

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 6



Who Are the Four Great Tamil Saints?

The Nalvars are the four Siva saints



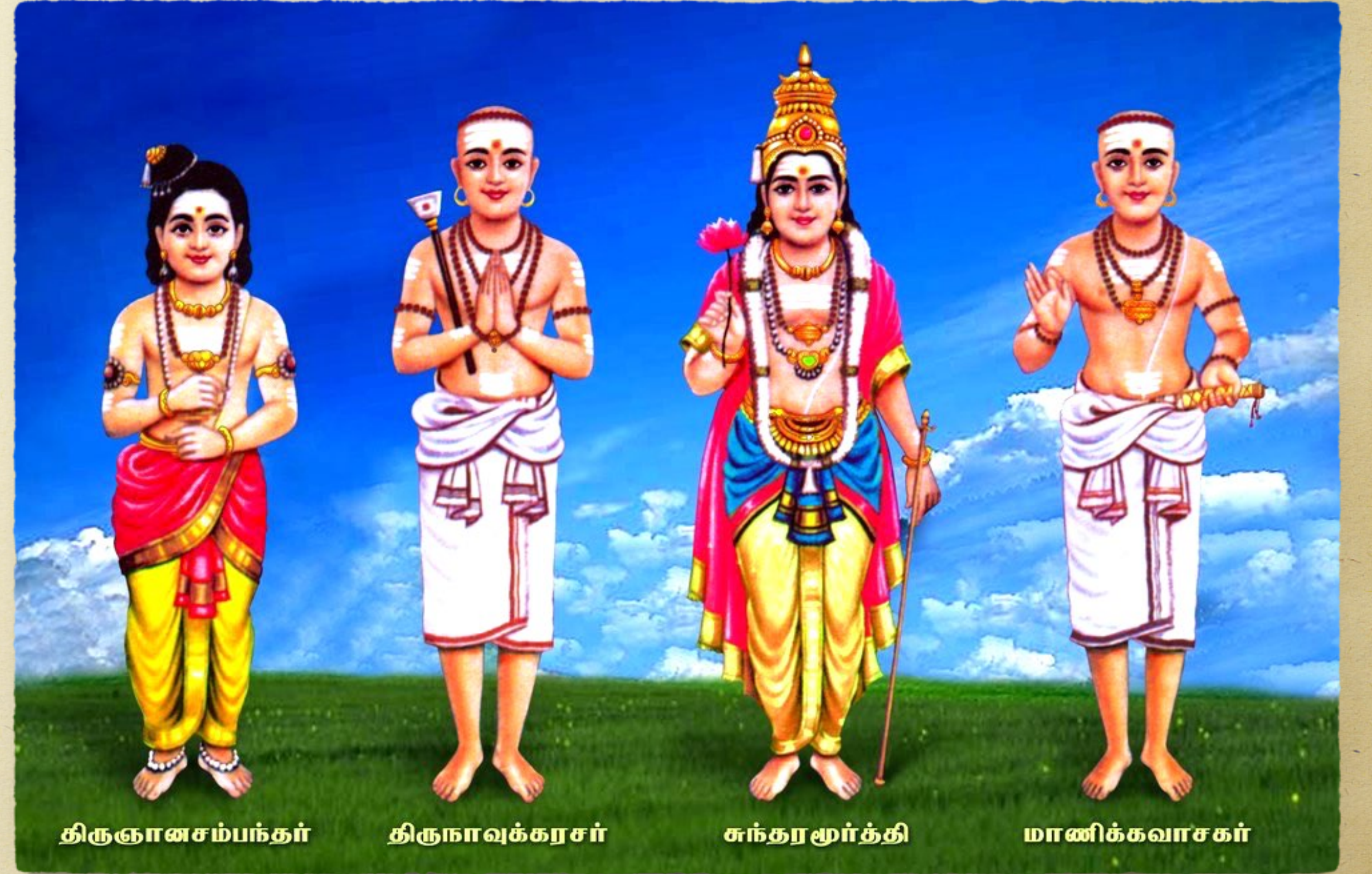
The Nalvars are the four Siva saints who lived in Tamil Nadu around 1,200 years ago.

Each composed devotional songs that are sung today in satsangs and temples.

Who are these Saints?

Their names are Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavasagar.

All are deeply revered by Tamil Saivites.



Saint Tirunavukkarasar, known as Appar

Saint Tirunavukkarasar, known as Appar ("father"), traveled from temple to temple worshiping Siva.

He chose the humblest of work, sweeping the temple walks and weeding the stone courtyards.



Saint Sundarar

Saint Sundarar is known for his deep visions of Lord Siva and for several miraculous events that occurred in his life.

A poor man, he often prayed for money or food for his family. His prayers were always answered.



Saint Sambandar

The third saint, Sambandar, was just three years old when he was blessed with a vision of Lord Siva, after which he spontaneously sang his first song.

He traveled throughout South India, sometimes with Appar, his elder, singing the praises of Siva.

At age 16, his family arranged him to be married. But this was not to be.

He was so devoted to Siva that just before the wedding, he disappeared into the sanctum of Tirunallurperuman Siva Temple near Chidambaram and was never seen again.



Devarums

The songs of the first three saints are called *Devarams*.



அரசைக கலலொடு கடடிக கடலிற
பாய்ச்ச முடிவுசெய்து , அரசன் இசைவு
பெற்று , அவ்வாறே கடலருகில் ஏகினர்
நாவுக்கரசரும் திருநின்ற
செம்மையுள்ளம் சிறப்பச் சென்றார் .
மன்னவன் சொன்னபடி முடித்து
அப்பதகர் மீண்டனர் . உறைப்புடைய
மெய்த்தொண்டர் , எந்தையை
ஏத்துவன் என்று சிவனஞ்செழுத்தும்
துதித்துப் பாடியது இந்
நற்றமிழ்ப்பாமாலைத் திருப்பதிகம் .



பண் : காந்தார பஞ்சமம்



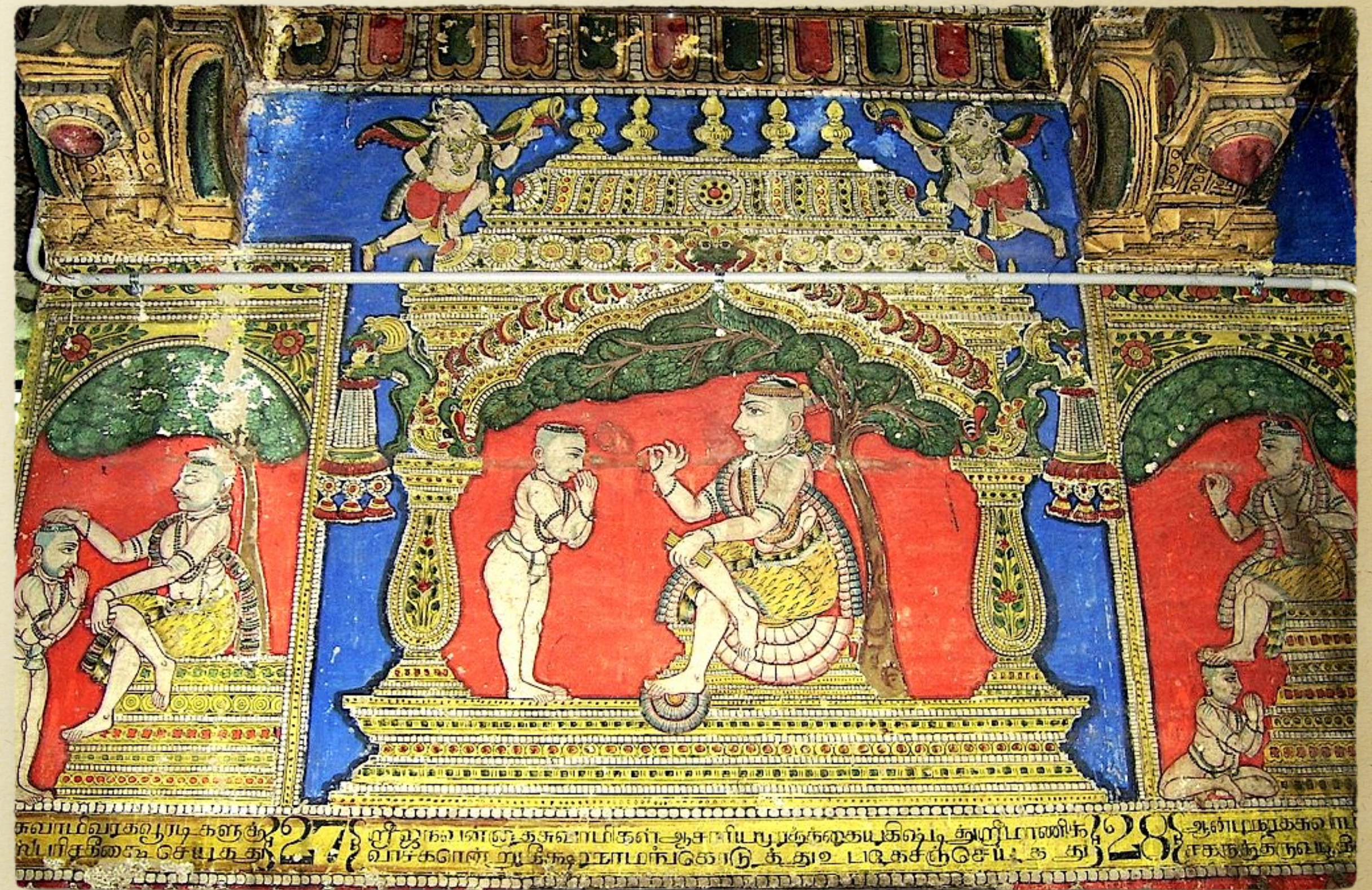
சொற்றுணை வேதியன் சோதி வானவன்
பொற்றுணைத் திருந்தடி பொருந்தக் கைதொழக்
கற்றுணைப் பூட்டியோர் கடலிற பாய்ச்சினும்
நற்றுணை யாவது நமச்சி வாயவே. 01

மாப்பிணை தழுவிய மாதொர் பாகத்தன்
பூப்பிணை திருந்தடி பொருந்தக் கைதொழ
நாப்பிணை தழுவிய நமச்சி வாயப்பத்
தேத்தவல் லாரதமக் கிடுக்க ணில்லையே. 10

Manikkavasagar

Manikkavasagar, the fourth Nalvar, was prime minister to the Pandyan king of Madurai.

One day he was blessed with enlightenment in a vision of Lord Siva sitting under a banyan tree.

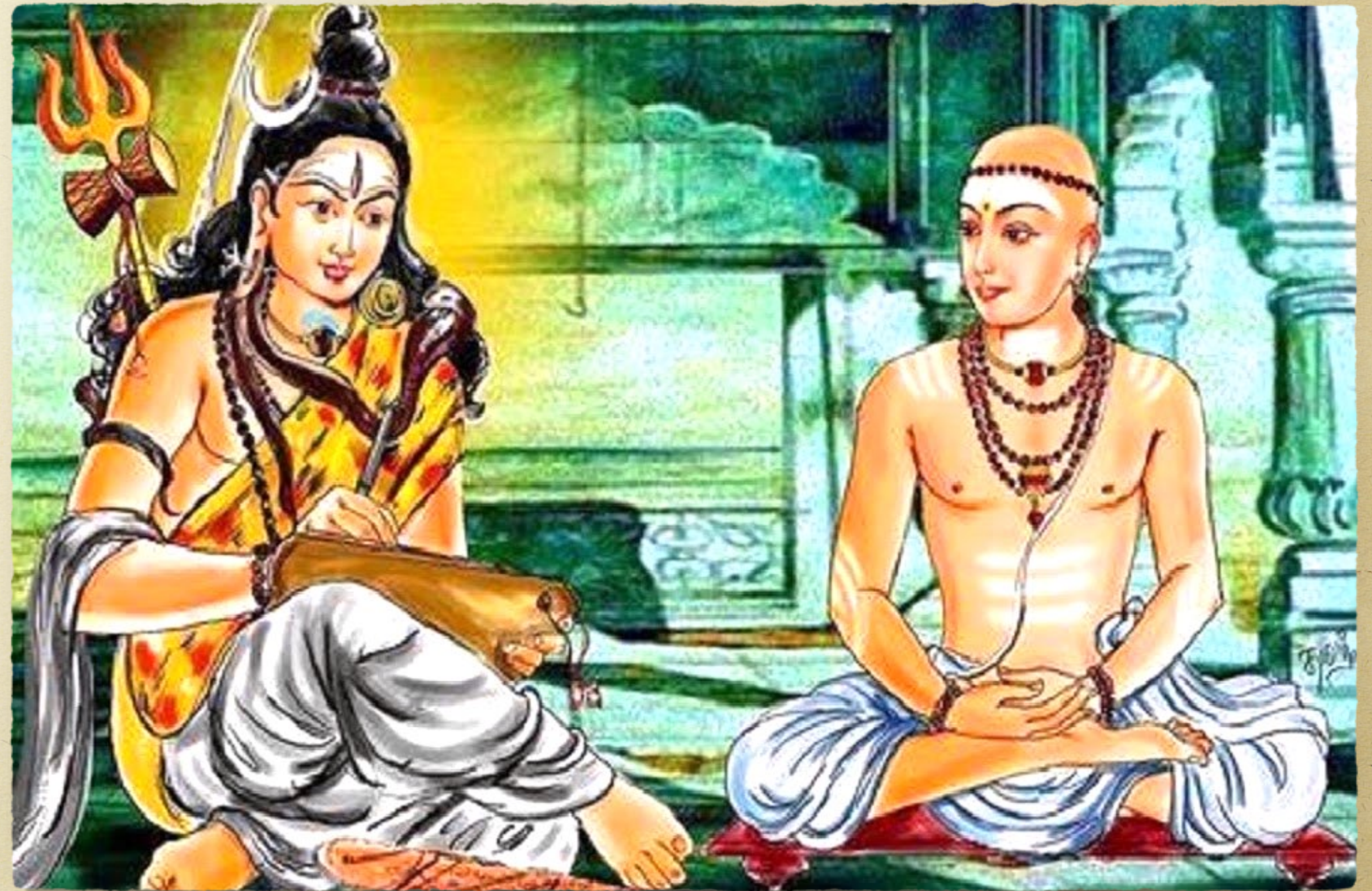


Manikkavasagar's Tiruvasagam

After this he left the royal court and traveled about, composing songs and building a temple for Siva at Tiruperunthurai.

His poems stress the importance of the Namasivâya mantra, developing dispassion and cultivating love of Lord Siva.

His highly poetic hymns are found in two collections, *Tiruvagasam* and *Tirukovaiyar*.



Gurudeva says...

Our saints have sung that Siva is within us, and we are within Siva.

Knowing that, fear and worry and doubt are forever gone from our mind.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 39



39.1 The Nalvars are four Saiva saints who lived in Tamil Nadu around 200 years ago.

- True
- False

39.2 Each of the Nalvars

(Check the correct answer)

- A. Was a great yogi
- B. Wrote books on philosophy
- C. Composed devotional songs

39.3 Enter the letter from below of A - D for the correct Nalvar who fits that description.

___ Swept the temple walks

___ Known for his deep visions of Siva and for several miraculous events

___ Was just three years old when blessed with a vision of Siva

___ Was prime minister to the Pandyan king of Madurai

- (A) Sundarar
- (B) Sambandar
- (C) Appar
- (D) Manikkavasagar

39.4 The songs of Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar are called

(Check the correct answer)

- A. Tiruvasagam
- B. Devarams
- C. Tirukural

39.5 The songs of Manikkavasagar are called

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Tiruvasagam
- B. Devarams
- C. Tirukovaiyar