

Group 1

THIRUNAVUKARASAR

My favourite Nayanar is Thirunavukarasar. He was born in the 7th Century and his parents named him Marul Neekiar.

When he was young, he converted to Jainism, which made his family very sad. His eldest sister prayed to Lord Shiva to bring him back to Saivism and the Lord gave him a terrible pain in his stomach. The Jains could not cure him, so he went to his sister, who gave him Thiru neeru (Holy Ash), and told him to pray to Lord Shiva. As he put the holy ash on his body, he sang his first song to Lord Shiva - "Kootraayinavaaru...."

Suddenly, Lord Shiva appeared before him, took away his pain and blessed him. Lord Shiva gave him the name "Thirunaavukkarasu" and told him to always sing his praises and serve his devotees.

The Jain leaders were very angry and tortured him, but he prayed to Lord Shiva and he was kept safe. From then on, Thirunavukarasar spent all his time cleaning the temple gardens and served the Lord, always remembering Him day and night. His one desire was to be permanently at the feet of his beloved Lord Shiva. And, at the age of 81, his wish was granted.