CHAPTER IV

Sooriyanar Temple at
Thirumangalakkudi
As per the Science of Astronomy, Sun is the head of the Solar system and also per the Science of Astrology, Sun or Sūrīyan is the head of the Navagrahās, hence called the “Mandala Grahā”. As cited earlier, in and around the district of Thanjavur, there are Sthalās for the worship of the Navagrahās. The graha has also been called as Āthavan, Prabākaran, Kaṭhiravan, Phagalavan, Bāskaran, Gṛāyiru, Miṭhiran, Āthmakārāgan, Rakṣhagan. Sūrīyanar temple at Thirumaṅgalakūḍi is an independent temple, exclusively built for the worship of Sūrīyan. This temple is located on the north of the river Cauvery. It is half a Kilometre away form Thirumaṅgalakūḍi, two Kilometres North of Āduthurai, three Kilometres west of Kanjanūr in Thanjavur district. The temple should have been built during the later half of the eleventh century A.D., during reign of Kulōthuṅga Chōla I. The shrines of the other grahas should have been built during the reign of the Rāyas of Vijayanagar.

The presiding deity of the temple is Sūrīya Perumān who is in the standing position towards west along with his consorts namely Ushā Deśī and Sāya Deśī, both in the left and right sides. The deity is holding two lotus flowers on his hands. This temple is the only temple where all other Navagrahās have been installed. This temple is otherwise known as Kulōthuṅga Chōla Mārthāndālayam. Another important aspect of the temple is that, it is the one and only temple in the whole of South India to have Soorian as the presiding deity. All other Navagrahās have been installed in appropriate directions.
Legends:

As per legends and puranas, the saints used to perform tapas or penance at the hilly terrains of Mount Himalayas. 'Kāla munivar' or the 'Saint of Time' was also one among those saints performing penance. He was gifted with the power of knowing or understanding the things that are going to happen in the present, past and the future. Hence, the fellow saints used to consult the saint about their future. One day, an young saint approached the saint and requested him to instruct about his future. The Kālamunivar also responded to this request and tried to apprehend about the future of the young saint using his supernatural powers. As a result of his powers, the Saint found the fact that he has noting to say about the future of the young Saint. On hearing the predictions of Kālamunivar, the young saint raised a doubt and asked saint Kālamuni, that, "O Saint, you are capable of predicting the future of others, and have you ever predicted about your own future?". The Saint was quite shocked to listen to this question and asked the young saint who he was. The young Saint calmly replied that he is nothing but the 'God of Time' or 'Kāladēvan', and disappeared. Immediately the Saint Kālamunivar began to ponder over about his own future. As a result of his former sins of having broken and eaten the legs of crabs, he found that he is going to be afflicted with the disease leprosy. He became very much upset about his future and looked very sad. Looking at his sadness, the other saints approached him and asked him the reason for his
grief. Kālamunivar informed the other saints about the nature of his future and the disease which is going to afflict him. The other saints advised the Kālamunivar, that the Navagrahās are the agents to redress the past actions of any body, hence asked him to perform penance so as to obtain the desired favours from the Navagrahās. Hence, Saint Kālamuṇi, left the Himalayas and reached the Vindya Hills and began to indulge in serious penance towards the Navagrahās.

The serious penance of Saint Kālamuni attracted the attention of the Navagrahās and they appeared before him. The Saint paid honours and worshipped the Grahās and explained to them the disease that is going to afflict him as result of his past actions. Hence, he pleaded them that they should help him to save him from the affliction of the disease. The Navagrahās also got convinced over the request of the Saint and promised him that he will not be afflicted by the disease and disappeared.

Somehow, the granting of the boon to Saint Kālamuni by the Navagrahās reached to the Knowledge of Lord Brahmā, who got annoyed and summoned the Navagrahās and questioned them as on what authority that they have granted such a boon to Saint Kālamuni. He further advised them, that the Navagrahās could not act independently and as per the grace of Lord Śiva and the Lord of the Time, the Navagrahās has to act according to the deeds, either good or bad of all the souls of the world. And also informed them, that only for
that purpose, the Navagrahãs have been created, said Brahmã. Hence, as a violation of the purpose of their creation, Lord Brahmã cursed the Navagrahãs that they also have to be afflicted by the disease leprosy along with Saint Kãlamuni as long as the curse exist.

On receiving the curse of Lord Brahmã, the Navagrahãs got shocked and fell on the Knees of Lord Brahmã, who happen to be the 'Lord of creation' and pleaded for the remission of the curse and explained to them that they have to yield to the request of Saint Kãlamuni, Since the penance was so serious and the rays of heat which emanated from the Saint Kãlamuni began to scorch the Navagraha Mandalã, hence, as they could not withstand the agony they were compelled to grant such a boon to Saint Kãlamuni. They pleaded to Lord Brahmã to suggest they ways and means to get relief from the curse.

Lord Brahmã, who got convinced over the fervent prayers of the Navagrahãs, suggested to them that they should go to the earth and reach South India, and particularly to the northern banks of the river Cauvery and reach a place called Arãkkãvanañam alias Vellerrukkãngãdu and to perform penance. Moreover Lord Brahmã instructed them that they should commence the penance for as many as seventy eight days, daily before the dawn of the sun, taking holy bath, offering worship to Lord Pranãvarathã and Goddess Mangalanãyaki, and offering a bunch of Arãkkã leaves, a handful curd rice as Naivãthiyam and after the worship they should eat them. On
all other days they should perform penance fasting. These formalities should be observed meticulously, and then only they will be relieved from the curse.

As per the instructions of Lord Brahmā, the Navagrahās came to the earth and were loitering in search of Arākkavaṇam. On the way, they happen to meet Saint Agasthiyā to whom the Navagrahās described in detail the things that had happened. Saint Agasthiyā, who was also wanted to worship at Arākkavaṇam, asked the Navagrahās to accompany him. Saint Agasthiyā, who will be short in stature, extended his hand towards the river Cauvery, collected water and offered abhisheka to Lord Pranāvarthar. The Navagrahās were simply astonished to witness the wonderful act performed by Saint Agasthiyā. In the meantime, as per the curse of the Lord Brahmā, the Navagrahās got afflicted by leprosy and their entire body began to shrink with sores, as a result of the disease. Hence, the Navagrahās prayed Saint Agasthiyā to guide them to perform the tapas as per the instructions of Lord Brahmā.

Saint Agasthiyā instructed the Navagrahās that they should choose the northeastern direction of Arukkavāna and install there the image of Lord Vināyaka, and commence their penance as per the instructions of Lord Brahmā. “Moreover, better you all choose each holy tank of that place, take a holy dip and perform the pūjjas then they will be freed from their curse”. The Navagrahās asked the Saint Agasthiyā the reason for keeping the curd rice on ērrukku leaves and
then to eat it. Agasthiyā replied that by keeping the curd rice on the ēṟṟukku leaves, the juice of the leaves will mix with the rice, and this admixture will be the proper medicine for the cure of leprosy. Accordingly, the Navagrahs performed the poojas so strictly and as a result of that they got relieved form their disease.

Kālamuni, who obtained a boon from the Navagrahās also reached the place, and the Navagrahās accompanied him to the place where they performed the penance and instructed Kālamuni to offer worship to Lord Vināyaga who had been installed there. Kālamuni also observed the formalities of worship and got relieved from the afflictions of the disease. As the Lord Vināyaga relieved the Navagrahas and the Saint Kālamuni from their disease, he came to be known as “Kōl Thīrṭha Vināyagar”. The Navagrahās instructed Saint Kālamuni to construct a separate temple for worship, which today exists as the Sōoriyan temple.

**Architecture:**

The temple is located in the centre of the Village facing the West. At the entrance there is a Rājagōpura with three tiers with a height of about fifty feet. There are five Kalasās and the Rājagōpura facing the West is decorated with a variety of lime mortar images depicting a variety of scenes form the Puranas. Outside the Rājagōpura, in the northern side is located the holy tank “Sōoriya Pushkaraṇi” and who ever wish to offer worship to the deity Sōoriyan must have a holy bath in the holy tank. At the centre of the temple is
located the Sanctum Sanctorum of the presiding deity Sōriyanar facing the West along with his two consorts Ushā Devi in the left and Sāyā Devi in the right. The deity is in standing position holding two red lotus flowers in his hands. The Sanctum is enclosed with a Praharā with lifted walls on all the four sides. At south west of the Praharā is located the shrine of the 'Kōl Thirtha Vināyakar'. At the west of the Praharā is located the temple's office. At the Northwest is the Vāhana mandapā, and at the North Praharā is the well of the Shrine. At the Northeastern corner lies the Yaga sālai, and at the south eastern side lies the Madapalli. At the South Praharā is the Sthala Virūṭṭha of the temple “Veḷḷekku tree”. Adjacent to the Sanctum, there are minor shrines for the eight grahās namely Sani, Puthan, Seyyai, Guru, Chandran, Kēthu, Sukkiran and Rāgu. At the Western side of the Praharā is the Shrine for Thējas Saṃdēsar. In front of the Sanctum there are the Artha Mandapā, Mahā Mandapā, Sthapana Mandapā, Sabānāyagar Mandapā and the Naṟṭha Mandapā.

The Sanctum Sanctorum of the presiding deity Sōriyanar has a single story vimanā with the lime mortar horse figures on all four sides. The images of Daṇḍi and Piṅgalan are located at the south and the north at the entrance of Artha Mandapā. The Dwārabalagārs also located there itself. Facing these images stands the Vāhana of the deity, the horse or Aswam, as the Nandi is located just in front of the Sivalingā.
Minor Shrines for the Navagrahas:

a) Shrine for Guru Bhagavan:

The Shrine for Guru Bhagavan has been located just behind the horse vāhana, in the west of the Mahā Mandapā. He is in standing position looking at the east. His right hand holds the abaya mudra and the left hand is placed on his thighs. The shrine has a single story vimāna with mortar images of fishes.

b) Shrine for Sani Bhagavan:

In the Southern Prakara, Sanēśwarā is seen in standing position facing the east in a separate shrine. He is also keeping one of his hands on his thigh and the other hand shows the abaya mudra. His vāhana crow is not seen here. The small shrine also has single story vimanā with out any embellishments.

c) Shrine for Puthan Bhagavan:

In the same Southern Prakara, Puthan is seen in standing position facing the west. He is also keeping one of his hands on his thigh and the other hand holds the abaya mudra. The tiny shrine also has a single story vimāna with the mortar images of Puthan on all four sides.
d) **Angara Bhagavan’s Shrine:**

The tiny shrine of Angāragan is located in the junction of the east and south Prakārās. He is seen in standing position facing the west. One of his hand shows the abaya mudra and the other hand is kept on his thigh.

e) **Chandra Bhagavan’s Shrine:**

He is seen in standing position facing the west in the eastern Prakārā. Both of his hands hold Kumuda flowers. Behind his head is engraved the image of a full moon. A noteworthy aspect of this image is that, the image of Chandran will be seen in other temples only with a crescent moon.

f) **Shrine for Kēthu Bhagavan:**

The shrine for Kēthu is located in the junction of the East West Prakārās. He is seen in standing pose facing the west. His image has a human head with a snake over it. He is seen in anjali Kasta Pose.

g) **Sukkira Bhagavan’s Shrine:**

He is placed in a small shrine in the Northern Prakārā, facing the South in standing pose. One of his hands holds the abaya mudra and the other one is kept on his thigh.

h) **Shrine for Rāgu Bhagavan:**

The tiny shrine of Rāgu is located in the Northern Prakārā, and he is seen in standing pose facing the east. The image is carved in
such a way that the body is in snake's form and the head of that an
asura.

i) Shrine for Thējas Sandēswar:

There are a number of Sandēswaras and the Sōriyanar temple,
he has been called as the “Thējas (Flame) Sandēswarar. As sun is in
the form “light or flame”, he has been called the Thējas Sandēswarar.
His shrine is located in the Northern Prakara, facing the South in
sitting pose.

Apart from these deities there are the deities of Natarāja,
Viswanāthar, Visālaṭchi and Vināyaka.

Mode of Worship:

Those who wish to worship Lord Sōriya at this shrine has to
take a holy bath in the holy tank Sōriya Puṣṭkarani which is located
at the Northern side outside the Rājagōpara. Then, Standing before
the Rājagōpara, holding both the hands over the head and should
have the Gōpura dharṣhān. After observing these formalities, one
should offer worship to Kōl Thērtha Vināyaga, Lord Viswaṇathā,
and Goddess Visālaṭchi. Then worship should be offered to Lord Sōriyan
along with his Consorts. Worship also should be offered to Guru who
is seen in front of the presiding deity. Then, through the Thuvaṅavōil,
which is in the south, one must come down and proceed towards east
and worship Sani, Puthan and Angārahan. Then proceeding to the
north, worship should be offered to Chaṇḍran and Kē thu. Then
proceeding towards West, worship should be offered to Sukkiran and Rāgu. Finally, worship should be offered to Thējas Sandēswar. Returning back the way that one proceed into the temple, one should reach the Shrine of Kōl Thōrtha Vināyagā and appeal to him one's wishes and worries. Then touching the flag mast, one should go round the temple for nine times. Before the Pīta, men should thank the Lord in the form of Ashtaṅgam and ladies in the form of Panchaṅgam facing the direction North. Only at this temple, Lord Sōōriya is seen in marriage pose along with his Consorts Usahā Dēvi and Sāyā Dēvi and also as the presiding deity. Moreover the other Navagrahas are seen without any Vāhanas and Weapons. Hence they have to be worshipped with Ghee theēpam.

**Festivals:**

Apart from the regular festivals celebrated in the Hindu Saivite temples, the following special festivals are celebrated in a grand manner in the temple. They are: Last Tuesday of the month Ādi, First Sunday of Āvani, Navarātri festival at Puṟaṭṭasi, Sunday of Kārthigai, Kārthigai Sōmavāram, Ashtami Thīthavari of Thai, Sivarāthiri of Māsi, Sandal Paste abhisheka for the Navagrahas, Transition of Sani and the transition of Guru.

**Finance and Administration:**

The ancient shrine was built during the time of the Chōlas and got renovated during the subsequent periods. The Epigraphical
sources of the temples have been mutilated and no authentic source of information about the grant of lands and other donations could be inferred. At present, the temple has 65 acres of wet land, 4 acres of dry land, ten numbers of various shops and 110 plots which brings about 40 lakhs of rupees per year to the temple.

At present, the temple is under control of the Thiruvāvuduthrurai Mutt and the Head of Mutt, the Thiravāvuduthurai Ādinam is the Chief administrator of the temple. Under his control, the temple has been administered properly, for which there is an office building within the temple Complex. There are as many as twenty eight employees working in the temple looking after various functions.

Pūjās:

At this temple, daily pūjās are performed six times to deities. They are as follow:

1. Early morning Pūjā  – Morning 6. A.M to 7.00 A.M
   (Thirupalli Ezhuchi )

2. Kāla Sānthi  – Morning 8.30 A.M to 10.00 A.M

3. Ucch Chi Kālam  – Morning 11.00 A.M to 12.00 A.M

4. Sāyaṛatc̦hai  – Evening 5.30 P.M to 6.30 P.M

5. Eraṇdam Kālam  – Evening 7.30 P.M to 8.30 P.M

6. Arthā Sāmam  – Night 8.30 P.M to 9.30 P.M
During these poojas, mantras are chanted, Archanās, Abhishēkas are also performed. Neivēthiams also distributed to the devotees.

**Astrological Relevance and Factors of Sōriyan:**

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<tr>
<th>Kōthiram</th>
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<td>Authority</td>
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<td>Plant</td>
<td>Vellēṟṟukku</td>
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<td>Grain</td>
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<td>Food</td>
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Metal Brass and Copper

Gem Ruby

Period of dwelling time in Rasi One month

Period of Dasai Six Years

Possession Pithrukaran – Pitha

Fortune 1,2,7 – Good fortune

Sthalā Sōōriyanar Temple

Association with human body Soul and bones

**Mode of Worship of Sooriyan:**

The following worshipping method or rites and rituals have to be followed to get relief from the “Sōōriya Thōsham”. He has to be offered red coloured flowers, adorned with red colour dress, and has to wear ornaments with Ruby. He has to observe fasting on Sundays and can offer red colour cow as “Thanam”. Then he has to perform “Sōōriya Namaskāram”. Red lotus flower is fit for archanā. The fire pit shall be formed with vellerrukku, and the Yagā can be performed. The archanā can be performed by offering wheat, sugar Pōngal as Neivēthiyam and with camphor, dipāradana can be shown to the deity. The Sōōriya hymns can be sung in Soṉrasṭhra tune and thus worship the deity.
**Sooriya Dasai:**

Sooriya Dasai lasts for six years. He has more power when he dwells in the Mesha rasi (Aries). His power has been calculated as per astrology, when he stays in the following Rāsis.

1. Mesha Rāsi (Aries) - 1 ¼
2. Simmam (Leo) - 1
3. Kadakam (cancer) - ½
4. Viruċhigam (Scorpio) - ½
5. Mithunam (Gemini) - ½
6. Kanni (Vigro) - ½
7. Rishabam (Taurus) - ¼
8. Maharam (Capricorn) - ¼
9. Kumbam (Aquaris) - ¼
10. Tula (Libra) - 1/8

The fortunes of Sōōriyan can be observed during the months of Chitthirai, Avani and during the stars of Kārtthigai, Uthiram and Uṭhirādanam. Through the father, Sōōriya Dasai causes good fortunes such as Courage, Valour, good health, grace, awards and good positions.

At times, he also causes bad fortunes such as accidents, family troubles, mental worries, enmity of wife and children.
**Nature of Sooriya as per the Rāsis:**

As Sōriya rotates, he dwells a month in each rāsi and as he dwells in such rāsis his nature also changes. He has authority over the Simma rāsi (Leo). He will be seen in full power when he enters into the Mēshā rāsi (Aries) and when he enters into the Tulā rāsi (Libra) he is seen declined in power. His friendly houses of the rāsis are Kadagam, Viruĉigam, Thanusu and Mēenam (Cancer, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Pisces). He is hostile to the houses of Rishaba, Maharā and Kumbā (Taurus, Capricorn, Aquarius).

As per one's horoscope, the fortunes and misfortunes of the person vary according to the dwelling rasi of a person. Hence, to avoid the misfortunes of the person vary advised to worship Sōriya as per the rites and rituals associated with him.

**Navagraha Sthōthira:**

"அர்த்த திவிலே இருக்கூம் காரியார்த்தி பாகிய தேவரா பெண்டிய மைவாளத் பெருமாளும் பாரியாளர் கத்தைக்கு பென்று மாரியம் புலவர் உள்ளாமல் என்று பெருமாள் உள்ளாமல் மேற்புறா நான்கு சோமாளி ஜனவரியடியா""

**Navagrahaś Sthuthi:**

"ஜ திர்நந்த சரவதர கசனை பவல் வளக்கூறியை

தீமைத்தா நான் பாராற்றம் பார்த்தர் வீராத்தியின் தியாகமா""
"I pray and worship Lord Sooriya who is in the colour of Semparuthi (Shoe flower) flower, more attractive, eliminating the darkness and granting relief form all sins".

**Sri Soorya Sthuthi:**

Lord Brahama had created the grand universe with your lotus shaped foot. Lord Thirumal also holds your thuli which you have after changed yourself as Sheshan. Adi siva also have pasted this Sooriya thuli all over his body.

**Navagraha Gayathri – Sooriyan:**

- பார்க்கிற மூலம் விரித்துள்ள பக்கமுற்றத்துக்கு விருத்தியும்
- துளியான பார்க்கிற மூலம்: பார்க்கிற மூலம்
- போர்க்கிற விரித்துள்ள மூலமுற்றி காயன் விருத்தியும்
- துளியான அகற்றும் பார்க்கிற மூலம்
Foot Notes


2. Ibid., P.20

3. Meenatchisundaram, V. Cholanattu Navagrahath Thalangal, (Chennai: Gangai Book Depot, 1999), P.14

4. Ibid., P.16

5. Vatsala Jambunathan, Navagraha Temples of Thanjore District of Tamilnadu, (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2003), P.16

6. Ibid., P.24

7. Ibid., P.26


12. Ibid., P.30

13. Ibid., P.31
14. ibid., P 31

15. ibid., P.31

16. Mangala Murugesan, op. cit., PP 20-21