

Group 1

Sundaramurthi Nayanar

There was once a respected Brahmin couple called Sadaiyanar and Isaiganiar who lived in Thiru Navalur, in Tamilnadu. They gave birth to a divine child, named "Nambi Arurar".

At the proper age, his parents wanted to get their son married. But just when the marriage ceremony was about to begin, Lord Shiva came in disguise as an old Brahmin, and said, "This man, Arurar is my bond-slave! I have a document to that effect, written by his grandfather". This put an end to the marriage ceremony and Arurar argued angrily with him and called him a 'Pithan' or mad man. After examining the old man's document, the wise men said it was true! The shocked Arurar had to accept their decision and prepared for a life of slavery.

The old man took Arurar into the temple of Thiru Arul Thurai and then suddenly vanished! Only then did Arurar understand that it was the Lord Himself who had appeared as the old man. He was so upset that he had not recognized his beloved Lord and had argued with him instead! Lord Shiva blessed him and gave him the name Sundarar.

Lord Shiva told him to compose his first song with the word Pitha (as he had called him a madman!) Sundarar did so, and the result was the beautiful thevaram *Pitha Pirai Soodi*.

Sundaramurti Nayanar visited several famous temples. He sang the glory of Lord Shiva at all the sacred places that he visited. He thought of Lord Shiva as his dearest friend. He lived for only 18 years, in the 8th Century, but his Thevarams are sung in Saivite Temples and homes throughout the world, even today.