

THE DIVYA PRABANDHAM

(Part-2)

As the name itself signifies the *A:Iwa:rs* were the great saints who were soaked or deeply immersed in the Divine Love of the Supreme Lord. As the Supreme Lord Himself granted them that state there were no signs of pride in them. They accepted the will of providence as the mercy of the Lord. The *Divya prabandhams* are the spontaneous outpourings of the *A:Iwa:rs*. They sang these hymns in the state of ecstatic trance. They have revealed their mind and the state in which they were in these hymns. Hence any effort to understand the *Divya-prabandhams* without knowing about them will be incomplete. Hence, let us try to know about the *A:Iwa:rs*, before venturing to learn the *Divya prabandhams*.

According to the tradition, the *A:Iwa:rs* lived on this planet in between 4200 B.C. and 2500 B.C. They might have enacted many pastimes during their stay on this planet. However due to the influence of time we know only their prominent pastimes. There may be many versions about the lives of the *A:Iwa:rs*. According to the tradition 1) *Divya su:ri-charitham*, (of Garuda va:hana

Panditha), 2) *Prapanna:mriitha* 3) *Guru parampara: prabha:va* 4) *Prabandha sa:ra* (of Veda:nta desikar) 5) *Upade:sa-Rathna Ma:la* (of Manava:la ma:muni) and 6) *Pazhanadai-vilakkam* are the authentic sources to know about the lives of the *A:Iwa:rs*. Hence let us base our study of the lives of *A:Iwa:rs* on these texts.

There are ten *A:Iwa:rs* namely Poygai-*A:Iwa:r*, Pu:daththa:*Iwa:r*, Pey *A:Iwa:r*, Thirumazhisai *A:Iwa:r*, Kulase:khar *A:Iwa:r*, Namma:*Iwa:r*, Periya:*Iwa:r*, Thiruppa:*na:Iwa:r*, Thondaradippodi *A:Iwa:r* and Thirumangai *A:Iwa:r*. *A:nda:l* the daughter of Periya:*Iwa:r* and Madhurakavi *A:Iwar* the disciple of Namma:*Iwar* are also considered as the *A:Iwars* for all practical purposes. Hence the *A:Iwars* can be considered as twelve in number.

Poygai *A:Iwa:r*, Pu:dathth *A:Iwa:r* and Pey *A:Iwa:r* are the most ancient of all the *A:Iwars* hence they are also called *Mudal A:Iwars*. They made their advent on this planet during the concluding stages of *Dwapara Yuga* (4200 B.C.). According to the tradition they were contemporaries.

Poigai A:lwa:r was the first among the three. He is also known as Sa:ra-Yogi. He was born out of a golden lotus, in the sacred pond situated in the precincts of Lord Vishnu's temple in Ka:nchi-puram. He made his advent when the *Sra:vana* asterism was prevailing in the *A:svi:yuja* month of *Siddha:rthi* Year. He is supposed to be the part manifestation of Lord Vishnu's conch *Pa:nchajanya*.

Pudathth A:lwa:r, the second of the three A:lwa:r is also known as Bhu:tha Yo:gi. He was born out of a *Ma:dhavi* flower (*Gartnera Racemosa*) in Thirukkadal mallai (the present Maha:balipuram). Pudathth A:lwa:r was only a day younger to Poigai-A:lwa:r. He made his advent when the *Dhanishtta* asterism was prevailing. He is said to be the part manifestation of Lord's mace i.e. *Kaumo:daki*.

Pey A:lwa:r the youngest of the three A:lwa:rs was a day younger to Pudathth A:lwa:r. He was also called as Maha:Yo:gi. He was born out of a red lotus in the sacred pond that is situated in the precincts of the A:di Ke:sava Perumal temple in Mayu:ra puri (the present Mylapur in Chennai). He made his advent when the

Satabhisha asterism was prevailing. He is said to be the part manifestation of *Nandaka* the sword of Lord Vishnu.

Poigai A:lwa:r was born on Tuesday, Pu:dathth A:lwa:r was born on Wednesday and Pe:y A:lwa:r was born on Thursday. Thus, all the three A:lwa:rs were born on three consecutive days of the same month. They were not born of a woman like any other normal beings. Their births were supernatural phenomenon.

Not much is known about their childhood or youth. All the three of them were devoted to the Lord. They were neither interested in any sort of worldly pleasures nor were they attached to any worldly beings. All the three were wandering from one sacred place to another in their spiritual quest. The service of the Supreme Lord was the only essence of their lives. Their mind was always engaged in the loving contemplation of the Lord. Their devotion was not tainted with any materiel desires. They had not met each other until the providence brought them together in Thirukko:vilu:r.

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