



## PEARLS FROM THE PU:RVA:CHA:RYAS

## Part-2

Sri Na:ttha muni also had the privilege of learning *Ashta:nga-Yo:ga* (i.e. the eight fold Yo:ga system) from Sri Namma:Iwa:r himself. He stayed for a brief period of time in *Kurugu:r* after learning all the works of the *A:Iwa:rs*. Sri Na:ttha muni returned to *Vi:ra Na:ra:yanapuram*. He used to spend most of his time by contemplating on the Tamil *Pa:surams* of the *A:Iwa:rs*. He also started to propagate the divine works of the *A:Iwa:rs*. He used to comment and give wonderful discourses on them. Many seekers started to flock around him.

Sri Na:tthamuni was a gifted singer. He aligned the *Pa:surams* of the *A:Iwa:rs* to *De:vaga:na* (to the rhythms of *Sa:ma Ve:da*) and to *Manushya ga:na* (various popular rhythms). He also used to melodiously sing them in front of the Lord. The Lord was very pleased by that service of Sri Na:ttha muni. The Lord appeared in his dream and said “My mission of liberating the deserved souls and disseminating the sacred knowledge to every soul is incomplete inspite of incarnating numerous times. Now this task of mine is made easy by the *Pa:surams*

of the *A:Iwa:rs*. Hence let this tradition go on uninterruptedly.”

That divine order made Sri Na:ttha muni to impart the *Divya prabandhams* to his disciples. He also made provisions for the recitations of these *Pa:surams* in front of the Lord in the various temples. The *Pa:surams* that were set to music were to be chanted in front of the Lord and they were named as *Isaippa*. The rest of the *Pa:surams* were named as *Iyarpa*. He taught them to his own nephew *Melaiyagatta:Ivar* (also known as *Manavalapperumal Araiyyar*) and *Ke:laiyagatta:Iwa:r* (also known as *Nadavinoda Araiyyar*). They in turn taught them to the other disciples of Sri Na:tthamuni.

The disciples split into various batches. They started to go to different temples and pleasantly sing *Divya prabandhams* in front of the deity during the fixed time. The people were captivated by their melodious singing. Many people started to learn the *Divya prabandams* of the *A:Iwa:rs*. Thus, Sri Na:ttha muni started to propagate the hymns of the *A:Iwa:rs*.

During that time two

women singers went to the court of the King of *Gangaikonda Cho:lapuram*, with a dispute. Each of them claimed her branch of music to be better than that of her antagonist. One of the women was proficient in *De:va:ga:na* and the other was talented in *Manushya ga:na*. They asked the King to select the best among them. The King agreed to their request and arranged for a contest between both the women to select the best among them.

The contest was held in the King's court on a selected day. The King was unaware of the intricacies of *De:va ga:na*. Hence he could not appreciate the chants of *De:va ga:na* though it was of superior nature. Whereas he was impressed with the woman who sang *Manushya ga:na*. He declared the woman who sang *Manushya ga:na* to be better than the other woman.

The lady who sang *De:va ga:na* was disappointed. She started to sing her music in different places to find a person who is well versed in *De:va ga:na*. In the process she reached the presence of Sri Na:ttha muni and sang her songs. Sri Na:ttha muni who was the master of both the branches of music appreciated her songs. She was delighted to find a person who knew the intricacies of *De:va ga:na*. She immediately went to the King and narrated everything

to him. She also pleaded the King to arrange for another contest between her and her rival in the presence of Sri Na:ttha muni. The King who was a great patron of learning readily consented and sent an invitation to Sri Na:ttha muni.

Sri Na:ttha muni accepted the invitation and came to the King's court. He was reverentially received and greatly honoured by the King. The proposed contest was held in the holy presence of Sri Na:ttha muni. Sri Na:ttha muni declared the woman who sang *De:va ga:na* to be a better singer than the woman who sang *Manushya ga:na*. He also taught the intricacies of *De:va ga:na* to the King. The King also started to appreciate *De:va ga:na*.

The King was impressed with the erudition of Sri Na:ttha muni. He immediately became a disciple of Sri Na:ttha muni. He was subsequently initiated to the learning of *Divya prabandhams* and *Vaishnavism* by Sri Na:ttha muni. Thus, Sri Na:ttha muni was able to secure royal patronage for the propagation of *Divya prabandhams*.

Let us know more about our *Pu:rva:cha:ryas* in the coming issues.

