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Chapter 1 - Periyava's Foresight

KVK Sastry was famous in Valavanoor. He had two sons. He was drawing pension after retirement. He was quite well off with own house, land, livestock etc. His pension of Rs. 136/- was a big amount in those days. One son worked in the Income Tax department and the other son was my sister's husband. KVK having retired devoted his time to shiva puja and feeding the many bhakthas who came to their house.

Once Periyava had camped in the town of Ellis Chatram near Vizhupuram. It was a pradosham day. Being a small town there wasn't much crowd there KVK Sastry, my sister and I had gone to attend the pradosham pujai there. Accompanying us was my sister's son Vidhya Shankar. Adorned with rudhraksha malai periyava was the embodiment of shiva himself. After darshan we entered the small thatchment where Periyava was sitting so as to take His leave.

"Krishna swamy, how are you? Is the Ekadesi puranam parayanam going on well?" enquired Periyava. As we all performed our namaskarams to periyava, the young child Vidhya Shankar stumped us all by asking a question to periyava.

He asked Periyava, "Thatha, Can you give me the cow that you have"?

Immediately my sister admonished her son for speaking like that. However, Periyava, Compassion incarnate said "Do you want the cow? All right, I will give it to you. But there is a condition".

"What class are you now?" asked Periyava to the young child.

"Class three" replied Vidhya Shankar promptly.

"All right, you finish studying fifth class and come back, and then will give you the cow." Said Periyava.

We had not yet recovered from the initial shock of Vidhya Shankar's question to periyava when he gave prasadam to us all and we took leave.

Two or three year passed. Now Shankar was in class 6. Periyava visited valavanoor once again and we all went there to have his darshan. Periyava performed the

usual enquiries, all the while smiling to himself. Only later were we to understand the import of His smile

Suddenly Shankar having remembered his previous encounter at EllisChatham said "Now I am in Class 6. I want the cow now". Periyava feigning surprise said "Are you in class 6 now"?

"yes" replied Shankar.

"All right, do you remember what I said then" continued Periyava.

"That you will give me the cow if I finish studying class 5. Now I am in class 6" ... Shankar stopped there. We were all taken aback and were a little scared.

Periyava continued "Again, What I say?"

"I must finish studying class 5....."

"Did you study class 5" asked periyava

Evasively Shankar continued "My mother arranged tuition for me while I was in class 4 and hence I skipped class 5 and got admission in class 6. That's equivalent to me completing class 5, is it not?"

Periyava said "I said I will give you the cow only if you finish studying class 5. However you did not." Further Periyava consoled him saying "That cow is destined to be with ummachi(in the matam). That is why you did not get it." So saying He gave the boy prasadham of karkandu (candy). Shankar said "what you say is correct" and returned home without a word of protest. Cannot Periyava's foresight foretell what is to happen in the future?

Chapter 2

The village of Krishnapuram near Tirunelveli was K.V.K.Sastry's ancestral village. However, like his father and grandfather before him, post retirement from the customs service found him settled in valavanoor. He had taken it upon himself to fulfill each and every of Periyava with utmost obedience. Once Periyava summoned KVK and asked him "Will you do what I tell you"? KVK readily conveyed his willingness to.

Periyava continued "Go to Krishnapuram at once and gave a sum of Rs.150 at house no.7 situated near the temple premises. They will initially refuse to accept it. Your father had borrowed a sum of Rs.150 from their father long back time. The loan however was never repaid. You must repay the loan. Only then will you be able to sleep in peace. The last statement had KVK puzzled, as night sleep has been eluding him for quite a while, But how Periyava came to know about it was a mystery.

As was the order KVK went to Krishnapuram accordingly and tried to return the money. However, as predicted, the people there refused to accept the money. "My father had the habit of maintaining a dairy" they said and "records do not indicate such a transaction at all." Only when KVK stressed it was Periyava's order did they accept the money.

KVK returned to Valavanoor and narrated the happenings to Periyava. Periyava said "Since the event occurred in the previous generation, nobody is aware of it. Somehow the thought stuck me and hence I told you about it."

KVK too had the habit of maintaining a dairy. He recollected having written in it that he had to repay his father's loan to one Seetharama Iyer. Upon browsing his dairy he found that the said family lived in Krishnapuram!!

There can be no further doubt that Periyava's divine vision transcends the boundaries of time!! Needless to say, KVK Sastry was able to sleep peacefully thereafter.

Chapter 3 - Beacon of Lights

As the years passed, the year 1952 found us, My Mother, My younger Brother and I relocated to Chennai to be with my older brother who had been asking us to stay with him for a while. We settled down in the suburbs of Nungambakkam, renting a house there. Just as Periyava had blessed, I got admission in the Ramakrishna mission school for studying 9th grade there. As that time Sri Anna was the school Principal there. My entrance exam had no questions whatsoever; I was taken in solely on the merit of my ability to recite the abhivada!!

During that time, one day, My younger Brother Sir. Natarajan (who now goes by the identity of Senthilswamiyar) had left a note saying he was leaving to visit a few temples in South India in his quest for peace, that which he experienced during his daily readings of Ramayana. During his travel he met Periyava at Cuddalore who asked him "Did you find the peace you sought?" Barriers of distance are no too. What more, Periyava asked him to visit our Periamma without further delay. My brother's request to leave after having darshan of the daily pujai was not granted. No sooner did My Brother reach the town of Aduthurai, when he was plagued with fever, chills and pox. This must have been the hidden support of Periyava order to hasten his return. Later My Mother and I went there to bring him back safely.

Periyava's grace has been with us at each every instance to our lives!

Chapter 4 - May everyone prosper

Dattaji lived in Jambulingastreet, Nungambakkam. He had retired after year of service at the Reserve Bank of India. Periyava usually camped at his house. The day usually started with ViswaroopaDarshan in the wee hours of the morning, followed by pujai and then continued with Periyavas visits throughout the area all the while blessing his numerous devotees.

Dattaji was the head of SevaSamiti. He used to collect a paltry sum of 1 Re from each and every house and use the collected amount towards noble causes like weddings of those who cannot afford it, Poonal ceremonies etc. He had a noble intension that everyone must be able to partake of the punya that comes from such good deeds.

My Friend Vidhyanathan and I used to go for Periyava's darshan as often as we could. On one such occasion Periyava laid out a task before us. We were to go from house to house and collect the sum of Re. 1 from them and give it to Dattaji mama. However Periyava cautioned us. He said "People might not be so receptive to the idea. They might abuse you verbally, they might even get physical. But you both must not retort back. You should accept it in silence only inform them that you are doing it on my instruction". He continued "this sum is to be used towards Vedas alone. Soon a vedic gathering is going to be organized at our ashram and seetharam Iyer is overseeing its organization. If you collect money from everybody and use the proceeds towards the event then everybody gets a share in the punya too.

My friend and I began our daunting task of going to every house in the district with our request. Some people were very welcoming and other not so much. One such occasion found us at the residence of an ayurveda doctor. Not only did he refuse our request he abused us with choice words. Still persistent, we bore the insult and tried to reason with him saying it was Periyava's order.

While the altercation was going on, we could hear sound of Periyava's retinue coming from nearby Rama Kalyanamandapam. Much to our surprise, Periyava was coming in our direction. As soon as He neared us, the doctor welcomed

periyava with poornakumbham. In the offering of poornakumbham was a sum of Rs.100. Periyava beckoned an attendant nearby and asked him to hand over the sum of Rs.100 to us. As he was leaving he told us to give a receipt for the collected sum to the doctor. Only then did it dawn on the doctor that we had been telling the truth all that time.

At the end of the day we went to sri matam and handed over a sum of Rs.500 to Periyava as the day's collection. Then Periyava enquired us " did he scold you ". I immediately said that he did not scold us and was in fact eager to help. But by then, You yourself arrived there and we were able to get a bigger sum of Rs.100. Inwardly, Periyava must have been happy with us and blessed us.

What more could one ask for!!

Chapter 5 - Time and Patience will do the needful

On the appointed day the vedic gathering took place. The event saw parayanams in each of the four Vedas- rig, yajur, sama and atharvana. Apart from that evening times saw events like upanyasams, kramam, padham, jatam etc. The event was concluded with the customary homam and honoring of each of the vedic priests. Periyava has strictly ordered not to invite any other persons and left on camp to the town of suloorpettai.

However there was something else in store of us. A few house holders got together and invited a swamiji from Tambaram (disregarding Periyava's instruction) to preside over the function. As soon as the homam was concluded we took the kalasams and went to Periyava's camp for his Darshan. It was about 1 in the afternoon at that time. Periyava was sitting in a thatchment at that time and we were all standing.

Slowly Periyava asked us "did the event go on well? Who presided over it". We did not have the courage to answer him. For a while we stood in silence, guilt and shame torturing us for having disobeyed him. Then slowly we told Periyava of how it was not our decision to invite the swamiji and that we were helpless while the householders took matter into their own hands. However Periyava did not seem convinced. But finally He took the kalasam for abishekam. He lapsed into silence for the rest of the time we were there.

Two days passed. On the third day, the news papers bore news that the said swamiji had been arrested in some case. It need not be said that Periyava knew of it before. However instead of spelling it out to us he let time and patience do the same.

Chapter 6 - Prophetic words!!

The town of Corvete nagar is situated near Ennore. The Navaratripujai took place there. To reach that place one had to go first to Ennore and from there take a boat to the camp. It was a scenic place, vast, jungle-like and sparsely populated. During that time (the 9 days of navaratri) Periyava was observing the vow of strict silence. Even gestural communication was not allowed.

When we went there for his darshan, Periyava was sitting under a tree. He had just finished his vow of silence, the 9 days just having come to an end. Sitting beside us was Sri Ramamurthy Sarma and an income tax officer.

Periyava asked Sri Ramamurthy “what is your monthly salary?” To which he replied that he was earning upto Rs.300 per month. Periyava further asked him if he borrowed money. Sri Ramamurthy replied in the affirmative saying he had to now and then to make ends meet. Then Periyava directed the same question towards the income tax officer. He replied that he was drawing a salary of Rs.10000 per month but he too had to borrow sometimes, say a sum of Rs.3000 when things fell short. He also added that borrowing nowadays was becoming very common.

Periyava surmised from their two answers “How much ever money comes our way, there is always a need for more because our wants keep on multiplying. Only when we are contented with what we have, will be able to engage ourselves in noble deeds.”

During the course of conversation, Periyava took an orange fruit and peeled it. He retained the peel and gave the fruit alone to the income tax officer. Not stopping there, He asked the officer how many segments were there in it. The officer casually looked at it and said “why there are 6 in one half and 5 in the other, in total there are 11 segments in all”. Periyava then said “so can we not call this fruit *shat panchapalam* (in Sanskrit *shat* is six and *pancha* is five, *palam* is fruit). Immediately both Sri Ramamurthy sarma and the income tax officer fell prostrate on Periyava’s feet. Why such a simple mention should evoke such a big gesture from the two devotees was beyond me.

Sri Ramamurthy was the family priest of the tax officer. Once, during a pujai, being unable to recollect the proper name for the orange fruit in Sanskrit (*narangapalam*), in haste, he called the same as *shat panchapalam* and the officer thought this was a lapse on part of the priest and scolded him. Periyava enacted this drama to prove that, that which is uttered by one well-versed in Vedas, even in haste, cannot be untrue.

Chapter 7 - Divine boon!

This incident occurred in the year 1962. Periyava was camping in the suburb of Tiruvelikanni. At around 3.30 in the afternoon I had gone there for his darshan accompanied by my friend vaidyanathan and his colleague Sri.Lingam. Also accompanying us was Sri.Lingam's mother-in-law.

Sri.lingam was introduced to me by my friend Vaidyanathan. Slowly our acquaintance grew and we used to discuss on astrological matters often. During one such discussion Sri.Lingam shared his sorrow with us. He told us that his mother-in-law was not keeping of a stable mind. There seemed to be no cure for it, as they had tried numerous options both medically and astrologically. At once I suggested that they seek refuge in Periyava. Sri.lingam was a little hesitant. He said "she has the habit of hurling things mindlessly. What if she does the same in his presence?" I somehow coaxed him saying that nothing untoward would happen and somehow she was brought from Trichy for the sole purpose of His darshan.

On the day we went there, there were a few visitors. Among them there were was a political dignitary too. Periyava finished talking to him, advising him to do the needful for the common people and then gestured us to come closer. Sri.Lingams mother-in-law, who was standing somewhere in the corner of the room, came running and sat in front of us. She started moving her hands up and down. We were besieged with fear. What if something disastrous were to happen? Periyava raised his hand to allay our fears and almost immediately Sri.Kannan brought the Karpoora(camphor) aarthi plate there. Periyava then pushed the burning camphor to the ground. The lady (Sri.Lingams mother-in-law) then closed her eyes with both her hands and remained motionless for a while. Miraculously the lady then got up and did her namaskarams to Periyava and left after obtaining her prasadam. Her previous rage became a thing of her past and the lady lived a normal stable life till the end of her life. Yet another miracle from the Mahan!!

Chapter 8 - Navarasa Nayakan!

Once Periyava was camping in a house near the Mangadu Kamakshi Temple. During those times, the temple was not patronized by many people and was in a dire state as result. There were not sufficient funds even to light the lamps in the temple. My friend and I used to make it a point to buy some oil for the temple whenever we visited there.

The house where the camp was set up was an old fashioned one. The pujai used to take place in the inner portico. The outside housed the elephant, camel and other retinue of the camp. Another section of the house was used to accommodate the feeding of the people who came there. In all, there was just about enough space for everything.

The day we went there, Periyava had just finished his pujai and it was time for the distribution of the abhisekam theertham (holy water). A huge crowd of people had assembled there. Some people clamored for the theertham, there was some singing going on in some corner and in all the din they raised was huge. Even before Periyava could get ready, one Nagaraja Iyer, a tax officer, announced in a loud voice, requesting everyone to maintain silence. This irked Periyava. He said "Nagaraja, don't boss around and leave this place at once". Without a word of protest, Nagarajan left the place and stood outside the house. This unintentionally had the desired effect, for the entire place was batched with pin drop silence.

Periyava immediately called Nagaraja affectionately "come here and get your prasadam". When he came inside Periyava asked him "you left as soon as I asked you to and came in when I asked you to , are you that obedient?" Nagaraja iyer replied humbly that being of service to Periyava and honoring his every command whatever they may be was his great fortune.

Everyone present there was astonished by the sways in Periyava's emotions. His anger gone, now he was the very epitome of affection.

Chapter 9 - We are call one!

The next camp was at Rama Kalyanamandapam. I had gone there with my friend Vaidyanathan as usual. Amongst us were various dignitaries like high court judge Sri.Kailasam, collector Sankaran and the like.

After the pujai was over, Periyava casually chatted with us. He said everybody knows that Sri.Kailasam is a high court judge. But that post is applicable only when he in court. Everyone's title changes depending upon the work they do. At home he is a normal householder. When he does yard work he becomes the gardener. Do you all understand? Periyava continued.

“ Here, in the presence of the Almighty, we are all one. No one is more important than the other. Infact, we are all but mere dust in his presence. Just as how we are all the same beneath this skin, we are the same once we set aside our differences in station, wealth etc.. arrogance of wealth or power can become a bane and stumble us in our spiritual progress.

As if befitting this lecture, at the conclusion, we all, regardless of who we were, did our namaskramas to Periyava at the same time. What better definition could there be of democracy?

Chapter 10 - Boundless Grace

It was the holy month of Margazhi. Peace and tranquility filled in air. One could not help but recall that Lord Krishna says that when it comes to months He is the month to Margazhi!! After His puja in the wee hours of dawn, Periyava would spend the rest of the day visiting the Kamakshi temple, granting darshan to devotees or would be engaged in Upanishad discussion.

One such day found us, My Friend Jaganathan and me seeking his darshan. My friend had never been to the mutt before.

It was 8.15 in the morning. Periyava was sitting in His mena (palanquin) and was absorbed in reading a book with the aid to torchlight. About an hour elapsed thus. After having finished reading the book, Periyava then alighted from his mena.

Since it was his first time, I introduced my friend Jaganathan. It was not a formal introduction and I must have mentioned only his name to the Mahan.

Immediately Periyava asked him “Don’t you have a printing press”? To which My Friend replied in the affirmative. This was news to me for as far as I knew their family only had a paper bag making business.

Periyava beckoned one Kuppusamy Iyer to his side and asked him to bring a particular book. When it was brought, Periyava gave it to Jaganathan and asked him to make 2000 copies of the same. Kuppusamy who was standing nearby said “We already have 2000 copies of it “. Periyava explained to him that those books had some mistakes in them and hence more were needed. But Kuppusamy kept repeating the fact that there was no need for books that were already in the matam. Then Periyava asked Kuppusamy to fetch one book from matam and to compare with the one he had just given to Jaganathan. Periyava asked them to compare page 18 on both the both the books. Then He added, first make sure it is there in that book. !! Finally Kuppusamy agreed that there were errors in the book (Matam copies) and more were needed. What surprised me most was Periyava’s last statement. He said “I found those errors in 1947 and had ordered those to be discarded, yet you are bringing the same book to me”! One more instance highlighting Periyava’s prodigious memory!!!

Chapter 11 - Perfection

Periyava then started detailing out instructions to Jaganathan. "Print 2000 copies of the book, the picture in that book is to be printed in black at Paul co. in Lloyds road. Tell them that you are there on my instruction and finish printing the books as soon as possible.

He continued further "Neelakantalyer of Paul co. will immediately go searching for the black. I recall having seen it under his bed in a trunk. You may remind him if necessary."

We left straight for Lloyds road immediately on starting from Kanchipuram. Just as predicted when Sir. Neelakantalyer went looking for black, he found it under his bed in a trunk. !!

In total 2002 copies were printed in all. We kept one aside and took the remaining to Periyava. Periyava asked us how many were there in all?, We said 2001. He immediately said "I wanted only 2000 copies. Discard one".

He then called the manager and asked him to bring the mailing list. There were exactly 2000 addresses in that list, not one more not one less. !! The 2000 books were to be distributed to those addresses.

This was a lesson in disguise for us. My Friend Jaganathan would say "Periyava taught us that whatever we do we should strive for perfection in it".

Chapter 12 - Everlasting support

It was in a place called Thenambakkam near Kanchipuram. It was also called Sivathalam. Situated on the outskirts, it was a very tranquil place.

Periyava had camped there by himself, with PudhuPeriyava having gone on a tour to North India. Since it was PudhuPeriyava's first tour alone, there was a sense of anxiety in the air. There were many learned scholars in the north who would be constantly and quietly judging PuthuPeriyava. Periyava was maintaining a vow of strict silence so as to silently and removey aid PuthuPeriyava in his sojourns elsewhere!

I had gone there with My Friend SrinivasaRaghavan. It must have been around 9.15 in the morning. There was a huge crowd there. Some were waiting since 8 in the morning. I also chanced upon My Friend Balasundaram there. Since there was a delay, people were making plans to return without His darsan itself. My Friend Balasundaram and SrinivasaRaghavan decided to visit the Kamakshi temple. This strangely irked me. I told them quite in ahuff "you can go anywhere, for me Periyava alone is Kamakshi or Meenakshi. I will not move from this place without His darsan!"

No sooner had I said that, miraculously Periyava rose, putting an end to His vow. His first word were "He has done well! Why, there are even tantrics out there in the North!" This reconfirmed my earlier suspicion that Periyava was silently imparting strength to PuthuPeriyava there.

Then He turned me and asked "what did you say just now?" I grew scared fearing that in my anger I had uttered something sinful. I begged Periyava "please forgive me if I have said something disrespectful". Disregarding my plea, he prodded me again. Only then did I understand that Periyava was measuring the strength of my resolve.

He then turned towards my friend Srinivasan and enquired him "what is your father's name?" he replied that it was Araavamuthan. Periyava said "people erroneously say Araavamuthan, however that is not the correct pronounciation. It

is Araa Amuthan. You are a Carnatic singer. Are you not familiar with the song” Araamudhanaipaadi?”

Periyava continued “ your father did not have much affinity towards this matam but your grandfather did. Once, eager to see me, he sprained his ankle and fell down while trying to cross the railway track near Mayavaram. Even while falling down he chanted “Rama Rama”. He would say that the divine lord rama only saved him that day. For, had he fallen on the other side of the track he would have fallen prey to the wheels of the train! Continuing further he said “there is a book written by your father have you read it?”

When my friend replied in the negative, Periyava described the book to him “it is called VishalathrayaSaaraSaaram. It describes what all the soul goes through after departing from this body.

Usually I do not read a book more than once. This book however I went through almost three times. There is so much information in it”. Periyava’s knowledge and concern for all knows no bounds!!

Chapter 13 - Determination

Continuing further, silence prevailed for a little while. Then Periyava turned towards me and asked (pointing to Srinivasa Ragavan) “how far is your house from his?” I initially said “half a mile”. This answer did not seem to satisfy Periyava. He kept asking me “what is half a mile, one furlong, two furlongs..” Finally I said “Its just a walking distance”. Ha! That is what I wanted to know...Said Periyava. “Had you given me this information in the first place, time would have been saved”

Then He said “do you remember what your school head master, Sri Anna had written in your autograph book?” This threw me in confounder. It must have occurred 10-15 years ago. Sri Anna had written very graciously in my book a Hindi saying “bahatSuno, bolo kum” meaning “listen more, speak less”. It also emphasized that one should convey ones support with a few words instead of meandering about it with a huge speech. I silently understood that Periyava propably wanted me to put in actual practice! How Periyava remembered or even knew about this autograph joins a long list of his miraculous all-knowing power!!

Coming back to our present visit, Periyava said “I want you to go to his (Srinivasaraghavan) house and learn the language of Sanskrit from him. It will serve you well in time to come. I immediately conveyed that I would. Periyava continued “To begin with, you will start from a book called “ RamoDhantham”. The peculiarity of the book lies in the fact that it first describes the qualities of Ravana , his strength and prowess and then goes on to describe about Rama. The reason for such description being that one should first fully understand the enemy and only then we properly plan our defense”. Another lesson at his Holy Feet!!

Chapter 14 - Antharyaami – The All – Knowing One

The camp had shifted to a place Vanagaram. It is quite close to Pundhamali in Chennai. At the time this incident occurred, Pundhamali was far less populated. In fact, cut off from the milling crowd, night times used to bear a very deserted look.

It was a pradhosham day when we had gone there for darshan. Usually Periyava used to finish his morning pujai quite early, however that day for reasons beyond us Periyava did not come out of his hatchment after his morning bath.

Accompanying us on our darshan was my grandfather (mother's father) who was the mudhrathikari for the matam. He had come to visit us at our place and had joined us for the darshan. When we reached the camp, people were talking amidst themselves of how Periyava had not come out from his little hut even through a huge amount of time had elapsed.

People were debating amongst themselves as to who should go and take a look inside the hut to see why Periyava was being delayed. Somehow my thatha found him nominated for the task. No amount of earnest pleadings from him seemed to dissuade them. Finally, reluctantly still, he agreed to go and look. He quickly peeped inside the hatchment and was out in a jiffy. He said "no, Periyava is not in inside". Panic rose in the matam as people started searching for Periyava.

At that moment, Periyava emerged from the very same hatchment. He immediately beckoned my thatha close by and asked him "why did you peep inside"? Ashamed, my thatha replied that he had done it only at the behest of others and begged His forgiveness for the same. Smilingly Periyava continued "was I there?" My thatha reiterated what he started earlier. He said "I saw the dhandam, kamnadalu and the mat but Periyava alone was not there". Periyava said "no, I was there, in fact I caught you peeping inside. Did I not ask you about it"? My thatha stood there a little confused. Then Periyava explained to him the concept of Dhanurvedam, the science of being invisible to the common eye through yogic powers. Also the same power enables one to know incidents that occur at a far off distance telepathically. Lord Rama is said to have been an

exponent of Dhanurvedam. Periyava continued that everything was due to the divine blessings of the almighty Mother.

Perhaps it was this very same yoga that enabled Periyava to know the precise moment when Jeyendrar Swami succeeded in his northern travels!!

Chapter 15 - Ocean of Compassion

Situated just behind the matt at Kanchipuram is the gho-sala (cow-shed). Home to many cows and their calves, a small water canal runs through it lending a picturesque beauty to the place. Once afternoon, must have been around 3.30 pm, Periyava sat there resting his back on a coconut tree. There must have been just ten of us around him at that time. Periyava was talking to us and a few attendants were carrying on their chores as usual. Suddenly a devotee walked towards us and humbly placed before Periyava an envelope saying “there is a sum Rs.900 in it. Please utilize it towards the causes of the mutt.”

Immediately Periyava enquired of him his name, his occupation etc. he replied that he was a small farmer from a place called Seyyaru. Periyava told him “take this money and purchase spinach leaves (agathikeerai) and feed all the cows here. He immediately nodded his obedience and set about on the task. However purchasing spinach leaves worth Rs.900 in one day was a near impossible task. It would take at least 10 days. Periyava meanwhile turned towards me and asked “was I right in directing him so”? My usual answer was “if Periyava orders it so, then it must be right”! However periyava asked me to explain a little further. I elaborated my understanding on his order in the following manner.

The Vedas have long upheld the sanctity of the cow. In fact the Vedas say “gho-Brahmanebhyaha” which underscores the importance of the cows as even the learned Brahmans come only after it. Its importance stems from the fact that it yields milk. That milk is consumed by the entire world. From milk comes it sister products like yogurt, ghee etc all of which have a variety of uses. Infact even the cow- dung is considered sacred. It has medicinal value as well. While I prolonged a little further, Periyava said “Even sannyasis like me have use for it” and ended the discussion.

Coincidentally I happened to meet the said farmer at a later date who had by then completed periyava’s order satisfactorily. He told me of how Periyava had saved him from a life-threatening accident miraculously. One need not emphasize further of how much Periyava valued “gho-Rakshanam”.

Chapter 16 - Humanity

Once again we return to my hometown of Vallavanoor. The village of Vallavanoor abounded in fertile soil suitable for cultivating a variety of pulses like ragi, jowar .sugarcane was cultivated on a large scale here.

During those times, customs and ritual practices were observed with strict obedience. So much so, people from other castes would hesitate to enter the Agraharam, were the people from the Brahmin case would usually reside.

Even though Periyava patronized the concept of Varna-ashrama , he was beyond petty caste differences. His kindness and grace extended for all humanity regardless of who they were or what occupation they carried on.

Just like everyone else, people residing in the settlements on the border of the village desired to have His darshan. Their genuine affection and bhakti reached his ears. At once Periyava called upon the manager of the mutt and had him arrange sarees, dhotis, and variety of sweetmeats for distribution. They were all asked to assemble near the Perumal temple where Periyava was already waiting to give them darshan. He patiently enquired each and every one of them, heard their grievances and blessed them bountiful. All the sarees, dhotis and sweetmeats were distributed as gifts from the mutt. They were all touched by his gesture, for they feared that coming from another caste they might not have the fortune of having Periyava's darshan. At the same time this incident also served as a lesson to those who thought themselves high and lofty purely because of their caste.

Chapter 17 - Bestowals of boons

It was in the place called orikkai near Kanchipuram. Peace and tranquility filled the air. It's fame has found its place even in songs sung by great Tamil Azhwars. Perhaps it's the serenity of the place that moved Periyava to wish that His manimandapam to be built here for posterity.

The pujai having been completed Periyava was resting quietly. PudhuPeriyava was sitting in the bigger mandapam at that time. It was at that time that I (my family) was frantically trying to obtain admission for my younger son at an Engineering college. We had even obtained a recommendation letter from Periyava to that effect towards admission at the Venkateswara Engineering College. Since Periyava was observing silence at that time, our plan was to seek His blessings and return.

For reasons beyond us, that visit, my wife started lamenting about how difficult it was to obtain the admission. This was contrary to my principles. My principle was that Periyava should not be troubled for petty causes (admission being one), atleast not when one's personal interests are involved. However, Periyava raised his left hand by way of blessing us and the meeting was over.

Our pursuits in the admission fray did not improve drastically. Even Venkateswara College said that they might only have the management seat to offer (involving a sizeable sum of money).The day we returned with our hopes low, there was a good news awaiting us. My son had found admission on merit from a decent college.

My son completed his studies satisfactorily and is now well-employed.

Periyava's blessings can never go in vain. He has been over-seeing my well-being since I was the age of ten!!

Chapter 19 - The ultimate doctor

It was the time when Periyava was camping at Kavalai. PuthuPeriyava was at Chennai, Mahalingapuram at that time.

My colleague Sri.LakshamnBharadwaj had a truly miraculous experience at the hands of Periyava. One day, without any reason, he lost his power of speech while at work. Numerous hospital and doctor visits were no avail. Some suggested appeasing the family deity which was also done. But there seemed no improvement in the matter. Unable to stand their grief further I suggested the only cure I knew, Periyava's darshan!!

We, my friend and his wife, my wife and myself, left for Kavalai immediately. By the time we reached the place it was 12.30 in the afternoon.

The place wore a deserted look. There were hardly a few people there. What if Periyava was not there? Our enquiries were responded by a simple hand gesture pointing towards the adistanam. Lo! Periyava was doing pradakshinam to the adishtanams there. A single attendant, Sri.Kandan alone stood there to wait upon Periyava.

After a while Periyava finished His pradakshinams and sat near the gate. My Friend's wife unable to bear her grief started crying. We slowly explained the purpose of our visit to Periyava. Periyava, seemed a little uninterested and was eagerly searching for something. There was not even a gesture from Him, since He was observing the vow of silence. We were a little disheartened and confused. Suddenly, Periyava found the object of his search near the adishtanam and brought it, an apple!! He held the apple in His hands for a while and gave it to my friend's wife by way of prasadam. We were even informed of how it should be consumed. The apple was not to be cut into pieces but the its's juice alone was to be given to My Friend.

Our visit over, we returned home to Chennai, all the while sharing stories of Periyava and his miracles. The next morning my friend having gone to the bathroom for his morning ablutions called out to his wife in a loud voice "Kalyani, where is the toothpaste?". Only when his son ran in delight to his mom saying

“Amma, Appa can speak now!!” did the magnitude of Periyava’s generosity register on them. Periyava is not only the religious head of the matt He is infact the Lord Vaidyanathan Himself.!!!

Chapter 19 - This time Periyava was campin at Thenambakkam in Chennai.

I was working at the Indian Oxygen company at that time. My work place was very close to the Rama Samaj where Periyava was camping. Those days, Saturdays were only half-days, and afternoons found me in the presence of Periyava. Periyava would sit in the garden outside and we would be talking about some mutt-related matters.

One such Saturday, an old lady came with her grand-daughter. She told Periyava that her concern was about the young girl's marriage and said that her father (that of the girl's) was an irresponsible man and hence was her concern. She continued that she had learned about the thirumanagalyam trust and was hoping that she might benefit from the same. Periyava gestured to his attendant who brought something from inside. He brought one coconut and a small gold coin as prasadam and gave it to the lady. The old lady however was disappointed. She lamented while leaving "How can one perform a wedding with this gold coin" ...My efforts to appease her saying that Periyava will take care were only met with stiff rebuke.

A week passed since the incident. The same lady came to the mutt again. This time she was accompanied by a few more people and not just her grand-daughter. She introduced the young man standing next to her as her distant relative. She continued saying that as soon as she had left the matam last week, there came a proposal from the boy's family who were well-settled in Singapore. What more they were willing to perform the marriage on their own and were taking the girl along with them right away. She then turned and looked at me and said "what you said last week has come true, You said Periyava will take care and He has!!"

Just like Ganapathi-the lord of success in all endeavors, Periyava will ensure our success if our devotion is pure!!

Chapter 20

Whenever Periyava camped at Nungambakkam, Sri.Dattaji's house used to be the place of residence. It was a big house with enough facilities to accommodate the entire retinue of elephants, horses etc.

That particular time when Periyava was camping, it was the time of the lunar eclipse. A few days before the eclipse Periyava was talking to us about it and how it would be beneficial to Him if there was a nice pond nearby to take bath after the eclipse. Hearing that someone suggested that near the Agastheeswarar temple situated close to the police station was a small pond suitable for bathing but they also hesitatingly added that the pond was very dirty have much water in it, and also did not have much water in it and hence might not serve the purpose.

Immediately Periyava said "sowhat, the water of the pond is considered pure always just as the water in oceans and wells. We shall have the bath in the pond itself!"

But the people were not satisfied with Periyava's assurance. So in just a few days before the eclipse the entire community got together and cleaned both the ponds near the temple and made arrangements for everyone to take the purifying bath after the eclipse by setting up tents, etc.

The day of the eclipse arrived and amidst tight security Periyava descended the pond to have His bath. Scores of people followed him there. Periyava blessed everyone and gave them a silver coin by way of Prasad.

Later Periyava enquired us "Why did you hesitate to tell me about the pond? It was such a nice place located near the old temple and absolutely perfect for the occasion"

Periyava not only fulfilled His purpose that day but also got the pond cleaned for the temple that day, something that might not have happened otherwise.