

Srinivasa Bala Bharati - 123
(Children Series)

NAMMALVAR

-Prema Nandakumar

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Telugu Version

Dr. P. Saurirajan

English Translation

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**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati**

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Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Ravva Sri Hari

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FOREWORD

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good, and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets in Telugu for children under Srinivasa Bala Bharathi Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord



Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,

Tirupati.

FOREWORD

To-day's children are to-morrow's citizens. They need at tender age apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenants of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lifes of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr. B. Raghunathacharyulu under "Balabharati Series". The response over these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with some of the books are now brought out with English and Hindi rendering by T.T.D. For the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets primarily intended to the growing children and also generally intended to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI
Editor-In-Chief
T.T.D.

WELCOME!

*Srinivasadayo dbhutaa baalaanaam sphoortidaayini
Bharati jayatalloke Bharateeyagunojjvalaa!*

In all this wide, wide world, India has been the originator of culture that has now blossomed everywhere. This includes religion and philosophy. Each person born in this land has opposed adharma and directed his own life on the path of dharma. With faith in God, each one has achieved fame. To be in the presence of these great men enriches us no end. If we learn at least their life's story and keep it in mind, the effect would be immense. Each and every boy and girl must say, "I am an Indian", "this tradition comes to me down innumerable generations" and "this is my duty". And they should offer themselves to serving the motherland.

To tell the truth, countless outstanding persons, mahapurushas, mahapativratas and celebrated heroes were born and grew up here. By their work, they laid strong foundations for our culture. They have made the pure springs of a fine culture stream down to our own times. Ah! Aren't we very fortunate? Our background has a memorable history. If those great men and eminent women had not taken their birth in this land, how would we have been enriched by such a famous culture? Just to understand them, know their life stories, and remember their ideals is itself an education which will make us also great. In the future, that education will help our race by enriching it with the sparkle and beauty of a superior culture. This is the reason for the sunrise of Srinivasa Bala Bharati. It will bring you many eminent people of our land. Don't waste any more time, children! Come! Come!

This is our heartfelt welcome to you all.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Varalakshmi Vratam, 22.8.1980

Chief Editor



NAMMALVAR

Introduction

Will a new born baby remain without crying or moving? If he were so, we would not recognize him as living at all. But one boy is alive but neither cries nor does he make any movement. How surprising! What is even more surprising is that even after many days he does not appear to be like other children. He just stays beneath a tamarind tree, lost in meditation. He neither moves nor utters a word. But he shines with a rare brilliance. Time passes. He becomes sixteen years old. An aged man about sixty is saluting him. How surprising! Who is that great man? He is Nammalvar. He is also called Parankusamuni and Sathakopamuni.

A brilliant ray:

The moon had not risen till then. It was a long time since the sun had gone down. Day was almost done. During that evening Madhurakavi who was near the city of Ayodhya ended his meditation and opened his eyes. Suddenly he saw a divine brilliance glowing in the sky. Madhurakavi concentrated his mind upon that brilliance. It began to move gradually towards the south. Madhurakavi looked around himself. No one who was near him noticed that brilliant light or how it was moving southwards. Madhurakavi felt that the brilliant light was inviting him. Immediately he began walking to follow that glowing ray. Not for one or two days but he walked on for several weeks. Why, the walking stretched to months.

During daytime Madhurakavi used to take rest. When night came, he followed unquestioningly the light. On the way he crossed many temples. Finally, Madhurakavi reached Tirukurugur in South India. Ah! The brilliant ray that was visible till then, now vanished. Madhurakavi did not know what to do or where to go. He stopped for a while.

An unusual sight:

The night was over. It was dawn. The birds were singing. Cool wind blew from the river bank. The



flowers that blossomed in the gardens were spreading sweet scent. The people of the village had begun to go about their work. Madhurakavi asked an old man who was going towards the river.

"Sir! I am new to this village. I have visited many holy places. I have seen many wonderful sights. Has any remarkable occurrence happened here? Kindly tell me", said Madhurakavi.

The old man looked at Madhurakavi up and down. "Sir! From your words it is obvious that you are a stranger to these parts. There is a marvelous sight here the like of which you would not have seen anywhere else. There! You can see at a distance the holy tamarind tree. Beneath the tree a boy has been sitting in meditation for the last sixteen years. You go and watch the strange sight yourself". So saying, the old man went away towards the river.

Madhurakavi entered the village looking for the tamarind tree. That tree was an ancient one. It had been giving shade for several hundred years. It looked as though Adishesha himself was there, with his raised hood spreading the shade. The brilliance in the sky he had been watching all these days seemed to have taken the image of a boy seated there. No movement could be detected in the figure. His eyes had a far-away look. Madhurakavi did not know what to do. For a

moment he planned in his mind what to say or how to address this person who was in deep meditation. He gently threw a tiny pebble so it could fall near the seated figure.

It was like a gentle wave moving in a calm pond. The boy opened his eyes. Madhurakavi was happy that his attempt had succeeded.

My life is fulfilled:

Madhurakavi was not an ordinary person. He was born in the Brahmin caste. He had studied the four Vedas. He knew the significance of the Vedas. By the time he came to Tirukurugur, he was more than sixty years old. The boy was now awake. So he placed before him his spiritual doubt for clarification.

"If the small one is born in the dead thing, what will it eat and where will it live?"

Nammalvar opened his mouth and said: "It will eat that and remain there."

The meaning is as follows: The atma stays in the body which is not its own, goes through the joys and sorrows of the body and remains there.

With these words Madhurakavi was filled with devotion for the boy. He prostrated upon the ground and offered salutations. He requested the boy to accept him as a disciple.

"Sir! I have wandered all over North India. I went around calling, 'Rama', 'Rama'. I went around Brindavan in tears, crying out, 'Krishna', 'Krishna'. I sang 'Narasimha', 'Narasimha' till my tongue got dry. Today your grace has given me fulfillment. My life has found fulfillment. You are my mother. You are my father. You are my Guru. You are my Lord. You are my all. All these days I had been wandering, to knowing the way. You have put me on the right path. This is enough. My life has been sanctified." Saying all this with tears flowing from his eyes, Madhurakavi saluted the boy again. That boy was Nammalvar.

Nammalvar's birth and happenings:

Historians say that cultures originated on the banks of rivers. This is very true. The Egyptian culture blossomed on the banks of Nile river. Ancient Russian culture developed on the banks of the river Volga. The Aryan civilization rose on the banks of the river Sindhu. Ancient Indian culture came to stay permanently on the banks of the river Ganga. As witnesses to the greatness of this culture, river banks are dotted with several famous temples. Here many distinguished personalities have been born and become outstanding achievers.

Tamraparni is one such river. On the banks of this river you find nine temples known as Nava Tirupatis.

Tirukurugur is one of them. People belonging to the Vellala caste live in Tirukurugur. These days Vellala caste is associated merely with farming. But they are more than farmers. They are also religious persons who grow crops in spiritual fields. They are vegetarians. All of them are devotees of Narayana. In this caste, one was born in Tirukurugur and was named Tiru Vazhudhivala Nadar. The term 'Vazhudhi' indicates that he belonged to a family of soldiers of the Pandyan Kings. Nammalvar was born in his family.

Today, one's life is controlled by school, college, films and magazines. But in ancient times, it was the family that determined the education of a person. More importance was given to family traditions than to the individual. In those days, one's bhakti or heroism or scholarship was measured by the ancestors of that person. Seen from this view point, Nammalvar's ancestors were apparently devotion-oriented and had spiritual inclinations.

Tiru Vazhudhivala Nadar, Aranthaangiyar, Chakrapaniyar, Achuthar, Chenthamaraikkannanar, Chenkannanar, Porkariyar, Kariyar were the seven generations of ancestors for Nammalvar.

Porkariyar decided to perform the marriage of his young son. He was searching for a proper bride. It is not wrong to hope for raising one's family's great-

ness through the girl who comes as a bride. It is also a joy for parents to watch their son and daughter-in-law lead a happy family life.

Close to Tirukkurugur is the village of Tiruvanparisaram. The presiding deity of the village is Tiruvazhmarban. The Goddess of temple is Kamalavalli Nachchiyar. There lived in the village a house holder with the name Tiruvazhmarban. Porkariyar learnt that he had a beautiful and accomplished daughter. The elders spoke to each other and the boy and the girl gave their approval. The marriage was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The newly married couple would go often to Tiruvanparisaram from Tirukkurugur. On the way is a tiny village called Tirukkurungudi. The Lord of the place is known as Nambi.

I will incarnate:

Once Kariyar worshipped in Nambi's temple along with his bride Udayanangai. The couple prayed for progeny. A disembodied voice spoke through the priest: "I will incarnate"! The young couple were taken aback. They were filled with delight with this indication of grace from the Lord. Taking holy water and prasada, they returned to Tirukurugur. After a little while, Udayanangai became pregnant. Nambi's boon came true. The kaustubha gem shed its luster on the baby in the womb. Vishwaksena uttered the victory-



blessing for the establishment of the Kingdom of Bhakti. About eleven centuries ago Nammalvar was born.

Strange attributes, unusual names:

Nammalvar after birth did not move his limbs like common babies. He did not cry. He did not laugh. Nor did he take food. There was no movement of the limbs. The parents were at first frightened. Later, remembering the words of the Lord in the Tirukurungudi temple, they ceased to worry.

Twelve days passed by. The baby was free of birth pollution. The couple took the baby to the temple of Adinatha in Tirukkurugur. As the baby was unlike the usual children, they named him 'Maran'. 'Maran' means 'different' in Tamil. Saying, "O Lord, you are the guardian of this child", they placed him in a cradle tied to the tamarind tree near the temple. Maran grew up. As long as one is in the womb, the 'satha' wind covers the knowledge of the Supreme. But Maran's utterance of the 'hoonkara' sound chased it away and the wind never came near him. Hence he came to be known as Sathakopa, one who was angry with satha.

Years went by. But there was no change in the boy. The parents were very unhappy. They blamed themselves of having done evil in their earlier birth. But they remembered the Lord's boon and consoled

themselves. It is said Vishwaksena came in person and performed the ritual of placing the signs of the Disc and the Conch on Nammalvar's shoulders.

Time moved forward. Vishnu with Lakshmi on their Garuda mount gave darsan to Nammalvar. The Lord also showed His various forms found in different temples. Then Nammalvar began reciting the glory of the Lord in pasuras (verses).

Nammalvar wrote four works titled **Tiruviruttam**, **Tiruvasiriyam**, **Peria Tiruvandadi** and **Tiruvaimoli**. He presented them as the essence of Rig, Yajus, Sama and Atharva Vedas. That is why scholars hail him as 'Vedam Tamil seyta Maran' (One who gave the Vedas in Tamil).

Delighted with these works, Polindu Ninra Piran (Adhinathaswami), the presiding deity of Tirukurugur temple, presented Nammalvar with a garland of Vakula blossoms. Hence he is also known as Vakulabharana. With his ideas and arguments, Nammalvar defeated those who followed non-Vedic religions. That is why he is called Parankusa which means he was like the goad that controlled the elephant-like-non-Vedic religions that had proliferated in his time.

Nammalvar's fame spread to many lands. Innumerable devotees came to him to offer their saluta-

tions. The common man received a new strength thanks to Nammalvar's compassionate glances. Philosophers understood important Vedantic matters from Nammalvar. Spending his life in mediation beneath the tamarind tree, Nammalvar reached Vaikuntha in his 35th year. Madhurakavi consecrated an image of Nammalvar under the tamarind tree and felt blessed.

The coming of Nathamuni:

Nathamuni is one of the acharyas who spread Vaishnavism. He traveled all over Northern India and returned to his ancestral village, Veeranarayanapuram. Just then some Vaishnavas came there from Tirukurugur. They sang a few pasurams from **Tiruvaim oli** with devotional fervour. Till then Nathamuni had not heard these verses. He was overwhelmed with joy while listening to the verses and understanding the beautiful thoughts in them. All these verses were about Sarangapani, the presiding deity of Aravamudan temple in Kumbhakonam.

When the devotees had completed singing, Nathamuni said:

"Devotees! Who composed these songs? You sang only ten verses. It looks as though this work contains one thousand verses. Who is there who can sing all of them? Kindly let me know."

"Sir! We come from Tirukurugur. we learnt the songs there. If you go to Tirukurugur, you may hear the rest being sung there."

Nathamuni went to Tirukurugur. He asked many persons residing there about the songs. But no one was able to help him. Finally one Vaishnava said:

"Sir! There is a very old man in this village called Parankusadasa. Ask him. He might help you."

Nathamuni felt like the man floundering in darkness who was shown a streak of light. He went to Parankusadasa and told him the purpose of his visit.

"Sir! Even I know only those ten verses. Sing those songs with deep aspiration. Meditate upon Nammalvar. You may succeed."

Nathamuni sang the ten verses with great devotion as directed by Parankusadasa. He meditated upon Nammalvar with one-pointed concentration. Nammalvar appeared in Nathamuni's vision and taught him all the other pasurams. This is how the works of Nammalvar which were about to be lost in time, were retrieved and gained currency.

Nammalvar's Works:

Nammalvar wrote four works. **Tiruviruttam**, **Tiruvasiriyam**, **Peria Tiruvandadi** and **Tiruvaimoli**.

Tiruviruttam

This is written in the prosodic metre of 'viruttam' and gets the name with the addition of 'Tiru' which means 'Sri' in Tamil. **Tiruviruttam** is in the Third Thousand known as Iyarpa in the **Nalayira Divya Prabandham**. It has one hundred verses in 'antadi' style.

The Third Thousand of **Nalayira Divya Prabandham** explains the Charama sloka. Charama sloka means the last Vedantic utterance spoken by Krishna in the **Bhagavad Gita**. Charama sloka asks the jiva to surrender to the Lord with complete faith. **Tiruviruttam** deals with this point. The devotee kidambiachchan speaks of **Tiruviruttam**'s significance thus:

"O people who are born, grow up along with countless desires and suffer in old age! To gain all your desires and attain salvation, try to understand one quarter of a single verse of Tiruviruttam and sing it with devotion."

Tiruvasiriyam

As it is written in the metre of 'Asiriyappa', this work is known as **Tiruvasiriyam**. A work in 79 lines which is easily understood. Emberumanar said of it:

"For the sake of saving earth-born lives, Nammalvar was born in this world and gave the message of the Vedas and Vedanta in the 'asiriyappa' metre. Let us keep our heart pure and never forget to praise our Teacher, Parankusa, Vakulabharana."

Peria Tiruvandadi

This work is in 'venba' metre and has 87 verses. The last letter of one verse is taken as the first letter of the next verse. So, this work is called the **Peria Tiruvandadi**. Ramanuja, who established the Visistadvaita Darsana, has spoken very highly of this work which underlines its greatness.

Tiruvaimoli

Tiruvaimoli happens to be the Fourth Thousand of the **Nalayira Divya Prabandham**. According to some, it is like a crown to **Nalayira Divya Prabandham**. It is referred to as Bhagavad Vishayam. Some speak of it as Sama Veda. Devotees speak of them as devotional poems. Tamil scholars speak of it as Dravida Veda. Ramanuja and many Acharyas after him wrote commentaries on Tiruvaimoli. They are known as **Aarayirappadi, Pannirayirappadi, Irupattunalayirappadi** or **Eedu**. Much later came another commentary, **Acharya Hrudayam**. It is said that the mother of the thousand verses of **Tiruvaimoli**

is Sathakopa. Ramanuja is said to have brought up the child. Thus have the elders praised the work.

Nammalvar among the Alvars:

Alvars are those who are immersed in devotion for God, love and Ananda. According to Vaishnavas Alvars are twelve in number. These twelve are incarnations of the assistants of Vishnu like Sesha and Garuda, Weapons like the conch and the disc.

Nammalvar is the soul. The first three Alvars are the mind. The rest are the body, says the Vaishnava tradition.

They are also seen in another manner. Pudattalvar is the head, Poygai and Pey Alvars are the eyes, Perialvar the face, Tirumalisai Alvar is the neck. Kulasekhar Alvar and Tiruppanalvar are the hands. Tondaradippodi Alvar is the chest. Tirumangai Alvar is the navel. Madhurakavi is the feet. Even as the other alvars are the limbs (avayava), Nammalvar is symbolized as the One (avayavi) who has them as his limbs.

Nammalvar's unique personality shows he was endowed with Brahman-knowledge even at birth. The others are based mainly on bhakti.

Only Nammalvar is known as the Acharya, not the others.

Some people are famous because of the place where they are born. Some bring fame to their place

of birth by their great deeds. Nammalvar is one of them. Because of this eminent person, Tirukurugur village has become famous as Alvar Tirunagari. This village is on the way from Tirunelveli to Tiruchendur in Tamil Nadu.

Nammalvar-Sri Venkata Giri:

It is well known that Nammalvar had darsan of holy temples in his meditation. They say Vishnu, along with Lakshmi, rode the Garuda and gave Nammalvar darsan of the various murtis in different temples. Vaishnavas consider 108 temples as important. Of them the most famous are Srirangam, Kanchipuram and Tirupati. These three temples are strong bases for Vaishnavism. Except for Tondaradippodi Alvar and Madhurakavi Alvar, all the other ten Alvars have sung of Venkateswara. Of them, Nammalvar had addressed the maximum number of verses to the Lord of Tirupati.

According to Vaishnavism, Narayana is the Supreme Lord. He is the home of all auspicious qualities. His place of residence is holy. He is the cause of creation, sustenance and destruction. We worship that Narayana with a variety of names and forms. But whatever the name or form we choose, the prayer ultimately reaches Narayana.

Krishna is the favourite deity of Nammalvar. His sadhana was through madhura bhakti. The jivatma is

the bride of the Lord. The jivatma has the Lord as its food and water. It is the Lord who gives Ananda for the jivatma. The supreme image for bhakti is the group of gopikas in Brindavan. Those who follow the path of the gopis will never fail to gain the presence of Sri Krishna. When Krishna is not seen, the devotee feels tortured. The Lord is also anxious to gain the love of the devotee. This is the supreme path of love revealed to us by Nammalvar.

Nammalvar was not satisfied just with a description of the deities in various temples. He has written many verses from the viewpoint of a bride, bride's companion and mother in worshipping the Lord. Let us see some of them:

"My friends! Don't you see anything? Look carefully. Check with concentration. My Lord is moving towards Venkata Hill so that even gods can reside there and gain riches. Look on with care."

"O clouds! I asked many and requested them. But no one was willing to go to my Lord as my ambassador. I think you are going to Venkata Hill which appears as if sprinkled with nine varieties of gems. You also look exactly like that mountain. It is certain you both are equal. You are going there. Will you not go there for my sake?"

"Friends who are wearing bangles that make sweet sounds! You have no worry of any kind. Look at me. I have grown very thin. My bangles appear as if they would fall down. Look at my condition who had gone in search of that Venkateswara!"

"O Resident of Tirumala! What have you done to my daughter? She is still not grown up physically. She does not even know how to tie the strings of her skirt. She is just lisping words. Yet she is always speaking of Venkateswara. Some times she says, One who is dark in complexion, like the cloud! Sometimes she cries out, One who measured the three worlds! Sometimes she murmurs, One with eyes like red lotuses! Crying thus and thinking of you, she has grown very thin and her bangles have fallen down from her wrists."

"This Tirumala is not ordinary mountain. This is the favourite place of enjoyment for the Lord. Hence it is like a tilak for the Dravida country. You are staying in such a place with Your devotees and torturing me. Do tell me why. You do not understand my pain. Even if I give expression to it, You act as though You have not heard anything. My mind wants to be with You. In spite of my 'no', it drags me towards You. You are attracting me no end! What is the secret of Your attraction? Is it the loveliness of Your face which draws us to look at You again? Or the sweet words

which one wants to hear constantly? Or the beauty of the lips which lets fall nectarean words? I do not understand. Tell me Yourself, O Lord!" So cries out the devotee attracted by the handsome Lord.

There was a bride. For long she remained in the company of her companions and aspired for her Lord. But there was no result. So the bride became tired. The very name of the Lord irritated her and made her angry. Nammalvar has given an attractive description of this scene.

"Sir! you came searching for an elephant. It was not to be seen. If the animal was not found, a gentleman should just go away without uttering a word. But You did not do so. You saw our lady. You are describing her eyes and the beauty of her eyes. What will people say if they hear You speaking so? Also, You were staying in the mountain dark as a cloud that seemed to have drunk all the waters of the seas. But all that time You never said a word. There is no connection between You and us. You can go."

Here is another scene presented by Nammalvar.

There is a lady. She saw the hero and fell in love. But the hero has not yet joined her. The heroine's pangs of separation increased. All these emotions are shown as that of a devotee in the picture drawn by Nammalvar.

The heroine is suffering due to separation. So her body has become very thin. Without knowing the cause of the sickness, one should not try contrary remedies. What use the gypsy fortune-teller's ways of applying remedies? It is not right for a mother to go about getting such treatments. It might harm the girl. Just take her to Tirumala and leave her there. All will be well.

Nammalvar-Annamayya:

It is the custom to speak of Annamayya as the father of Telugu devotional songs. He is said to have composed a kriti a day till his last breath. The total numbers 32,000 songs! Finding the importance given by the Vaishnava tradition to the songs in **Nalayira Divya Prabandham**, he adhered to it and wrote his works. One can see the inspiration of Nammalvar in many of the songs of Annamayya.

In his pasuram, "Olivil kaalamellaam" Nammalvar praises the Lord who resides on the Tirumala Hill that shines in the glorious riches of nature. Annamayya writes in almost the same terms:

This Hill is visible Vaikunta to our eyes
This Tirumala of endless magnificence.

Vedas have become the stones of this Hill
Holy deeds have become water-falls here;

This Hill is higher to Brahmaloaka and others;
This is Seshadri where the Lord resides."

Nammalvar says in Tiruvaimoli that the gift of poesy must not be used to praise human beings. It must be used only to praise the Lord. Annamayya also expresses himself thus:

I thought why these thoughts come to me
And when I knew, it became clear

It is wrong for the body created by Hari
To praise human beings and not Hari
Will one praise a despicable stream
When the majesty of the Lord is ours?"

Nammalvar said that a chandala is better than a brahmin who has no bhakti. If the chandala has devotion for Hari, he is worthy of worship. Annamayya also says so:

"Even if he thinks a little of Hari's qualities
He is the real, noble Brahmin;

More than a renunciate who studies Vedanta
But never thinks of Hari, it is a low-caste person
Who may eat animals yet thinks of Hari
Is the true Brahmin."

In Vaishnavism the service of the servants of God is considered superior even to the service of God Himself. Nammalvar has mentioned the superiority of ser-

vice to bhagavatas in many of his pasurams.
Annamayya does the same:

"Need I meditate upon You Achyuta
When Your servants give me

All that is good here and in heaven?

Is it not enough for us to have bhakti
For those who are devoted to Hari?

Is it not enough for us to be the servant
Of the servant of Hari's servant?"

Is Venkateswara Vishnu? Or Siva? Or a Folk God?
Or Sakti? Such questions are raised often. But in the
minds of those who think of him, He is Vishnu, Siva,
Sakti. Just as Nammalvar says that the Lord appears
in the form imaged by the devotee, Annamayya sings:

"The degree that the Lord is meditated upon
That much is His appearance to the devotee
If you look within, it is like the saying
The sweet equals the size of the flour.

The Vaishnavas pray devotedly as Vishnu
The Vedantins speak of You as Parabrahman
The Saivites worship in the form of Siva
The Kapalikas hail happily as Adibhairava

I have naught that is wanting in You

You are like the lotus that rises to the water level

In the same way, You appear according

To the meditational level of the devotee.
Close to us, You guard us like the wells
Near Ganga which spring the same water.
You are Venkatapati and our guardian Lord
Your feet is the treasure, the Paratatva for us."

Nammalvar's message is clear: "Worship the Lord.
Surrender to Him. Praise His greatness. Recite His
names. He will guard you. Always save you."
Nammalvar is the brilliant ray that is showing us the
right path.

* * *