

Group 4

My Favourite Samaya Kuravar

Of all the religions, Saivism is the greatest and oldest. It is still prospering today because of the Thevarams and Thiruvagasams, which may be described as the Tamil Vedas. It was the Kuravars who wrote these Tamil Vedas. They are Thirugnanasambanda Nayanar, Thirunavukarasu Nayanar, Suntharamoorthy Nayanar, and Manikavasaga Swamigal.

Of the Kuravars, it was Manikavasaga Swamigal who worshipped Lord Shiva in Gnana Markkam, and finally merged into Him. He was born in Thiruvathavoor in Tamil Nadu. His father was called Sambupaathaasiriyar. His mother was called Sivagnanavathiyar. His parents named him Vaathavoorar at birth. The King of Pandi Nadu made him chief minister and gave him the title, "Thennavan Pirammaraayan", in honour of his wisdom, good behaviour, and knowledge of the arts. Manikavasagar had the honour of having Lord Shiva Himself as his Guru. The songs he sang – the Thiruvagasams – have the power to melt the hearts of anyone.

The special thing about all of Manikavasagar's miracles is that when they were performed, Lord Shiva was present. Lord Shiva himself came as a horse-trader and turned foxes into horses to sell to the king. He then turned them back into foxes at night. He came as labourer to work for an old lady called Chemmanachchelvi, to help dam up the flooded river "Vaikai". Finally the king Pandiya beat him because he was not doing any work. Everyone else also felt the hit as if they were also being beaten. Lord Shiva came as a Brahmin and wrote all the Thiruvagasams himself. At the end of that He asked Manikavasagar to sing the Thirukovaiyaar as well. Manikavasagar obliged and Lord Shiva wrote the Thirukovaiyaar down as well. After he did this, Manikavasagar was asked by the Thillaivaazh-anthar what the meaning of the Thiruvagasams and Thirukovaiyyar was. Manikavasagar showed Lord Shiva at Chithambaram Temple and disappeared. He achieved Para-muththi – also called Sayuchiya-muththi – meaning that his soul merged with God. This happened when he was thirty-two years old.

Manikavasagar sang six hundred and fifty eight Thiruvagasams and four hundred songs of Thirukovaiyaar. These make up the eighth Thirumurai.

Although we have a lot to learn from Manikavasagar, the most important thing is this: even though he was given the title "Thennavan Pirammaraayan", he always put himself down – he repeatedly said that he at a lower level than a dog, in his songs – and he prayed to Lord Shiva without a trace of egotism.