) *Reclining* on the Milk-ocean, the centre of creative activity, surrounded by the band of celestials;

*Sitting* on the serpent couch in the High Heaven; and *standing* firm on Mount Tiruvēṅkaṭam, His favourite resort.

(b) *Lying* prostrate in front of the Ocean, Śrī Rāma's supplication to the king of the ocean;

*Sitting* (Staying) in the Āśramas of the Mahāṛṣis during His exile;

and *standing* victorious at the gates of Lāṅkā after slaying Rāvaṇa (may also refer to Śrī Rāma standing victorious after slaying vāli).

(c) *Lying* in the pilgrim centre known as Puḷiṅkuṭi.

*Sitting* in the pilgrim centre known as Varakuṅṅa-māṅkai.

and *Standing* in the pilgrim centre known as Śrīvai-kuṅṅam.



- (a) above refers to the Lord's transcendent glory;  
 (b) above refers to the Lord's 'Saulabhya' (easy accessibility) in His Incarnate form,  
 (c) refers to the Lord's iconic manifestation in these different postures in the respective pilgrim centres. See also notes under V-10-6.

kāṅpār āṛ em icaṅ kaṅṅaṅai? eṅ kāṅumāṅu?  
 ūṅ pēcil, ellā ulakum ōṛ tuṅṅu āṅṅā:  
 cēṅ pāla viṭṭō, uyirō, maṅṅu ep poruṭṅum  
 ēṅ pālum cōṛāṅ, parantu uḷaṅ āṅ eṅkumē. (II-8-8)

### Translation

Who can comprehend Kēṅṅaṅ, my Lord  
 Or get at the know-how? hardly a morsel  
 Of His food can all the worlds be, His abode  
 Is high above the worlds, Inner Controller of all,  
 Indeed He pervades all over  
 With no exception whatever.

### Notes

- (i) It is indeed impossible for any one to gauge the full extent of the Lord's glory; even the exalted ones who are endowed with the capacity to delve into it, are not equal to the task. They too could touch only a fringe of it, just a peep, and no more.
- (ii) All along, reference was made to the Lord containing within His stomach, eating up all the worlds, during the period of deluge, making it appear to be a herculean task of gigantic magnitude. Now, it will be seen that all the worlds put together hardly constitute a morsel of food for the Lord, a mere fleebite.

eṅkum uḷaṅ kaṅṅaṅ eṅṅa makaṅaiṅ kāyntu,  
 iṅku illaiyāl eṅṅu iraṅiyāṅ tūṅ puṭaiṅṅa,  
 aṅku appoḷutē avaṅ viyat tōṅṅiya eṅ  
 ciṅkap pirāṅ perumai āṅyūṅ cirmaittē? (II-8-9)

### Translation

The son affirmed, 'Kannaṅ is everywhere',  
 Shouted back irate Iraṇiyaṅ, "If he be not here?"  
 And slapped the pillar hard; there and then  
 The Lord appeared and killed the demon;  
 Indeed, my Naraciṅka's glory is beyond deliberation.

### Notes

- (i) In the preceding Song, the Lord's immanence was referred to. Perhaps, it didn't carry conviction with quite a few persons who doubted whether the Lord could pervade all over, in and out. This song is evidently addressed to those persons, warning them not to follow in the foot-steps of Hiranya and come to grief.
- (ii) Hiranya slapped, with his own hand, a pillar built under his own supervision. There was, therefore, hardly any question of magic or sleight of hand which produced the furious Narasiṅga, right from the bosom of that very pillar, from the very spot on which Hiranya slapped that very moment. The points to be pondered over in this context are: Had the Lord not appeared from the crucial spot tapped by Hiranya or if His appearance had been delayed by even a split second, His immanence at all places and at all times would be open to question. His omnipresence having been established, His omnipotence needs to be demonstrated. If it is said that Narasiṅga was born, He was not born in the generally accepted sense of impregnation, birth, growth and all that. He jumped out of the ripped-open pillar, as a full-grown adult, a peculiar combination of Man and Lion, more than a match for the formidable Hiranya. Strange indeed were the boons conferred on Hiranya by Brahmā—the devil was not to meet with death at the hands of a male, female or a hermaphrodite, neither by Gods nor by man or beast or any of the five elements, neither by day nor by night, neither in space nor on the ground, neither inside the house nor outside, so on and so forth. The Strange Visitor who sprang forth engaged Hiranya, in a *hand to hand fight*, dragged him



on to the *door-step*, laid him on His *lap* and tore open his bowels with the *finger nails* (spear-like claws), at *dusk*. Hiraṇya, the seemingly impregnable fortress, armed in a thousand and one ways against every conceivable source of danger, crashed, at long last, before the superior might of the Omnipotent Lord. The words in italics, as above, will show that none of the boons granted to Hiraṇya was violated.

cirmai koḷ viṭu cuvarkkam naraku iṅā,  
irmai koḷ tēvar naṭuvā, marṅu ep poruṭkum  
vēr mutal āy, vittu āy, parantu taṅi niṅṅa  
kār mukilpōl vaṅṅaṅ, eṅ kaṅṅaṅai nāṅ kaṅṅē. (II-8-10)

### Translation

Seen have I kaṅṅaṅ, my cloud-hued Lord, of unique excellence,  
All pervading, He is the triple cause of all existence,  
Ushering in the exalted Heaven, Svarg and hell, the respective  
denizens,  
The kind-hearted Devas and all else.

### Notes

- (i) As already mentioned in the preamble to this decad, the Ājvār finds, at this stage, the people around, most unresponsive, all his advice having fallen on deaf ears. Frustrated though, he is still happy that he didn't get contaminated by them and become one of them, very much like clearing a dacoit-infested area without getting robbed or molested.
- (ii) The Lord combines in Himself all the three causes of existence, the *material* (upādāna) *Instrumental* (Sahakāri) and the *operative* (nimitta) causes. For making pots, mud is the material cause, the potter's wheel and staff, the Instrumental cause, and the Potter is the operative cause. So far as the creation of this world is concerned, all the three causes vest in the Lord, yet another unique feature of the Lord. Apart from this universal aspect, the Lord regales the denizens of the high heaven with the exquisite charm of His transcendent Form, and

He has now chosen to present Himself unto the Āḷvār as the charming Kṛṣṇa. Great indeed is the Āḷvār's joy.

kaṇ-talaṅkaḷ ceyya karu mēṇi ammāṇai  
vaṅṭu alampum cōlai vaḷuti vaḷa nāṭaṅ  
paṅ-talaiyil coṅṅa tamiḷ āyirattu ip pattum valār  
viṅ-talaiyil viṅṅiruntu āḷvar em mā viṭē. (II-8-11)

### Translation

Those that learn these songs ten  
Out of the thousand composed in choice tunes,  
By (Caṭakōpaṅ), Chief of Vaḷutināṭu, abounding in fertile  
orchards,  
Where go gay honey bees in their swarms,  
Adoring the black-hued, large lotus-eyed Lord,  
Will in high Heaven flourish and partake of bliss supreme.

### Note

The chanters of this decad will shoot up from the harrowing depths of worldly existence to an exalted position in heaven, keeping at their beck and call, the denizens over there.

## Second Centum—Ninth decad (II-9) (Ēm mā viṭṭu)

### Preamble

This decad pinpoints the concept of 'Puruṣārtha' the ultimate value of the final goal of every individual. In the preceding decad, frequent references were made by the Āḷvār to the Eternal Land of absolute bliss. On hearing these, the Lord thought He would rather put the Āḷvār in Heaven if that was all His desire and accordingly told him, "Well, you can have the Mokṣa, as desired". It is now and here that the position gets crystallised. The Āḷvār revolves in his mind and concludes that any thing granted by the Lord, by way of catering to his desire instead of His own, is not worth having, and even heaven attained this way, would be little better than hell. The real 'Puruṣārtha', or ultimate value



lies in whatever is bestowed by the Lord out of His own free grace and liking. And so, the Ājvār speaks out his mind, as follows:

“ My Lord, it makes absolutely no difference to me whether I am in heaven as the partaker of the endless bliss there or in the state of *Kaivalya*, lost in self-enjoyment or get consigned to the gloomy abyss, if it is all your sweet will and dispensation. On the other hand, I will not hesitate to decline even the gift of heaven, if it is bestowed on me just for my gratification. And so, may it please you to so ordain my goal as to make it coincide solely with your desire”. Here is a clear enunciation of the paramountcy of the Lord's will, in total subjugation of the egoistic compulsions of the Individual. It is indeed very hard to find the Subject who can appreciate and fall in line with the Ājvār's lofty train of thought, totally bereft of egoistic impulses and putting his whole weight on the Lord. It was for this very reason that Empār, the great preceptor, is said to have screened his audience and closed the gates of the lecture hall before discoursing on this decad.

em mā viṣṭut tiṅgamum ceppam; niṅ  
cem mā pāta-paṅṅut talai cērttu; ollai  
kaimmā tuṅṅam kaṅṅinta pirāṅṅē!  
ammā! aṅṅiṅ vēṅṅuvatu itē.

(II-9-1)

### Translation

You relieved the distress of an elephant, benevolent Lord!  
If you'd only soon set your grand lotus feet red  
On my head, the topic of high heaven I shall not moot,  
Sire, this is all I pray for, nothing more do I want.

### Note

Right in the beginning of this song, the Ājvār makes his position abundantly clear. He shall no longer mention about the high heaven, be it a matter of assuming a form like unto that of God (*Sārūpya*), staying in the same area as the seat of the Lord's kingdom in heaven (*ālokya*) etc. All that he needs is that the Lord should set His lovely pair of red lotus feet on his head.

itē yāṅ unṅaiḱ koḷvatu eṅṅāṅṅum; eṅ  
 mai tōy cōti maṅivaṅṅa! entāy!  
 eytā niṅ kaḷal yāṅ eyta ṅāṅak  
 kai tā; kālak kaḷivu ceyyēlē.

(II-9-2)

### Translation

My lovely Lord, lustrous like the dark blue gem,  
 All that I pray unto you now and at all times,  
 Is that you do lend me the hand of wisdom,  
 To reach your feet, difficult to attain, with no loss of time.

### Notes

- (i) In the preceding song, the Āḷvār had categorically stated that he wanted nothing more than the Lord's lovely pair of lotus feet being set firmly on his head. And yet, the Lord tempts the Āḷvār and asks him whether he would want anything more. The Āḷvār, however, stands his ground, all right and reaffirms that he wants nothing else.

*Lord* : Well, how long will you persevere in this attitude?"

*Āḷvār* : "As long as you and I exist".

*Lord* : "What made you so steadfast?"

*Āḷvār* : "Your exquisite charm".

*Lord* : "And what should I do now?"

*Āḷvār* : "Pray, deign to make this vassal, your sole dependent, get at your lovely pair of feet, difficult to attain".

- (ii) About the lending of the hand of wisdom, here is an anecdote, very instructive.

Mutaliyāṅṅāṅ and Empār were colleagues and co-disciples of Śrī Rāmānuja. During a fairly long spell of absence of the former from Śrīraṅgam, a disciple of his stayed with Empār. One of those days, quite a few disciples of Empār were administered by him the five-fold sacraments enjoined for Śrī vaiṣṇavas. The aforesaid disciple of Mutaliyāṅṅāṅ also got the sacraments from Empār along with the others. To an enquiry by Empār,



whether the disciple in question had spiritual relationship with any other Preceptor, the answer was assuring enough and indicated that there was no other spiritual mentor. But then, when Mutaliyāṅṭāṅ returned to Śrīraṅgam, this particular disciple went back to him, and served him as before. When Empār got to know of this, he hurried to Mutaliyāṅṭāṅ and expressed regret for the administration of the Sacraments to the disciple in question during Āṅṭāṅ's absence from the station. But Āṅṭāṅ's magnanimity put Empār at ease, in no time. The former observed: "If two persons stretch out their hands to one fallen into a well, it is so much the easier both for the riser and the raisers". The helping hand, in this case, refers to the spiritual knowledge imparted by both the preceptors.

ceyyēl tīvaṅai eṅṅu aruḷ ceyyum eṅ  
kai ār cakkarak kaṅṅa-pirāṅṅē!  
ai ār kaṅṅam ātaikkilum, niṅ kaḷal  
eyyātu ētta aruḷcey eṅakkē.

(II-9-3)

### Translation

Kaṅṅā, my benefactor, wielding the discus bright,  
'Tis your grace that I from evil deeds desist;  
Bless me that I shall adore, without respite,  
Your comely feet even when phlegm chokes my throat tight.

### Note

**Ālvār to the Lord:** "I pray not for relief from sufferings but for a mind rivetted to your feet at all times, even in those dark moments when the throat gets choked by phlegm".

C.f. the 12th Jitante śloka (recited at the conclusion of the worship of the household Deity)

Which means:

"Whatever calamities might befall me, let not my mind be apart from you; this would be enough to salve me".

eṇakkē āṭcey ek kālattum eṇṇu, eṇ  
 maṇakkē vantu iṭaivitu iṇṇi maṇṇi,  
 taṇakkē āka eṇaik koḷḷum itē:  
 eṇakkē kaṇṇaṇai yāṇ koḷ ciṇappē.

(II-9-4)

### Translation

The greatest good I desire from Kaṇṇaṇ, my Lord,  
 True to my essential nature, is that command He shall,  
 That I serve Him wholly and at all times, and own He shall  
 Me as His exclusive vassal, in my mind firmly lodged.

### Notes

- (i) This song is the quintessence of this decad, determining, as it does, the greatest good for the individual soul, in keeping with its essential nature, namely, abject dependence on the Lord as His exclusive vassal for all time. For abiding in such a state without the slightest aberration at any time, the Āḷvār seeks the Lord's Grace.
- (ii) Śrī Nampiḷḷai appreciates this decad as the most outstanding, of all the hundred decads (Tiruvāymoḷis) and even so, this song is the best, in this decad. That is because the Āḷvār prays unto the Lord that He should stay inside him, firm and for ever, and take from him service, service exclusively unto Him and at all times, rendered solely for His pleasure, eschewing the slightest tinge of personal egoism, absolutely selfless like the Moon, Southerly breeze, sandal paste and water.
- (iii) In the learned assembly presided over by Empār, Piḷḷai Tirunarayūr Arayar enquired why the Āḷvār, endowed with full and complete knowledge, clear and concise, should at all make a request of this kind to the Lord, instead of resigning himself wholly to His grace, leaving Him to do whatever He liked. While agreeing with the Arayar that it was a pertinent question, Empār elucidated that it was the innate charm of the destined goal, namely, selfless service unto the Lord for His exclusive enjoyment that drew the Āḷvār out in this manner and made him long for it, even as the Divine Mother,



inseparably poised on the Lord's winsome chest,  
keeps on saying, "I shall not get parted from my  
Lord even for a trice".

cigappil vītu cuvarkkam narakam  
iṅgappil eytuka, eytaṅka; yāṅum  
piṅappu il pal piṅavip perumāṅai,  
maṅappu oṅṅu iṅṅi, eṅṅum makiḷvaṅṅē. (II-9-5)

### Translation

Let me or let me not go, after death,  
To the renowned heaven, the svarg or the hell,  
But may I meditate upon the Lord, Who, though free from  
birth,  
Chooses to take many a birth, in an unbroken spell,  
Forgetting Him at no time and thus be full of mirth.

### Note

The Āḷvār's sole concern is to remain steeped for ever in the enjoyment of the Lord's wondrous deeds and auspicious traits, displayed during the numerous incarnations taken at His sweet volition.

makiḷ koḷ teyvam, ulōkam, alōkam,  
makiḷ koḷ cōti malarnta ammāṅṅē!  
makiḷ koḷ cintai col ceykai koṅṅu eṅṅum  
makiḷvuṅṅu upṅai vaṅṅaṅka vāṅṅē. (II-9-6)

### Translation

Oh, Lord, from You blossomed the mirthful Moon and the  
Sun resplendent,  
The blissful Celestials, mankind with Knowledge radiant,  
The fauna and flora with no such radiance, pray appear before  
me  
That I may worship you ever, by word, deed and thought gaily.

### Note

Āḷvār to the Lord: My Lord, you made the celestials, full of bliss, the mankind, radiant with knowledge, the luminous

Sun and Moon as well as the non-sentient beings, devoid of knowledge. You, who could create this Kaleidoscopic Universe, can surely make me enjoy you wholly, by word, deed and thought and, for this purpose, you should be before me, at all times.

vārāy! un tirup pāta malarkkiḷp  
 pērātē yāṅ vantu aṭaiyumpaṭi:  
 tārātāy! unṅai yēṅṅuḷ vaippil eṅṅum  
 ārātāy! eṅakku eṅṅum ekkālē.

(II-9-7)

### Translation

Oh, Lord, You haven't granted me the favour  
 Of attaining your lotus feet for ever;  
 However long I wrap You in my mind, non-satiate you are,  
 Pray appear before me, for my eyes to feast for ever.

### Note

The Āḷvār feels that, having whetted his God-thirst and God-hunger, it was but meet that the Lord should appear before him for his eyes to continually drink deep of His nectarean beauty.

ekkalattu entaiyāy eṅṅuḷ maṅṅil, marṅṅu  
 ek kālattilum yātonṅum vēṅṅēṅ;  
 miḱkār vēta vimalar viḷuṅkum eṅ  
 akkāarak kaṅiyē! unṅai yāṅē.

(II-9-8)

### Translation

You, Vedic scholars of rank and repute do (with love) devour,  
 Oh, my candy- fruit, my eternal Master,  
 If you shall my mind enter and stay there, firm and secure,  
 Never shall I from you seek any other favour, (be sure).

### Notes

- (i) Rock-candy is a delicious product of cane-juice and it is the Āḷvār's figment of imagination that conceives of the Lord being as delicious as the fruit of the imaginary Rock-candy tree. (akkārakkani is the term used in the



original text of this song, to denote this imaginary fruit of an imaginary tree).

- (ii) The versification, as above, conforms to the interpretation of this song (original) by 'Emperumāṅār (Rāmānuja). Śrī Ājavantār (Yāmuṇa) would, however, appear to have interpreted this song, as follows:

"My Lord, if you would only enter my heart, as my Sovereign Master, even if it be for a split second, I shall not seek from you any favour, at any other time, not even this very favour now sought".

yāṅē eṅṅai aṅiyakilātē,  
yāṅē eṅ-taṅatē eṅṅu iruntēṅ;  
yāṅē nī; eṅ uṅaimaiyum niyē;  
vāṅē ḍttum em vāṅavar ḍṅē!

(II-9-9)

### Translation

Oh, my Lord, by the entire heaven adored!  
Chief of Celestials, Fancied I, in ignorance bred,  
I my master was and all things mine own;  
But now do I realise, all are yours, I and mine.

### Note

The Lord had done His best, down the ages, to reclaim the Ālvār but the latter was striking a divergent path all the time, not knowing his essential nature and relationship with God. Prior to his reclamation, the Ālvār was like unto a Prince, fallen into the hands of a hunter and brought up like the hunter's son in strange environments, totally alien to his native surroundings. But now true knowledge has dawned on him and he is in a position to advise the people around to disengage themselves from the erroneous notions of 'I' and 'Mine' and be rooted in the Lord, whose exclusive vassals they are, solely dependent on Him.

ḍṅēl ḍṅum veṅṅu, ḍṅ koḷ ilaṅkaiyai  
niṅṅē ceyta neṅṅuṅi cuṅṅarc cōṅṅi!  
tḍṅēl eṅṅai; uṅ poṅ-aṅi cḍṅrttu ollai;  
vḍṅṅē pōka eṅṅāṅṅṅum viṅṅalē.

(II-9-10)

## Translation

My resplendent Lord; you tamed the seven bulls unruly  
 And routed Laṅkā, the city beautiful; trust me not,  
 Better take me quick to your golden feet  
 And never allow me to slip back to things worldly.

## Note

*Lord* : Āḷvār, I suppose you are quite safe now and have nothing more to fear."

*Āḷvār* : "Sire, you can't be too certain about me, still in this material body, and in these frightful surroundings. Situated as I am, the possibility of my going astray and slipping back to old ways cannot be ruled out. I cannot, therefore, feel safe unless and until I am laid at your feet firmly. To get at me, you can of course root out the impediments even as you tamed the unruly bulls and destroyed Laṅkā, to get at Nappiṇṇai and Sita respectively.

viṭal il cakkarattu aṇṇalai mēval  
 viṭal il vaṇ kurukūrc caṭakōpaṇ  
 keṭal il āyirattuḷ ivai pattum  
 keṭal il viṭu ceyyum kiḷarvārkkē.

(II-9-11)

## Translation

These songs ten, out of the thousand immortal songs  
 Of Kurukūr Caṭakōpaṇ, ever close to the Lord,  
 Who the discus inseparable holds, will unto those that sing  
 Them ardently, bestow heavenly bliss, from all ills freed.

## Notes

- (i) These ten stanzas will confer on those who recite them heavenly bliss. It need not be questioned how these songs could, by themselves, grant Mokṣa, which is the sole prerogative of the Supreme Lord. What is intended to be conveyed by this end-song is that the recital of these ten songs will gladden the Lord and, as a consequence thereof, His gift of Mokṣa will follow. C.f. IV-5-11 where the lotus-born Lakṣmī is said to confer



Mokṣa on those who recite the ten tanzas in that decad. Actually, the Lord is the sole Granter of Mokṣa but He grants it only through the instrumentality of Śrī Lakṣmī, as the Grand Intercessor between Man and God and her recommendatory role plays a very vital part in the ascent of Man to the foot-stool of God.

- (ii) In the last song, the Ājvār had requested the Lord not to let him slip back to his old ways. The Lord assured the Ājvār that he need have no misgivings whatsoever and added that it was not for giving up devotees like him that He was carrying in His hand the discus all the time. By implication, He could hold on to His devotee as firmly as He held the discus.

### Second centum—Tenth decad (II-10) (Kīḷar oḷi iḷamai)

#### Preamble

In the last decad, the Ājvār stressed the need for quick action on the part of the Lord, while praying that He should take service from him, at all times. The Ājvār's agitation for expeditious result was, however, construed by the Lord as the Ājvār's desire to serve in this body itself and He, therefore, directed the Ājvār to serve Him in His Iconic Form in Tirumāliṛuñcōlai malai (very near to Maturai in the South), a nice, quiet place, abounding in lovely hills and beautiful orchards. The Ājvār accordingly enjoys alike the pilgrim centre and the Lord enshrined there, his predilections extending even to the other hills, in and around, and the very route leading thereto.

kīḷar oḷi iḷamai keṭuvataṅ muṅṅam,  
vaḷar oḷi māyōṅ maruviya kūyil,  
vaḷar iḷam poḷil cūḷ māliṛuñcōlai  
taḷarvu iḷar ākic cārvatu catirē.

(II-10-1)

#### Translation

Ere the youth, up and radiant, gets blasted

'Tis but meet that one reaches with a mind steadfast,

Māḷiruñcōlai, the hill resort, full of orchards,  
Young and lovely, where stays always the wondrous Lord  
Of (growing splendour and) mounting radiance.

### Notes

- (i) Even reaching the holy place, 'Tirumāḷiruñcōlai Malai', is an end in itself, says the Āḷvār. Even as one is advised to acquire knowledge when still young so as to reap the benefit thereof, in later years, one is advised to go to this pilgrim centre while still young and before the sensual pleasures get hold of the rising youth and distract it.
- (ii) There is nothing like growth or diminution, waxing or waning for the Lord Who is immutable and yet, His Splendour is said to grow by virtue of the exhilarating impact of this lovely station on the Lord. This is sheer poetic grandeur extolling the beauty of the place.
- (iii) This is one of the four principal Vaiṣṇava Pilgrim centres, the other three being Śrīraṅgam, Tirumalai and Kāñcī-puram.

catir iḷa maṭavār tāḷcciyai matiyātu,  
atir kural caṅkattu aḷakar-tam kōyil,  
mati tavaḷ kuṭumi māḷiruñcōlaiṭ  
patiyatu ētti ēḷuvatu payaṅē.

(II-10-2)

### Translation

Better ignore the viles and charms of damsels young  
And on Māḷiruñcōlai, meditate for your good;  
The Moon walks on its tops and the conch keeps blowing  
In the temple of Aḷakar, our Lord.

payaṅ alla ceytu payaṅ illai, neñcē!  
puyal maḷai vaṅṅar purintu uḷai kōyil,  
mayal miku poḷil cūḷ māḷiruñcōlai  
ayalmalai aṭaivatu atu karumamē.

(II-10-3)



**Translation**

My mind, better desist from deeds futile  
 And reach the mount beside Māloruñ Cōlai, lovely and fertile,  
 Surrounded by many an enchanting orchard,  
 The favourite resort of the cloud-hued Lord.

**Notes**

- (i) In the last two stanzas, the Ājvār expatiated on the glory of the Pilgrim centre, Known as ' Māloruñ cōlai ', treating one's visit to that place or mere meditation of the station as an end in itself. And now, the Ājvār extends the same treatment even to another mount in its vicinity, by virtue of its associaton with 'Māloruñ-cōlai Malai'.
- (ii) The futile deeds, referred to, are rites and rituals performed for attaining swarga etc, or even contemplation of the Lord's transcendent glory and the by-gone Avatāras. The emphasis thus rests on this pilgrim centre which is now getting broad-based so as to include the neighbouring mountain, as well.

karuma vaṅ pācam kaḷittu uḷaṅṅu uyyavē,  
 perumalai eṭuttāṅ piṭu uḷai kōyil,  
 varu maḷai tavaḷum māloruñcōlait  
 tirumalaiatuvē, aṭaivatu tiṅamē.

(II-10-4)

**Translation**

Going over to Māloruñ cōlai is real good,  
 Where the rain-clouds crawl and dwells the Lord  
 For ever, for us to serve Him and get undone  
 Our ' Kārmik ' bonds tough; His person does the glory beam  
 Of His great deliverance of Mount (Govardhan)

**Note**

To extricate ourselves from the otherwise inextricable bondage of ' Karma ' and to serve the Lord, the Ājvār deems it but proper that we should reach this sacred hill where the Lord stays for ever, with great delight. That He is the great deliverer is writ large on the person of Lord Aḷakar enshrined

there, proclaiming His great glory as the deliverer of the inhabitants of the pastoral village of Gokula from the fury of Indra, by holding aloft Mount Govardhana for a whole week during His Avatāra as Kṛṣṇa.

tiṅam-uṭai valattāl tīvaṅai perukkātu,  
aṅam muyal āḷip paṭaiyavaṅ kōyil,  
maṅu il vaṅ cuṅai cūl māḷiruñcōlai  
puṅamalai, cārap pōvatu kiṟiyē.

(II-10-5)

### Translation

Do not your energy dissipate and your sins multiply,  
Better go to the mount close to Māḷiruñ Cōlai,  
Surrounded by cascades, neat and lovely,  
Where stays the Lord, bent on protection  
Of His devotees, holding the discus, that benevolent weapon.

### Note

The Āḷvār brings on a par with 'Māḷiruñ Cōlai malai' another mount around. He advises that all one's energy, that might otherwise be dissipated on selfish pursuits breeding endless sins, could as well be used up in going on a pilgrimage to the said mount.

kiṟi eṅa niṅaimiṅ! kiḷmai ceyyātē,  
uṟi amar veṅṅey uṅṭavaṅ kōyil,  
maṅyoṭu piṅai cēr māḷiruñcōlai-  
neṟi paṭa atuvē, niṅaivatu nalamē.

(II-10-6)

### Translation

Desist from base deeds and remember  
'Tis good to think solely of traversing the road  
Which leads to Māḷiruñ Cōlai where live together  
Herds of deer and young ones and stays our Lord,  
Who from hanging hoops ate up all the butter.

### Notes

- (i) The Āḷvār advises people to divert the mind from sensual pleasures and *fix it on the route leading to 'Māḷiruñ*



*Cōlai* where Lord Kṛṣṇa stays on, to grant 'darśan' to us, the post-incarnation beneficiaries.

- (ii) Even as the deer and the young ones stay together, it behoves us to stay on with the Lord, our eternal Father and Mother, rolled into one.

naḷam eṇa niḡaimiṇ! naraku aḡuntātē,  
 niḷam muḡam iṡantāṇ niṡu uḡai kōyil,  
 maḷam aḡu maṡi cēr māḷiruṅcōḷai,  
 vaḷam muḡai eyti maruvutal vaḷamē.

(II-10-7)

### Translation

It would be best if you got yourself attached,  
 With due reverence, to Māḷiruṅ Cōlai where shines  
 The Moon clear and dwells the Lord Who once  
 Redeemed the Earth (as the Boar unique); better teach  
 Your mind this advice good, let it not dredge in hell.

### Notes

- (i) Going to hell does not mean that those who somehow fail to visit this pilgrim centre will go to hell. To be in conjunction with the Lord, as Sītā put it to Śrī Rāma before setting out for exile, is Swarga while being away from Him is hell. The emphasis here is, therefore, on not getting parted from the Lord.
- (ii) The Moon's blemishes having been removed by his rubbing against the hill-top of this station, he is shining quite clear.
- (iii) "With due reverence": duly realising the inter-relationship between Man and God.

vaḷaṅceytu, vaikal vaḷam kaḷiyātē,  
 vaḷaṅceyyum āye-māyaveṇ kōyil,  
 vaḷaṅceyyum vaṅōr māḷiruṅcō'ai,  
 vaḷaṅceytu nāḷum maruvutal vaḷakkē.

(II-10-8)

### Translation

Acquire strength all right but waste it never,  
 Better go round daily Māḷiruṅ Cōlai where stands enshrined

The wondrous shepherd (Kṛṣṇa), our great Benefactor  
And the Celestials come down and move around.

### Notes

- (i) The Lord gives Himself unto His devotees, besides the strength to enjoy the rapport with Him. Lord Aḷakar Himself goes round Mount Māliṛuñcōlai, in the company of His Consorts, even as Śrī Rāma and Sitā went round, hand in hand, the mountain slopes of Citrakūṭa.

Even as the citizens of Ayodhyā followed Śrī Rāma when he went into exile, the Celestials do come to this pilgrim centre and circumambulate the temple of Aḷakar. It would indeed be a grievous misuse of the specially endowed human body, highly conducive to holding communion with the Lord and serving Him in a number of ways, if it strayed into the domain of sensual pleasures, thus moving in the opposite direction.

- (ii) Nañciyar is said to have related from personal experience how he observed Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭar and Piḷḷai Tirunarayūr Arayar, leisurely pacing about the premises of the temples, gazing at the tall turrets and the lovely mansions around, in short, imbibing every small detail, literally drinking them in, with their eyes. This was in dire contrast to the men of the world to whom visiting temples is a mere formality, moving about like race-horses, as if it is a place more to hurry from. For the great Savants to whom the Lord is at once the Means and the End, temples are places to stay and serve. No doubt, genuflections and circumambulations do not serve as the 'Means' for them and yet, they get absorbed in the sanctity of the temples and their surroundings, as an end in itself.

vaḷakku eṇa niṅaimiṅ, valviṅai mūḷkātu;  
aḷakkoṭi aṭṭāṅ amar peruñkōyil,  
maḷak kaḷiṅṅu iṅam cēr māliṛuñcōlai,  
toḷak karutuvatē tuṅivatu cūṭē.

(II-10-9)



**Translation**

Get not immersed in dire sins,  
 Take this advice just and wholesome,  
 'Tis best that you firmly resolve to worship  
 Māliṛuñ Cōlai where elephants young herd up  
 And there is the huge temple of the Lord,  
 Who, the devil of a woman destroyed.

**Notes**

- (i) The Ājvār says, it would suffice even if one just resolved to worship this pilgrim centre.
- (ii) The devil of a woman referred to here is Pūtanā.
- (iii) Speaking about the herds of young elephants mustering here in strength, Nampiḷlai observes that it is no wonder that the Lord (Aḷakar) standing like an elephant, Young and majestic, (Cōlai Maḷakkaḷṛu) as Tirumañkai Ājvār appreciates the Deity, attracts thousands of elephants.

cūtu eṅṛu kaḷavum cūtum ceyyātē,  
 vētam muṅ virittāṅ virumpiya kōyil,  
 mātu uṅu mayil cēr māliruñcōlaiṅ  
 pōtu aviḷ malaiyē, pukuvatu poruḷē.

(II-10-10)

**Translation**

Giving up gambling and thieving as means of subsistence,  
 Get into Mount Māliṛuñcōlai, your final goal  
 Where flowers are in full bloom and lovely peacocks, in pairs,  
 revel  
 And there is the temple where the Lord lovingly stays,  
 Who did elaborate the contents of the Scriptures, long back.

**Notes**

- (i) 'Thieving' refers to 'Ātma apahāra', the stealing of the Soul, looking upon ourselves as our own Masters ignoring the fundamental fact that we belong to the Lord.

- (ii) *Gambling*: indulging in quibblings to put people on the wrong track and dissuade them from believing in the existence of God, good and bad, and things of that sort.
- (iii) Long, long ago, the Lord disseminated the Vedas, unseen, and later on, as Lord Kṛṣṇa, He expounded their inner meanings, right from the chariot on the battlefield; Bhagavad Gitā is but a restatement of the central teachings of the Ūpaniṣhads.
- (iv) The Lord loves to stay in this pilgrim centre, just to attract, by His exquisite charm, those not amenable to His advice (upadeśa).
- (v) *Final Goal*: Going to Māliroñcōlai is an end in itself.

poruḷ eḡḡu iv ulakam paṭaittavaṅ pukaḷmēl  
 maruḷ il vaṅ kurukūr vaṅ caṭ-kōpaṅ  
 teruḷ kollac coṅṅa ḍr āyirattuḷ ip pattu  
 aruḷutaiyavaṅ-tāḷ aṅaivikkum muṭittē.

(II-10-11)

### Translation

These ten songs out of the thousand imparted  
 By mighty Caṭakōpaṅ of famous Kurukūr, with clarity great,  
 Shedding on us knowledge, clear and concise, about  
 the Lord  
 Of many an auspicious trait, Who the worlds did hopefully  
 create,  
 Will cut out *Samsāra* and put us at His merciful feet.

### Notes

- (i) As already explained in II-9-11, what is meant here again is that the Lord will be immensely pleased with those who learn these ten songs and confer on them the benefits referred to here.
- (ii) The Lord endowed us with limbs and sense-organs so as to capacitate us into a career of gainful activity. This is what is meant by creation and He goes on with it, undaunted by adverse results, always hoping for better luck, an indefatigable Cultivator, with robust optimism.



## THE CENTUM, IN RETROSPECT (DECAD-WISE SUMMARY)

(II-1): The traumatic experience of the Saint, longing for the external (physical) perception of the Lord and stung by the poignancy of separation from that priceless blue-gem, the darling of the celestials, described by him in I-10-11, is set out in vivid colours *in the first decad*; thrown into a state of deep dejection, the Ājvār stands transformed once again as a forlorn female lover;

(II-2): The erstwhile gloom of the God-lover, sunk deep in dejection, is found to have vanished, *in toto, in the second decad*, consequent upon his exhilarating union with the Lord, the pendulum having swung to the other end; in such an exultant mood, the Saint highlights the Lord's supremacy vis-a-vis Brahmā and Rudra, the possible contenders for this position of eminence, in the light of the wondrous deeds performed by the Lord during His incarnations;

(II-3): *In the third decad*, the Saint gives vent to the joy of his reunion with the enchanting Lord, an inexhaustible fountain of bliss;

(II-4): *In the fourth decad*, we see the Ājvār, thrown into deep dejection back again, inasmuch as his longing for entry into the gatherings of the devotees and singing profusely the glory of the Lord in their steadfast company, did not materialise; assuming once again the overtones of a frustrated lover. The Nāyaki's grief is too deep for words and the gnostic mother comes on the scene and seeks clarification from the Lord as to what He proposes to do with the poor little victim, her daughter;

(II-5): Beholding, once again, the joyous Lord in all His splendour and paraphernalia, the Saint feels immensely delighted and narrates his ecstatic experience, *in the fifth decad*; the Lord meets the aspiration of the Ājvār by conferring on him the heavenly bliss longed for by him, right here;

(II-6): *In the sixth decad*, the Ājvār hastens to assure the Lord that he shall not part from Him any more, finding Him at the height of His joy of union with him but nevertheless apprehensive of the possibility of his slipping away, overwhelmed by His transcendent glory;

(II-7): *In the seventh decad*, the Ājvār expatiates on the extraordinary benevolence of the Lord, in extending His grace to all those associated with him, seven generations back and forth;

(II-8): *In the eighth decad*, the Ājvār, swayed by boundless compassion for the suffering humanity, turns round and advises them to get into the Divine fold, taking due note of the fact that the Lord is the one and only granter of Mokṣa, the final bliss, ridding them of their terrific involvement in the dreadful cycle of birth and death; (This is the second time the Ājvār addresses the world, the first was in I-2.)

(II-9): *In the ninth decad* the Āḷvār pinpoints the concept of 'Puruṣārta', the ultimate value or final goal of every individual, the emphasis resting on the Lord's voluntary dispensation, out of His free will and spontaneous grace, individual gratification of one's own desire receding to the background altogether; what a lofty train of thought, totally bereft of egoistic impulses and putting the entire weight on the Lord!

(II-10): *In the concluding decad of this Centum*, the Āḷvār exhorts people to propitiate the hilarious Mount Tirumāḷiruñcōlai (near Mathurai, in Tamil Nāḍu) his predilections extending even to the other hills, in and around and the very route leading thereto; the Āḷvār advises people to go to this pilgrim centre, while still young and before the sensual pleasures get hold of the rising youth and distract it.

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## ERRATA (Vol. I)

PAGE	LINE	
1	1	<i>For decades read as decads.</i>
1	7	<i>For Divnie read as Divine.</i>
2	7	Insert the following after ' say ' " that God is the fountain-source of infinite bliss "
8	8	(From bottom <i>For him read as Him.</i>
15		Foot-note insert ? at the end.
18	4	(From bottom) <i>For being read as Being.</i>
23	15	(From bottom) <i>For Those read as To, those</i>
„	11	(From bottom) insert ' by ' after ' sought '.
26	10	Delete, before ' calls '.
31	8	<i>For wearing read as weaning.</i>
32	12	Delete ' the ' at the beginning.
50	11	Substitute, for ! and ! for, at the end.
76	6	(From bottom) Shift the, before ' fit '.
80	13	Insert ) before ' peerless ' and delete ) at the end.
81	11	(From bottom) insert , before ' of '.
87	10	(From bottom) insert , before ' to '.
89	9	(From bottom) insert , after ' operates '.
91	4	Insert , after ' mind '.
101	2	<i>For Discuss read as Discus.</i>
105	12	<i>For demons read as demon's.</i>
110	19	(Forms part of line 18) <i>For He read as he.</i>
114	Last	<i>For It read as I.</i>
136	3	(From bottom) <i>For apired read as aspired.</i>
158	20	Substitute! for full-stop at the end.
160	5	Insert full-stop after (Yāmuna).
161	14	<i>For vallaikaṅ read as vallaikāṅ.</i>
163	8	Insert , after ' his '.
168	5	Insert , after ' of '.
172	8	<i>For with read as within.</i>
176	10	(From bottom) <i>For of read as or.</i>
183	17	<i>For Fancied read as fancied.</i>
191	15	Delete ) before ' as '.
„	16	Substitute ) for, after ' Deity '.