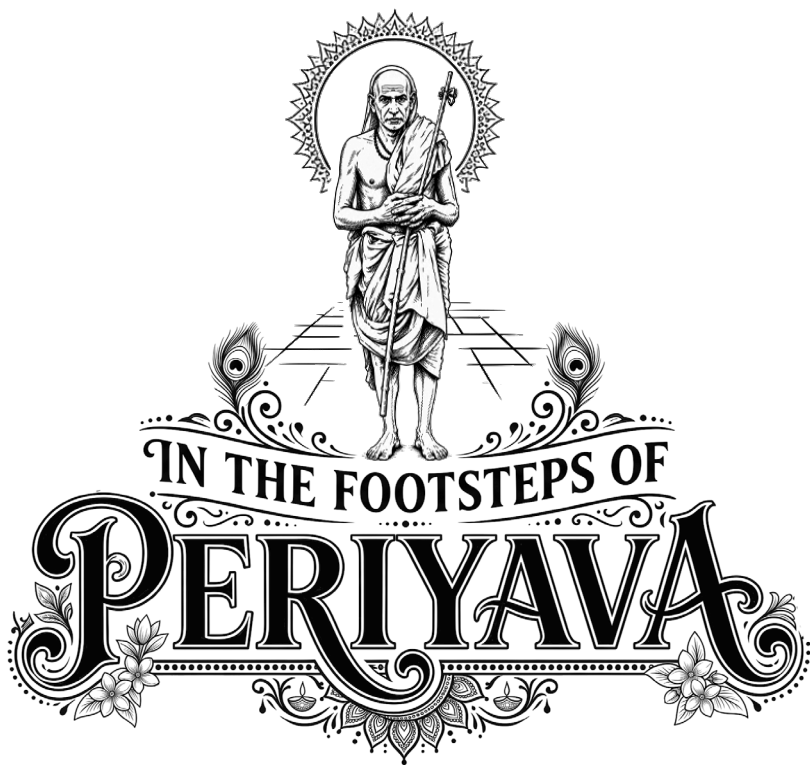


IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PERIYAVA



Thiruvaiyaru
S.R. KRISHNAN





—❧— Thiruvaiyaru S. R. Krishnan ❧—



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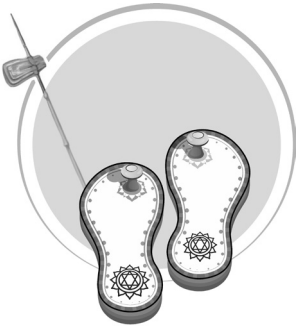
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Publisher's Note

The author of *'From the Holy Feet of the Great Saint'* is Śrī Thiruvaiyaru S.R. Kṛṣṇan, who was blessed to receive initiation (*Dīkṣa*) directly from the holy hands of Mahā Periyavā. Having grown, since childhood, under the Master's grace, Kṛṣṇan is one of the few who has fully received the compassionate vision of Mahā Periyavā – much like a fish is said to protect its offspring with its mere gaze.

In response to our request, he authored a series of articles for our *Kāmakoti* monthly magazine (2021–2023). These articles chronicled the blessings he received while at the Master's feet – events where Mahā Periyavā guided him with motherly affection, showing concern, correcting him, and providing vital advice at every step of his formative life.

Originally published as a book (in Tamil) in 2024, that series has now been translated into this English edition. Along with his personal journey, the author shares moving accounts of the blessings bestowed upon others who sought the Master's *kaṭākṣam* (grace of vision).

Giri Publications takes pride in Śrī Kṛṣṇan's multifaceted expertise as a writer, singer, composer (*Vākgēyakāra*), Vedic scholar, poet, orator, and social worker. We express our heartfelt thanks to him for completing this second book amidst his demanding schedule.

There is no doubt that this book will be a boon to the devotees of Mahā Periyavā; these records will serve as a treasure trove of spiritual information for generations to come.

Mahā Periyavā Śaraṇam!
Hara Hara Śaṅkara! Jaya Jaya Śaṅkara!

– **The Publishers**



Preface / Introduction

This book is a *mirror translation* of the Tamil work *Periyavā Kālaḍiyilirundu*, published by GIRI Publishing in 2023. A brief background is in order.

In 2021, **Śrī T.S. Ranganathan** (Giri) informed me that the *Kāmaḱoṭi* monthly journal was re-starting as a digital e-magazine. He invited me to contribute a monthly series on any of my favorite divine topics. Without hesitation, I immediately accepted to write on Mahā Periyavā, and the title *Periyavā Kālaḍiyilirundu* (From the Holy Feet of the Great Saint) jumped out instantly.

I told a surprised Ranganathan, “*The title has come now, but I will begin writing soon. Periyavā himself will take care of the attempt, as always!*” With Periyavā’s grace, the monthly series continued for a couple of years.

A few months after the Tamil edition was published, the publisher, **Śrī T.S. Raman**, nudged me to write a “mirror translation” in English to reach a wider audience across Bharat and overseas. Although the project remained an idea for some time, Periyavā eventually took care of everything. This book is the result of that Grace.

The Sage of Kāñci: A Century of Light

In the Spiritual landscape of 20th-century India, few figures loom as large or as luminous as *Jagadguru Śrī*

Candraśekharendra Sarasvati Mahāswāmi (1894–1994). Affectionately known to millions as “**Mahāperiyavā**,” he served as the 68th Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya (of the Kāñci Kāmakoti Peetham) for eighty-seven years – a tenure defined by an unwavering commitment to the preservation of *Dharma* and the upliftment of humanity.

A Living Embodiment of Advaita

Mahāperiyavā was more than a religious head; he was a living testament to the **Advaita philosophy** he taught. His life was a masterclass in simplicity:

- **The Ascetic Path:** Clad in saffron khadi and residing in humble shelters, he rejected the luxuries of the modern world.
- **The Sacred Journey:** He traveled thousands of miles across the Indian subcontinent on foot (*Pādayātra*), bridging the gap between ancient scriptural wisdom and the challenges of a rapidly changing society.
- **A Universal Moral Compass:** His presence served as a steady Spiritual Force for a Nation transitioning from colonial rule to independence, offering profound counsel to world leaders and common seekers alike with no agenda except “Unity and Peace.”

The “Voice of God” and His Global Legacy

His legacy is well described in the “**Voice of God**” (*Deivattin Kural*), a monumental collection of discourses that demystified complex Vedic concepts, making them accessible to all.

- **Preservation:** As a champion of the Vedas, he established schools to ensure the survival of the world's oldest oral traditions.
- **Compassion:** His grace knew no boundaries of caste, creed, or nationality. He taught that the ultimate goal of religion is the cultivation of **Bhakti** (devotion) and **Vinaya** (humility).
- **Unity:** He famously taught that individual souls are but travelers waiting to merge into the one and only *Ātman*. He viewed humanity, *uniformly, as the children of God*, suggesting that the variations in our backgrounds are merely as superficial as the “shirts we wear.”

A Tribute to the Sage of Kāñci

I owe a debt of eternal gratitude to my parents for the blessing of my childhood: to sit at the feet of the Divine and witness the greatest of modern Saints from such close quarters. While these notes may lack a professional hand, they are a sincere outpouring from my heart. I ask that the devoted reader approach these pages with a spirit of compassion and absorb only the ‘message.’

This work serves as a humble tribute to the **Sage of Kāñci**. Through these pages, I attempt to explore the facets of his extraordinary life – from his rigorous asceticism and profound scholarship to the quiet miracles of grace bestowed upon those who sought his proximity.

As we journey through these chapters, we do not merely look back at a historical figure; we look inward at

the timeless values he espoused: **Truth, Compassion, and the Eternal Light of the Ātman.**

May this work serve as a bridge to his teachings and a source of inspiration for all who seek a life of purpose and peace.

The Challenge of “Mirroring” – a humble acknowledgment

The “mirror translation” of the original Tamil work presented a significant challenge. My primary goal was to preserve the original dialogues of **Periyavā**, whose words carry a unique, divine resonance that is notoriously difficult to capture in another tongue. To translate ‘Periyavā’s pearls’ is not merely to change words, but to attempt to transplant a spiritual atmosphere.

I was fortunate to have the dedicated support of three individuals who helped bridge this linguistic gap, refining the semantics and syntax while safeguarding the book’s soul:

- **Smt. Rādhā Kṛṣṇan:** My life partner and a retired banker, she provided unwavering oversight. Through her tireless, repeated readings of multiple drafts, she ensured the essence of the message remained consistent and clear.
- **Smt. Rukmiṇi Raghunāthan:** My senior disciple and a retired oncologist, she brought a scientist’s precision to the text, ensuring that every semantic nuance was handled with care.

- **Śrī T.K. Murali:** A fellow disciple and retired senior executive of Citibank, who offered a meticulous eye for detail, polishing the syntax to meet the highest standards.

Together, this team worked tirelessly to ensure that while the language changed, the **spiritual integrity** was preserved to produce a perfect reflection of the original source. I thank the team members for their generosity.

**dharma eva hato hanti
dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ |
tasmād dharmo na hantavyo
mā no dharmo hato'vadhīt ||**

“Dharma, being destroyed, destroys; dharma, being protected, protects. Therefore, dharma must not be violated, lest violated dharma destroy us.”

Thiruvaiyaru S R Kṛṣṇan

San Jose, California, US

