



உண்ணாமலை யுமையாளொடும் உடனாகிய வொருவன்  
பெண்ணாகிய பெருமான்மலை திருமாமணி திகழ  
மண்ணார்ந்தன வருவித்திரண் மழலைம்முழ வதிரும்  
அண்ணாமலை தொழுவார்வினை வழுவாவண்ண மறுமே.

## **WELCOME MESSAGE**

We are blessed by Arulmigu Sri Arunachaleswarar and Abeethakujambal of the London Sivan Kovil and welcome all devotees from the world over to participate and enjoy the forthcoming Second International Thirumurai Festival in London.

The London Sivan Kovil Trust is immensely proud to host the Thirumurai Festival being held on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2014. A Steering group convened for this purpose is organising the Festival.

### **Thirumurai:**

Thirumurai is composed of twelve volumes of hymns sung by 27 great Saiva saints in 276 Sivan Temples in Tamil Nadu and northern Sri Lanka. The twelve Thirumuraihal have a collection of well over 18,200 holy hymns. However according to history tens of thousands of the Thirumuraihal have been lost and this is an incalculable loss to our ancient heritage. Worshipful Nambiyandar Nambi Adigal was blessed by Thirunarayur Polla Pillayar and felt the need to comprehensively classify the massive collection of devotional hymns. He was the architect of producing what is now known as Thirumuraihal, in eleven volumes in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Please refer to the page Thirumurai).

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century during the height of the Chola Kingdom, the then chief minister Arulmozhithevar, who was an intellectual giant, became despondent at the Chola king's preoccupation with romantic epics such as Seevakasinthamany belonging to the Jain literature. It was Arulmozhithevar who decided to convince the Chola monarch and direct his attention towards the fantastic Bakthi literature and Purana and Ithihasa stories. These abound in the Saiva tradition and espouse the highest ethical and moral values practised in that era. He successfully convinced 2<sup>nd</sup> Kulothunga Cholan to appreciate the finer points of the hymns sung in pure devotion. The King was inspired and made a plea to the gifted chief minister to reveal the hymns and lives of the Saiva saints to the world. The Chief Minister renounced his role and went to Chidambaram, the home of Lord Nataraja and Sivakami Ambal and produced the incomparable Thiruthondar Puranam, often referred to as " Periya Puranam" because of its pre-eminence in the sphere of Bhakti literature. The Chola king was ecstatic and honoured his former chief minister who became the Revered "Theiva Pulavar" Sekhizhar. Thus this invaluable contribution was worthy of addition as the twelfth Thirumurai.

The first International Thirumurai conference was organised and celebrated by Malaysian Hindu Sangam on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It attracted delegates from across the world including the UK and scholars from India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Myanmar. The Malaysian Hindu Sangam has had a well-structured Thirumurai festival featuring many youngsters for over three decades. We appreciated the precedence and the efforts to sustain such a great tradition, and it was primarily at their suggestion that we embarked on this mission to spread the enormous spiritual and cultural wealth of the Thirumuraihal to the rest of the world with particular focus on Youth.

We welcome your support in fulfilling this enormous task. To accomplish this goal we have structured the Thirumurai festival under three major categories.

1. Thirumurai sung in traditional Pannisai by accomplished Othuvar Murthigal and vocalists from UK, Europe, India, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia etc.
2. Invite and publish research articles on several topics enunciated in the Thirumuraihal relevant to today's youngsters, exposed to a very technological and materialistic culture. We invite eminent academics, learned scholars and keen youngsters to produce high quality, well researched and structured contributions on topics in Saivism which have contemporary relevance..
3. Quality performances in the form of dance- dramas depicting some landmarks in the history of Naalvar, the four pre-eminent Saiva saints.

The festival itself opens at the London Sivan Temple on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014 with prayers and worship of Thillai Natarajan and Sivakami Ambal. It signifies the great debt of appreciation we owe to the heart of all temples Chidambaram, where tens of thousands of hymns collectively known as the eleven Thirumuraihal was originally found under the aegis of the incomparable Raja Raja Cholan at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It was he who initiated the great revival of our Bhakti literature and was instrumental in bringing them in to the daily lives of all Saivites.

The 20<sup>th</sup> September Saturday and 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday proceedings will be held at the Sedgheil School Grand Auditorium. The details can be found in the page contact us.