



Aacharya vriksham

(E Magazine of Srimath Andavan Ashram, Coimbatore)

Plava Maarghazhi 2021 Special supplement



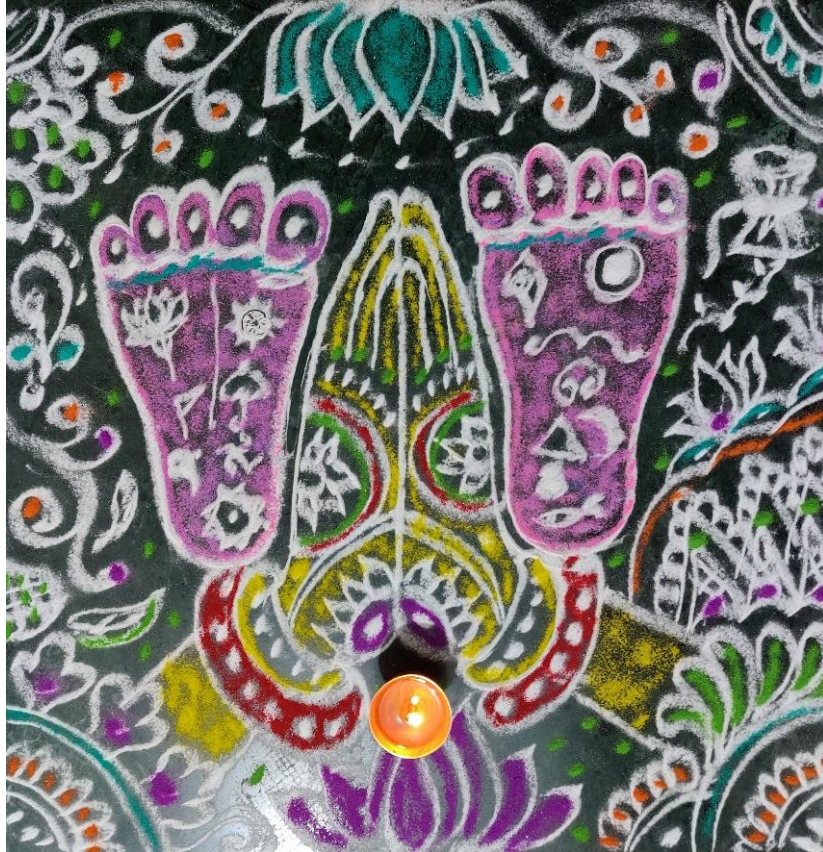
**“Maadhangalil
Naan
Maarghazhi”**



Color pencil drawing of Srivilliputtur Andal
by Lakshmi shreyas

THIRUPAVAI IN PICTURES

PAINTING BY SMT.MALATHY BALAJI





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1. “AMONG THE MONTHS - I AM MARGAZHI”

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita: Among the twelve months in a year, I am Margazhi. “mAsAnAm mArgasirso 'ham” [Chapter 10 Slokam 35]

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम्।

मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः॥10.35॥

Brhat-sama tatha samnam Gayatri chandasam aham

Masanam marga-sirso 'ham rtunam kusumakarah

The most beautiful month in the Tamizh calendar! Lord Krishna says that he is the month of Margazhi from which one can imagine the beauty and sanctity of this month. The holy star Mrigaseersha combined with the Pournami thithi is the birth of the great Margazhi month. Among the 12 Tamil months, Margazhi brings the spring season.

- **Sriman Narayanan is called with various thiru Naamams. 12 ThiruNaammas - (Kesava, Narayana etc) are considered very special. And these 12 thiru Naamams denotes 12 Tamil months. Out of these 12 thiru Naamams, Kesavan is considered to be the greatest and divine Naamam and this Naamam - Kesavan is related to the Margazhi month. This also explains the greatness of Margazhi month.**
- **On all the thirty days of this month, Thiruppavai Pasurams will be rendered in the early morning in all temples and houses. Adhyayana Utsavam for 21 days (10+10+1) will also be held during this month by rendering holy scriptures (Four thousand Divya Prabhandam Pasurams) at 108 Divya Desam including Sri Rangam and many other Vaishnava Sthalams). The month is also of great significance in the SrIrangam Sri Ranganatha Temple. Apart from the Vaikunta Ekadasi, the SrIrangam temple during the month witnesses the Pagal pathu and Rapathu – chanting of 4000 Divya Prapadham**
- **Pavai Nombu, also known as Margazhi Nonbu, is observed in Tamil Nadu during Margazhi masam or Margali month. It is said that Andal performed Pavai Nonbu to merge with Sri Ranganatha (Lord Vishnu).**
- **The Pavai Nonbu observed as per the Thiruppavai verses illustrates the desire of the jeevatma to merge with the paramatma. All the austerities performed in this regard are part of the sharanagati performed by Andal to Lord Ranganatha. Andal's thirty songs contain the cardinal principles of Vaishnava dharma during the month of Margazhi. Vaishnavas sing these songs to bring peace, prosperity and Divine Grace.**
- **The first five stanzas provide an introduction to the main theme, its principle and purpose. According to Andal one should give up luxuries during this season. Sincere prayers to the God would bring abundant rain and thus prosperity. Offering Lord Krishna fresh flowers would expiate sins committed earlier and those that may be committed in future.**
- **In the next ten stanzas she describes the importance of community participation. She invites her friends to gather flowers. She essays the ambience at her village, the**

chirping of birds, colorful blossoms, the musical sound of butter-churning, herds of cattle with tinkling bells, the sounding of the conch from the temple.

- She visits each household and awakens all her friends to join her for a bath in a nearby pond. She also praises the incarnations of the Lord. The next five stanzas describe her visit to the temple accompanied by her friends. She desires to render Suprabhata gently to wake up the Lord. The group appeases the temple guards, enters the temple and recites prayers extolling the parents of Lord Krishna and begging them to wake up Krishna and Balarama. Then they approach Neela Devi, the consort of the Lord, to have a Darshan.
- The last nine stanzas are on the glories of the Lord. On receiving his blessings Andal lists her demands; milk for the vrata, white conch, lamps, flowers, and rich costume and jewellery, plenty of ghee and butter. The concluding stanza is an envoi identifying her as the daughter of Vishnucittar who made this garland of 30 pasurams and says those who recite with devotion will have Lord's blessings.
- This Margazhi month has another specialty also. This month is considered and should be considered as the divine and highly spiritual month because in all the other months, there are lots of festivals and happy occasions fall.
- The main reason why there are no festivals in this month is mainly because of mind and soul should completely think only towards the Perumal and this is the only month in which all the 30 days should be dedication towards the Perumal. This is the main reason why no festivals are done during this month, as this month is highly sacred and divine.
- There is also a scientific meaning, which explains the greatness of the Margazhi month. During this month, the ozone layer will be lowered a little bit and because of this, any disease will reduce and gives a healthy body.



**Let us recite Thirupavai, daily,
during this month without fail**

Srimathe RangaRamanuja MahaDesikaya Namaha

Let us celebrate Margazhi

Bhagavan says, "Among months I am Mārgazhi." The greatness of the month of Mārgazhi has been described in several places. Let us see the information from Pancaratra.

धनुर्मासं दिनं वक्ष्ये केशवाराधनं परं

कोदण्डस्थे सवितरि प्रत्युषे पूजयेत् हरिं

द्वादशाब्दार्चनं फलं दिनेनैकेन लभ्यते

चापमासं तु देवानं राज्यन्तमिति हि स्मृतम्

रज्यन्तं देवकालं स्यात् देव प्रीतिकरं परं

dhanurmāsa dinaṁ vaksye keśavārādhanaṁ paraṁ
kodaṇḍasthe savitari pratyūṣe pūjayet hariṁ
dvādaśābdārcanaṁ phalaṁ dinenaikena labhyate
cāpamāsaṁ tu devānaṁ rāṅyantamiti hi smṛtam
raṅyantam devakālaṁ syāt deva prītikaraṁ paraṁ

From the time the Sun enters the dhanur rāsi, ārādhanaṁ should be performed very early in the morning. In this sloka it is said 'kodaṇḍasthe savitari' Without simply saying when the Sun is in dhanus, the term kodaṇḍasthe is used to indicate that wherever it is mentioned as bow, it represents the bow and arrow in Sri Rama's hands. One day's formal worship of Emperuman grants the benefit that twelve years' worth of worship would have granted. Why should worship be performed early in the morning? One year in human beings' life is equivalent to one day in the life of Devas. Early morning time of that day is the month of Mārgazhi.

Hence, special prayers are performed in the month of Mārgazhi. The early morning in this month is time of Devas. Anything performed (according to rules) will gladden the Devas.

आवाहनादिभिः सर्वैः उपचारैर्विशेषतः

गन्धपुष्पं तथा धूपं दीपं पूर्ववदाचरेत्

अलङ्कारासनं चैव स्तोत्रपाठन्तथा चरेत्

भक्तगाथा विशेषेण वैष्णवैः श्रावयेत्क्रमात्

स्तोत्रगीतं समायुक्तं वाद्य नृत्यं तथाचरेत्

āvāhanādibhiḥ sarvaiḥ upacāirviśeṣataḥ
gandhapuṣpaṁ tathā dhūpaṁ dīpaṁ pūrvavadācaret
alaṅkāraśanaṁ caiva stotra-pāṭhantathā caret
bhaktagāthā viśeṣeṇa vaiṣṇavaiḥ śrāvayetkramāt
stotra-gītaṁ samāyuktaṁ vādya nṛtyaṁ tathācaret

As per the methods prescribed, bhagavad ārādhanam should be performed with formal āvāhanam (this is applicable only for divinity with form). May be it is due to the expression bhaktagāthā viśeṣeṇa that Thiruppavai, Srimadh Ramayanam and other upanyasams happen everywhere for the listening pleasure of the devotees. Music performances and dance programs occur as Mārgazhi mahotsavam during this month.

मुद्धान्नं सघृतं रम्यं सक्षीरं सोपदंशकं

सुगन्ध रस संयुक्तं लेह्यं शोष्यादिकं ततः

उपदंश सहस्रन्तु दद्यात्विभवसंमतं

मधुपर्कादिकान्त्र हविराज्यं समर्पयेत्

mudvānnaṁ saghṛtaṁ ramyaṁ sakṣīraṁ sopadaṁśakaṁ
sugandha rasa saṁyuktaṁ lehya śoṣyādikaṁ tataḥ
upadaṁśa sahasrantu dadyātvibhavasāṁmataṁ
madhuparkādikāntatra havirājyaṁ samarpayet

Food offering has been specified for this month as follows. Mudhgānnaṁ pongal, along with good clarified butter, milk and other associated dishes should be offered to the Lord. As far as possible, whenever we make rice offering, we should offer it along with accompaniments such vegetables, koottu (vegetables with gravy), chutney, rock candy, jaggery etc. Adiyen wishes to say something in this context. There is a kshetram, Kārappankādu, 30 km from Mannārkudi. The Emperuman in this temple is Sridevi, Perundevi nāyikā samedha Abhīṣhta Varadarāja Perumāḷ. Here everyday food is offered along with something to go with it. We do not eat plain rice unless it is accompanied by something else. Hence, it is best to perform nivedanam to Emperuman along with any one of the accompaniments. Hence, in the month of Mārgazhi people should wake up early in the morning without worrying about physical discomforts, work load etc. and perform ārādanam for Emperuman's happiness. Even if one does not know the formal way of worship, one should bathe early in the morning, recite Thiruppali ezhucchi, thiruppavai, Desika prabandam etc and offer whatever they can to Emperuman thus completing the worship. Waking up early in the morning brings about several changes within us. Let us attempt to praise such a great month of Mārgazhi and perform bhagavad ārādhanam.

Dasan,
Vaduvur Govindhan

Transliteration & Translation primary contributor: Smt.Geetha Anand

Sri Ranganatha Paadukaa (English)

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Malar I, Idhazh 11 Kara varusham Maargazhi maasam

IMPORTANCE OF MARGAZHI MONTH IN TAMIL CALENDAR

The Tamil Margali Masam, or Margazhi Month, is the month of Bhakti and Music. In 2021, Margazhi month begins on Thursday, December 16, 2021 and ends on Thursday, January 14, 2022. The importance of Margazhi Masam was announced by none other than Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita when says Maasanam Margasheersoham - among the twelve months, I am Markazhi. Rendering of Thiruppavai and Thiruvempavai, religious discourses and music festivals are the major highlights during the period.

Importance of Margazhi Month in Tamil Calendar

- ❖ The month is kept aside for spiritual activities. Auspicious events and marriages are not performed in the month. The reason for avoiding auspicious activities is that the month is the dawn period for Devas and people do not want to engage in any other auspicious activities other than worship of Gods.
- ❖ Margali Month is of immense spiritual importance and the greatness of the Margali can be gauged from the fact that Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says "Among the twelve months, I am Margazhi."
- ❖ Chanting of the Tiruppavai of Andal is the most important event of the month. Tiruppavai consists of 30 verses and a verse is chanted on each day of Margali.
- ❖ Instead of the usual prayer, Tiruppavai is recited as morning prayer during the month of Margazhi at the Tirumala Tirupati Temple.
- ❖ Another major highlight of the month is the drawing of kolams (rangoli) daily in front of houses. Many streets are filled with huge kolams of various sizes and shapes. The designs are breathtaking.
- ❖ The most important festivals in the Margali month are Vaikunta Ekadasi, Hanuman Jayanthi and Arudra Darshan.
- ❖ The month is also of great significance in the Srirangam Sri Ranganatha Temple. Apart from the Vaikunta Ekadasi, the Srirangam temple during the month witnesses the Pagal pathu and Rapathu – the chanting of Thiruvaimozhi which extols the glory of Lord Narayana.
- ❖ The first 1000 verses of Thiruvaimozhi are rendered during the 10 days prior to Vaikunta Ekadasi and this period is known as 'Pagal Pathu.'
- ❖ Beginning from Vaikunta Ekadasi for ten days, the next three thousand verses of Thiruvaimozhi are recited and this period is known as rapathu or Iruppathu.
- ❖ Margali Masam is also the time of the winter solstice when the days are shorter and the nights are longer.
- ❖ Margazhi Month is also considered the dawn period of Devas. Uttarayana Punyakalam begins in mid January – the daytime of Devas. One year of ours is a day for the Devas. The night time of Devas begins during Dakshinayana Punyakalam.
- ❖ Dates of important festivals and auspicious days in the month are:

Arudra Darshan – December 20, 2021
Hanuman Jayanti – January 2, 2022

Vaikunta Ekadasi – January 13, 2022
Bhogi Pongal – January 13, 2022

- ❖ The Tamil Margazhi month is famous for numerous Indian traditional classical music concerts and dance programs especially in Chennai.
- ❖ The entire month is kept apart for music and spiritual activities by many people.

Source: Abhilash Rajendran in the HINDU BLOG

THANIANS OF AANDAAL



1. SrI parAsara bhaTTar:

The well-known tiruppAvai taniyan that is chanted at the very beginning of tiruppAvai chanting, was composed by SrI parAsara bhaTTar, the son of kUrattAzhvAn who was a primary disciple of SrI rAmAnujar. He did ma'ngalAsasanam to kOdhai declaring his desire to serve her forever. This taniyan reveals the avatAra rahasyam of ANDAL:

நீளா துங்க ஸ்தனகிரி தட ஸுப்தம் உத்போத்ய க்ருஷ்நம்
பாரார்த்யம் ஸ்வம் ஸ்ருதி சத சிரஸ் சித்தம் அத்யாபயந்தீ
ஸ்வோசிஷ்டாயாம் ச்ரஜிநிகளிதம் யாபலாத் க்ருத்ய புங்க்தே
கோதா தஸ்யை நம இதம் இதம் பூய ஏவாஸ்து பூய:

nILA tu'ngastana giri taTI suptam udbodhya kRshNam
pArArthyam svam sRuti Sata Siras siddham adhyApayantI |
svOcchishTayAm sraji nigaLitam yA balAtkRtya bhu'nkte
godA tasyai nama idamidam bhUya evAstu bhUyah | |

(Salutations again and again to godA pirATTI who woke up emperumAn Who was fast asleep on the mountain-like breasts of nILA pirATTi, reminded Him of her right to perform eternal kai'nkaryam to Him as declared in the upanishad-s, bound Him with the garlands that she had worn on herself, and enjoyed her Seshittvam to Him as she wished.)

"SaraNagata rakshakan"

2. TirukkaNna ma'ngai ANDAn, who did kai'nkaryam to SrI bhaktavatsalap perumAL by cleaning the temple using broomstick, has blessed us with a taniyan for nAcciyAr tirumozhi by ANDAL –

அல்லிநாள்தாமரைமேல் ஆரணங்கினிந்துணைவி *
மல்லிநாடாண்ட மடமயில் மெல்லியலாள் *
ஆயர்குலவேந்தனாகத்தாள் * தென்புதுவை
வேயர்பயந்தவிளக்கு.

alli nATTamarai mEl AraNa'ngin in tuNaivi
malli nADANDa maDa mayil melliyaAL
Ayar kula vEndan AgattAL ten puduvai
vEyar payanda viLakku.

(gOdA is the lamp with which the family of periyAzhvAr was blessed; She is the dearest companion to mahAlakshmi seated on the lotus with a thousand-petals, the beautiful peacock that ruled SrI villiputtur as its princess, with a sweet and soft disposition, and the one who is united inseparably with the prince of the Ayar kulam, namely kRshNan, (who grew up as the child of nandagopan)

Courtesy : Kalyani Krisnamachari in Naachiyar Thirumozhi www.sadagopan.org

MARGAZHI – A TIME OF STABILITY

BY ISHA SADHGURU

At the onset of the Tamil month of Margazhi, Sadhguru speaks about the spiritual significance of this time and how we can make use of it to create balance and stability within ourselves.

Sadhguru: We are at a time of the year which is considered significant for those on the spiritual path. The Tamil month of Margazhi starts from December 16th. At this time of year the planet Earth is closest to the sun. In the northern hemisphere this should have been the hottest month, but it is the coolest because the northern face of the planet is facing away from the sun. The closeness to the sun renders an angle where the sun's rays are diffused as they hit the planet. They fail to warm the earth as they would have if it were a little away. But in terms of the sun's gravity functioning on the planet, right now it is at the highest. January 2nd, 2017 is the day when the planet is closest to the sun, so the maximum pull of the sun's gravity happens at this time. That is the effect the Margazhi month has on the human system – it pulls you from the base.

Margazhi is a time to bring balance and stability to the system. There are practices in the yogic system which have been transmitted into the culture in many different ways. This is a time when men will do what generally women are supposed to do, and vice versa. In Tamil Nadu, men will go on nagarasankeertan; they will sing and practice devotion – which are largely considered feminine. Geometry and masculinity are very directly connected. The feminine always pays maximum significance to an object's color and outer form. The masculine always sees the geometric base first. In this month, women practice geometry – not on paper, but in front of their homes, drawing geometrical figures or kolams.



Because of a general pull downward, the muladhara (the foundation chakra), and thus the preservative nature of life, become dominant. All life in the northern hemisphere is at its minimum right now. If you plant a seed, the growth will be slowest at this time, and it will not sprout very well. Since the growth is held back by a certain inertia in the life force, this is a time the body can recoup and preserve itself well. Recognizing this, it is still maintained that there are never any marriages in Tamil Nadu during Margazhi. This is not a time for conception. Even grihastas, or householders, practice brahmacharya for this period.

Margazhi Dip in Water



This is also a good time particularly for those suffering from psychological imbalances because the sun's energy is pulling downward, and they can stabilize themselves. In the yogic system, if there is a psychological imbalance, it is always seen as water element going out of control. If you have a tank full of water and shake it, it will slosh. The water element causes various levels of imbalance in a person if the right kind of things are not done with it. Traditionally, in this month, there are various practices to be in touch with water. Generally, people don't want to miss the brahma muhurtam (3:40am, a conducive time for spiritual sadhana). One of the simplest things people do is go into temple ponds at 3:40am to take a dip.

The Margazhi brings a natural sense of stability into the system. There are any number of spiritual seekers who are constantly one step forward, one step backward. This is happening to too many people because there is not enough sadhana towards stabilizing themselves. If you are pulled upward and you are not stable within yourself, it will lead to imbalances. This month is used for stability and the next month, the Thai, is used for mobility. If you have created enough stability within you, only then would you dare to be mobile. This is a time to create balance and stability.



4. THIRUPPAVAI-INTRODUCTION

Andal, like Sita Piratti was born at Rangamannar's nandavanam, just like the ethereal fragrance of the tulasi growing nearby. After she attained a marriageable age, when Periyazhwar was searching for a groom, Andal said, "If you get me married to mere mortals, I shall not wish to live, I shall not allow you to do so, I shall get wed to Paraman alone".

Whenever Azhwar used to sing the glories of the Perumals of the hundred and eight divya deshams, and whenever he mentioned about Arangan, His divine form and the beauty of His thirumeni, she used to feel mesmerized and shed tears of joy and at the same time feel thrilled. She, like the gopikas of Nandagokulam, decided to get married to Kannan alone and adorned Herself with attire similar to that of the Gopis and would talk hours together like them and observed the "Paavai" nombu or festival. These actions were sung by her as Thiruppavai. This is also referred to as Godai Tamizh that is "ஒரு பெண்ணின் தமிழ்" a girl's tamizh.

The Tamizh sung by those born as a female. Other divyaprabandhams are tamizh, which have been basically sung by Azhwars who were male with naayaka -naayaki bhavam or bridal mysticism.

Thiruppavai can give one a divine experience of unity with Bhagavan.

"மதுரையில் சங்கப்பலைக ஏற்றுக்கொண்ட பாக்கைளக் கொண்டது" – It is based on those pasurams which were accepted by the changa palakai at Madhurai, that is Thiruvaimozhi. Kodai says "சங்க தமிழ் மாலை முப்பதும் தப்பாமே", one who sings this garland of pasurams in changattamizh, shall definitely get the divine blessings of Thirumal.

There are certain periods for Vedam, when it should not be recited, but for a few days, Thiruppavai can be recited at all other times. The shastras taught to us by our parents are two in number. The first one being Geethai taught by our father Kannan. The other one being taught to us is by our mother, which is Thiruppavai. Its glory is said thus "வேதம் அநத்துக்கும் வித்தாகும்", that is Vedam is the basis for everything.

And so it is said that one who does not know these (5 x 5 + 5 = 30) thirty pasurams of Thiruppavai is a burden to the earth.

There are six main topics in Thiruppavai –

1. Paavai nombu – The observance of paavai festival
2. Going together for observing the paavai nombu
3. Awakening Kannan
4. Singing the glories of Kannan
5. Preaching
6. Sharanagathi or Self surrender

Andal talks about the above in the same order mentioned.

Andal becomes an acharya to Bhagavan for having taught him of his own duties.

The shastras proclaim that a pupil can eat the left overs of his acharya. It is for the same reason as to why Rangamannar wishes to adorn the flower garland of Andal after her having worn it. This is conveyed by her name "சூடிக்கொடுத்த நாச்சியார்". Just like Gopis, Andal takes all her friends and others to observe the festival of paavai and having preached them the ultimate truths, helps everyone to perform sharanagathi at the lotus feet of the Lord to attain the eternal bliss of moksham.

Courtesy: Commentary by His Holiness Pundarikapuram Srimad Andavan Srimath Gopaladesika Mahadesikan--Translation in English By Sri C.G. Balaji-Edited by Oppiliappan koil sri varadachari sathakopan....www.sadagopan.org

SIMPLE ENGLISH MEANING FOR THIRUPPAVAI BY SRI.V.SATAKOPAN USA

https://www.srivaishnavam.com/tpavai/tpavai_meaning1.htm



Selected Excerpts from MahA VidvAn Sri U.Ve. PerukkAraNai Swamy ' ThiruppAvai Monograph'

MahA pravEsam and First Paasuram (Marghazhi Thingal Dinam); Srimathyai GodhAyai Nama:, SrimathE RaamAnujAya Nama:

A short Introduction on MahA PravEsam (Grand Entry) to ThiruppAvai and cover the highlights of the First sLOkam .

adiyEn will cover the literary meaning and follow it by the section on Inner Meanings by Sri PerukkAraNai Swamy .

In view of the very limited space to cover these articles , adiyEn will be very brief with respect to references to other commentaries.

MahA PravEsam(Grand Introduction)

-" Every one of us is an ANDAL and like Her must long for union with the Lord. This is SuddhAnthasiddhAntham , the doctrine of King's harem , the doctrine of Bridal mysticism.

ANDAL was born as a girl and it was easy for Her to become a bride, for the eternally youthful Bridegroom, Sri RanganAtham.

-Other AzhwArs were males and they had to adopt the sentiments, language and dress of ANDAL to become the bride , which they did successfully (as Parankusa Naayaki/Swamy NammAzhwAr and ParakAla Naayaki/Thirumangai AzhwAr) to a large extent.

-THAT MUST BE OUR GOAL; we must acquire right knowledge sitting at the feet of a SadAchArya;

-The AchAryan will TRANSFORM US, us as a bride and offer us to the Lord , who is eager to accept us.

-So long as we are in this world, we must try to do KAIMKARYAM to BhagavAn & His devotees, which is like the ForeTaste of WHAT, we are going to enjoy Ultimately, in the Transcendent World- Pudukkotai Professor A.SrinivAsa Raaghavan (1986).

There are many , many commentaries for ThiruppAvai. They are classified into different groups based on their length.

-Twenty four padhams (grantham in Sanskrit and PaDi in Tamil) are the units of measurement .

-for instance ,MoovAyirappadi commentary (that of Swamy PeriyavAcchAn PiLlai) has 3000x24 Padhams.

-The various ThiruppAvai Commentaries are :

- (1) OrAyirappadi (1000x 24 padhams)
- (2) IrAyirappadi of JananyAcchAr of Melkote (2000x24)
- (3) MoovAyirappadi of Swamy PeriyavAcchAn PiLlai(3000x24)
- (4) NalAyirappadi of JananyAcchAr of Melkote(4000x24)
- (5) EiyAyirappadi (5000x 24 Padhaams)
- (6) ArAyirappadi of Azhagiya MaNavALa PerumAL NaayanAr (6000x24)
- (7) Upanishad BhAshyakAra Sri RangarAmAnuja's Sanskrit commentary
- (8) Sri UtthamUr Swamy's Prabhandha Rakshai(1986)
- (9) Sri PrathivAdhi Bhayankaram Swamy's ThiruppAvai NaRu manam(1983)
- (10) Sri PerukkAraNai Swamy's SudhA SvAdham commentary (2000 A.D)

-We have to be necessarily brief in these daily postings and we refer you to these original commentaries & special Articles on Bridal Mysticisms et al, assembled under Bhakthi List Archives and Sri VaishNavA Home pages, under ANDAL subtitle by Sri MaNi VaradarAjan.

-Sri Varadarajan's article on ANDAL's life and works there, along with the most beautiful home pages, created for Srivilliputthur, By Sri Venkat Iyengar are most valuable for BhakthAs.

-The Saint-poetess ANDAL, the AvathAram of BhUmi-DEvi, observed Paavai Nonbhu (Paavai vratham) to attain Lord KrishNA as Her Husband (BharthA).

-She observed a Vratham ,which is a variation of the KaathyAyini Vratham, described in Srimath BhAgavatham.

-The Month chosen for the vratham was Marghazhi or Dhanur Maasam.This vratham takes a whole Month to complete.

-ANDAL became one of the Gopis of Gokulam -who observed the Marghazhi Vratham -and joined Her young friends, to obtain the PurushArtham, the Choicest-Highest Boon) of Nitya Kaimkaryam (eternal service to the Lord)and to have Him as their BharthA.

-ANDAL addresses Her play mates and fellow Vratham observers as " yElOrempAvAi";

-Sri UtthamUr Swamy has explained that this "yElOrempAvai " refrain found in the 29 of the 30 paasurams of ThiruppAvai, as Yel+ ohr+ YempAvAi (Oh My dear friend !

-I will describe the facets of this Paavai Nonbhu and please understand them , accept their meanings and practise them).

-The words "NeerAdap pOthuVeer" in this paasuram and elsewhere has nothing to do with taking a bath in the Yamuna river, at early morning as an essentail preparatory step of the Vratham. -NeerAttam (Bathing) means really the KrishNa samsLesham (or Union with Lord KrishNa).

-Sunai Aadal is an ancient expression denoting the same and has been used from Sanga Kaalam .

-ANDAL considered SrivilliputthUr of South, as the AayarpAdi of North, the girls of Her birth-place as Gopis, and Herself as One of the Gopis, and the temple of Vatapathra Saayee as NandhagOpar's (father

of KrishNa at Aayar Paadi) House, and Lord VatapathrasAyee as Lord KrishNa Himself and performed the Vratham.

-This feeling state (Bhavaanai) ripened and yielded the sought-after Fruits of that Vratham .She blessed us to follow this vratham and be blessed.

First Paasuram:" Marghazhi Thingal mathi niRaintha NannALAI.."

Literal Meaning by Dr.V.K.S.N.Raghavan:

" It is the good full Moon day of the month of Marghazhi.Oh the well ornamented maidens ! Those desirous of taking the bath

(in the Yamuna) may please come on. Oh the prosperous young girls of Aaypaadi (Gokulam) that is rich and grand (in beauty

and wealth) ! Lord NaarAyanan will surely yield to us alone the drum (paRai). He is the son of King Nandagopa , of cruel deeds (towards the enemies), and holding a sharp spear in his hand always. He (KrishNa) is the young lion-cub of Queen YasodhA

with very charming eyes.He(Lord NaarAyanan) has a dark cloud-like divine complexion ,(lotus like) reddish eyes and (lustrous)

face (shining) like the bright Sun and Moon. (This Lord NaarAyanan alone is the Saviour). (Let us) resort (to Him) performing the Paavai-Nonbhu and get the benefit of praise from the people of the world. { (Oh dear friend , may You recite and learn this)-know the purport of this hymn}. (Mention may be made of the slokam of Bhagavath GitA : " mAsAnAm mArga-sirshOham--X.35); " Lord NaarAyanan alone will grant Moksha SaamrAjjyam to the individual soul" is indicated in the seventh line of this First paasuram ".

SvApadEsArtham (Inner Meanings) of the First Paasuram

There are many inner meanings to every word used by ANDAL in this and every paasuram of ThiruppAvai.For reasons of

brevity , we will give only the condensed meanings for the words of the paasuram as revealed by Sri U.Ve.PerukkArANai Swamy :

Seer malhum: The place where those blessed ones ,who comprehend fully the anantha kalyANa

GuNams of the Lord reside

Aaypaadi In this dark SamsAric world

nErizhayeer Oh People with the noble traits of Samam and dhamam (auspicious Aathma GuNams of Tranquility and Control over the senses)!

NiRaintha- On this day , which is like the Moon with Thingal Mathi all its sixteen digits (kalai) just as the ShAdgunya SampoorNa Bhagavan Himself

NannALAI Since it is such an auspicious day

Maarghazhi Those who wish to follow the most noble Neerada upAyam (means) of Prapatthi (self-surrender)! pOthuveer Please join us! pOdhumino !

Koor vEl The one with the sharp-pointed sankalpam similar to the tip of a well honed spear or javelin

kodum Thozhilan One who destroys our sins

NandhagOpan and is the eteranl Youth , who is Kumaran the BrahmAnandha Svaroopan , who initiated Brahma into the Vedams and their meanings

yErArnthA KaNNI the One , who adorns the beautiful flower garland known as Vaijyanthi

Yasodhai the One , who has attained unquestionable fame (Yasas) by granting us BrahmAnandham

iLam Singham One , who is like the powerful Lion chasing away our sins and enemies

KaarmEni One who has the hue of a dark blue rainy SenkaNN cloud and has lotus like besutiful eyes

Kadhir madhiyam One who has the lustrous face like pOI MuhatthAn the radiant Sun and the cool Moon

NaarAYaNanE That SarvEsvarn , who has incarnated as Krishnan now amidst us

pArOr Puhazha who is compassionate towards us and padinthu who is lauded by the world for His sensitivity about not failing in His duties to protect us always

NamakkE for us , BhaagavathAs , who have performed Bhara NyAsam (Aathma Samarpanam, Prapatthi) at His sacred feet

Parai TharuvAn HE WILL GRANT US READILY MOKSHA SUKHAM .

Other thoughts on selected key words of paasuram 1

(1) The sacred Month of Marghazhi has Kesavan (the first of the 12 Upa-VyUha Moorthys) as the presiding deity .

Therefore , any Vratham , charity (dhAnam) , SnAnam ,AarAdhanam performed in Marghazhi will quickly yield fruits according to Swamy Desikan (Taathparya Chandrikai). That desired fruit is Parai or nithya kaimkaryam in His SaamrAjjyam (Sri Vaikuntam).

(2) Swamy JnaanyaachAr summarizes the significance of the message of this paasuram as " PrApya PrApakangaL iraNDum NAARAYANANE " .

(3) "yEIOrEmpAvAi" --This refrain is the Chandas for the Nonbhu according to Swamy JananAycchAr. Upanishad BhAshyakArar recognizes this Makutam of ThiruppAvai as "Paadha PoorNArtham ".

(4) " PaRai TaruvAn ":As the Purushan with the greatest affection for His Pathivrathai wife , Sriman NaarAyaNan will bless us with the requirements(tools) for Kaimkaryam and Ubhaya anushtAnam such as Jn~Anam , Seelam and other auspicious Aathma GuNams (Sri Abhinava Desikan).

(5) " NaarAyaNanE--TharuvAn ": Lord NaarAyaNan Himself , the inner meaning of Thiru AshtAksharam , will bless the ChEthanams (MakArArtha Jeevans)-- after being pleased with their AshtAkshara Japam -- will perform UpAya anushtAnam for them (through a SadAchAryan)...(Sri Abhinava Desikan).

(6) The yEkAram in " NaarAyaNanE " and "NamakkE": This yEkAram asserts that " SadhArchanE TantharuLa Vallan ;

SathsisshyanE PeRatthahunthavan" (The SadAchAryan ALONE can bless us; the sath-sishyan alone is qualified to receive that rarest of blessings " (Sri PBA Swamy).

Soodikkoduttha NaacchiAr Thiruvadigale Saranam ,
Sarvam KrushNArpanam asthu;
RaamAnuja Daasan , Oppiliappan Koil VaradAchAri SatakOpan
Web page kaimkaryam by R.Venkat

NAVAVIDHA BHAKTI IN THIRUPPAVAI

Dr.Murali Santhanam

Introduction: *Navavidha Bhakti* comprises the nine ways to express and develop devotion towards God or the higher Self. "*Srimad-Bhagavata*" describes Navavidha Bhakti as the devotional paths that lead to *moksha* or liberation. Navavidha Bhakti comes from the Sanskrit, *navavidha*, meaning "nine-fold" or "consisting of nine parts," and *bhakti*, meaning "faithfulness," "devotion to" or "love".

As per Bhagavad Gita one can attain moksha through Karma yoga, Jnana yoga, Bhakti yoga or ultimate surrender to God (Prapatti). There are different paths to salvation with bhakti being just one. Jnana is the path of knowledge, Karma is the path of action, Sri Krishna wants Arjuna to follow the path of devotion and declares that Bhakti is the most important among the means of Liberation.

'Bhagavata' observes that Bhakti is a state of complete dedication of life, mind and everything else. Bhakti means a firm, stable and unflinching attachment for God which brings well-being in this world and bliss in the world beyond.

According to Prahlada, devotion consists in dedicating mind, speech, action, riches and life to God.

Sravanam keertanam vishnoh smaranam paadasevanam
Archanam vandanam dasyam sakhyamaatmanivedanam [Bhagavata 7.5.23]



The following table gives the nine forms of Bhakti, its one line meaning and the standing example for that form of bhakti:

Sl	Type	Meaning	Example
1	Shravanam	Hearing the names and glories of the Lord	Pareekshit
2	Keertanam	Chanting His glories	Shuka
3	Smaranam	Remembering His captivating form and His exploits	Prahlada
4	PAadasevanam	Serving His Lotus feet	Goddess Lakshmi
5	Archanam	Worshipping Him by flowers and fruits	Pritu
6	Vandanam	Obeisance or prostration before Him	Akroora
7	Dasyam	Humble service to Him as a Servant	Hanuman
8	Sakhyam	Developing Friendship with Him	Arjuna
9	Atmanivedanam	Complete surrender of Oneself to the Lord	Bali

Thiruppavai is also referred to as “Godhohanishad” – it is the essence of Vedas (*vedam anaitukkum vitthagum*) and Upanishads. AndAl is the only female among the 12 Azhwars – as per shastras we know that ladies are not permitted to recite Vedas; perhaps, she wanted to give the essence to all the ‘AndAl ghoshti’ members through her pasurams. She was such an ardent devotee of Lord Sri Krishna that she imagined herself as a Gopi residing at Ayarpadi (Gokulam) though she was at Srivilliputtur. AndAl gives three simple ways by which one can get the attention of the Lord and attain moksha:

1. A Few beautiful flowers
2. Singing the praise of Him
3. To keep thinking of Him (Mananam)



With this background, let us look at AndAl’s Thiruppavai and the bhakti forms enshrined in the various pasurams:

1. **Shravanam:** This is the first among the nine forms and the most important one - listening to the glories of the Lord. By listening to His glories, we start developing love and reverence to Him. The easy way for Shravanam is Satsang (group of devotees) or attending classes on ancient scriptures, listening to the discourses by great philosophers, etc. When one is in a Satsang, one can listen only about God, as the co-devotees will only talk about God and His glories.. By listening, one does Shravanam. In the Thiruppavai, the following pasurams denote Shravana bhakti:

- a. **Second Pasuram** – *Vayyattu vaazhveergAl... Seyyum kirisaigal Keliro* – AndAl tells all her friends to ask and find out what are the dharma karyams . Then she tells the dos and don’ts to be observed while performing the nombu vratam.
- b. **Sixth Pasuram** - *puLLum silambina kaan puLLaraiyan kOyilil veLLai viLi sangin pEraravam kEttilaiyO* – AndAl along with her friends has gone to one of her friends’ house to wake her up. At that time she tells the friend who is sleeping that the morning has dawn and as a proof of that she gives the examples of chirping sound of birds, sound of the conch that is blown in the temple during the ‘thirupalli ezhuchi’ (awakening of the Lord), chanting of Hari namam by the sages.
- c. **Seventh Pasuram** - *keesu keesu enRu engum aanai(ch) chaaththaan kalandhu pEsina pEchcharavam kEttilaiyO* – Sounds of the Bharadwaja birds flying in groups – which AndAl listens as Krishna, Krishna – the sound of the curds being churned by the women folk in Ayarpadi, the

auspicious sound coming from the bangles and the mangalya sutrams of these women and the Kesava nama being chanted by them.

d. Twenty Sixth Pasuram - maalE! maNivaNNaa! maargazhi neeraaduvaan *mElaiyaar seyvanagal vEnduvana kEttiyEl* – She advices everyone to listen to the elders who have attained moksha through bhakti margam (way) and follow their advice. She also affirms that she has been following the footsteps of the elders.

2. Keertanam - Keertanam is the utterance of the names of the Lord and recitation of the scriptures and singing of His greatness and glory. By chanting the names of Lord - Dhruva, Meerabai, Prahlada, Purandaradasa, Thyagaraja, Kanakadasa and many other saints - have achieved God realisation. Chanting God's names releases tension and brings mental peace to the devotee. ***It is said that in this Kaliyugam, Keertanam is the only way to achieve salvation. In the Thiruppavai AndAl by using the word 'PAdi' (sing) in 14 pasurams has told the importance of keertanam.***

a. Second Pasuram – “*Theekkuralai senru odom*” –Speaking ill of others would not be liked by God. Hence, AndAl vows not to speak bad about any one and tells her friends also that they shall follow this tatvam strictly.

b. Seventh Pasuram – *kEsavanai(p) paadavum nee kEtta kidaththiyO* – Lord who is antaryami in Aditya is called ‘Kesavan’ in the month of Margazhi. If we chant the name of Kesava all our worries will vanish says Nammazhwar. Therefore, she calls all her friends to do any work chanting the name of Kesava.

3. Smaranam: Smaranam is the constant memory of the Lord and meditating upon Him i.e, Dhyana. We can consider Smaranam as the advanced stage of Shravanam and Keertanam. For example, you have attended a discourse or bhajan or a class on Srimad Ramayanam . After sometime, you keep remembering the things which you have heard about Lord - that is Smaranam. Doing Japa, a meditation on God, will also come under Smaranam.

a. Sixth Pasuram – *Pullum silambina - uLLaththu(k) kondu munivargaLum yOgigaLum* – In this pasuram the saints getting up in the early morning reciting Hari: Hari: thirteen times and keep remembering the Lord without disturbing Him. Similarly, we should also keep remembering the Lord within us the ‘Antaryami’.

b. Fifth Pasuram - *maayanai mannu vada madhurai maindhanai... vaayinaal paadi manaththinaal sindhikka* - If such a great Lord were to be worshipped with purity of mind, soul and body, and with pure fragrant flowers and thulasi, ***by singing His names and contemplating on His glories*** and by surrendering ourselves at His lotus feet, then all the sins committed by us till today, the sins that we are committing now and the sins that shall be committed by us in future shall disappear similar to the way a piece of cotton gets burnt in the fire.

The first three forms of Bhakti viz., Shravanam, Keertanam and Smaranam are done through our 'thrikarana' – Shravanam through our hearing (ears), Keertanam by speaking (mouth) and Smaranam through our intellect (thoughts).

4. **PAdasevanam** : PAdasevanam is the worship of the lord by concentrating upon His feet or *Paadukaa*: *PAdasevanam* is an innate sense of surrender to the Supreme leading to worship of the Lord's lotus Feet. To approach a person's feet is a sign of humility and that is why in Indian tradition, we touch our parent's and elder's feet as a token of respect. The feet of the Supreme Lord are so sweet and beautiful that they are known as *pAda pankajam* (Lotus feet) as they are very soft and red like the lotus petals. By doing pada pooja we are saying to God that we are keeping our life at his feet. PirAtti Mahalakshmi is the best example for PAdasevana Bhakti. In Bhagavatam , the greatness of PAdasevana bhakti is explained through the thoughts of Kuchela. Examples of Bharatha performing Rama's PAduka Pattabhishekam, Ahalya's shApa vimochanam (release from curse) Rama's PAdam touched the stone (in which form Ahalya was residing) and Vedanta Desikar's 'PAdukA Sahasram' speak tons about the greatness of God's PAda/paduka.

a. **24th Pasuram**: *anRu ivvulagam aLandhaay adi pORRi* – It is this thiruvadi you incarnated as Vamana and later took the gigantic form of Trivikrama, measuring all the celestial worlds and sanctifying them all with the sacred waters from your lotus feet. With the second measure you placed your foot on the crowns of one and all without any bias relieving them off their sins. It is this thiruvadi that King Bali desired God to place on his head and prayed for salvation.

b. **29th Pasuram** : *siRRam siRu kaalE vandhu unnai sEviththu un potRRaamarai adiyE pORRum poruL kELaay* – Lord's divine feet are like the finest gold that is of the purest form, brightest and superlative in quality. The same feet was extolled by AndAl and her friends in the Pasuram 24 already. By using the word 'adiyE', AndAl is submitting that they have come to God and offered themselves at His feet and that they have none else to go to and prays that they have to be protected by Him.

5. **Archanam**: Archanam or deity worship combines an external ritual with internal meditation. Archanam can be done by offering flowers, fruits, leaves, food, or even water to the lord. Generally, we can do Shodashopachra pooja, Sahasranama pooja, Ashtottara pooja, etc. We should do all these with devotion (Bhavana) which is the most important thing. God does not expect something very costly. Anything offered with devotion – it could even be a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water - is good enough, as detailed in the Bhagavad Gita shloka:

“Patram Pushpam Phalam Toyam Yo Me Bhaktya Prayacchati;
Tadaham Bhaktyupahritamasanami Prayatatmanah” (9.26)

a. **5th Pasuram** : *thooyOmaay vandhu naam thoomalar thoovi(th) thozhudhu*; We have to perform archanam to Lord by offering flowers with pure heart

b. **24th Pasuram**: *anRu ivvulagam aLandhaay adi pORRi* - In this pasuram AndAl is praising the various qualities the Lord in each of the lines of the pasuram. In this pasuram she speaks about the greatness of Trivikrama Avataram, Sri RamaAvataram, Sri Krishna Avataram (3 situations – killing of demon shakatasura, demon vatsasura and the lifting of Govardhana Hill on his little finger)

6. **Vandanam**: Vandanam is paying obeisance to the Lord by prostrating in front of the deity in the temples (SAshtAnga Namaskaram). Vandanam is a form of Bhakti where you will recognize that all the things you

have, are given by God and you express your gratitude to God. Vandanam means saying thanks to God for all the things he has given. You should be grateful to Him at every point of Time.

- a. **4th Pasuram**– *Azhi Mazhai KannA* – AndAl does vandanam to all the Acharyans
- b. **21st Pasuram** - *ERRa kalangaL edhir pongi meedhaLippa* – and
- c. **22nd Pasuram** - *am kaN maa NYaalaththu arasar abimaana* – Many rulers who were thinking high of themselves, after losing their possessions, realising the only solace is Lord, surrendered to Him with all humility.

The second set of three bhaktis we have seen –Pada Sevanam, Archanam and Vandanam are done through Karmendriyas (organs of action – mouth, feet, hands, anus and genitals)

7. **DAsyam:** When the devotee feels the presence of the Lord more and more, the tendency of service develops in him, which leads to the attitude of being a willing and happy servant. This feeling of the relation between the Supreme master and the dedicated servant is the Dasyam. *In this bhakti form, the devotee sees himself as not just the ‘servant’ of the Lord but also the servant of the Lord’s devotees, with no sense of inferiority.* It is the ultimate expression of humility. It is the dedication of all the activities, at the physical and mental levels, to God as a servant. The service to the *devotees of the God* is termed as **‘Bhagavata Seshatvam’** which is brought out by AndAl in the following pasurams:

- a. **16th Pasuram** - *naayaganaay ninRa nandhagOpan udaya*- AndAl prays dwarapalakas who were guarding Nandagopa’s palace with all humility seeking their permission to see the Lord who is inside the palace
- b. **17th Pasuram** – *ambaramE thaNNeerE sORE aRam seyyum* - AndAl seeks permission of Lord Krishna’s close relatives like Nandagopala, Yashoda, Balarama
- c. **18th & 19th Pasurams** - *undhu madha kaLiRRan Odaadha thOL valiyan and kuththu viLakkeriya kOttu(k) kaal kattil mEl* – AndAl seeks blessings of Nappinnai (Neeladevi) and seeks Her support to awaken the Lord and permit them to have His Darshan

8. **Sakhyam:** In this form of bhakti we consider God as our friend. We realise the insignificance of the worldly objects and put absolute faith in God and consider Him as our friend. We share all our happiness, sorrows, and every moment of our life with God. We always feel that He is with us in every point of our life.

- a. **28th Pasuram:** *kaRavaigal pin senRu kaanam sErndhu uNbOm* – *aRiyaadha piLLaigalOm anbinaal undhannai siRu pEr azhaththanamum seeRi aruLaadhE* – AndAl says to Lord Krishna that you have forgone your virtue of supremacy; you have come and taken birth amidst us in the lineage of the Yadavas. We have been addressing you singularly as Yadava, Krishna and others. This is the Sakhya bhavam where AndAl and her friends moved closely with Lord and treated him as a friend. AndAl’s friendship with Lord Krishna can be equated to the one Arjuna had with Lord Krishna.



9. **Atma Nivedanam:** The surrender of one's self to the Lord as the Lord's own i.e., the absolute surrender to God. We should offer everything to God including our body, mind, and soul. We should not have any personal and independent existence. We should leave all our karmas, dharmas and offer ourself to God. In Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna says “ *Sarva Darmaan Pari Tyajya Maamekam Sharanam Vraja....*” Which means leave all your karmas & dharmas and surrender to me totally and I will liberate you from all your sins.

a. **29th Pasuram** : *siRRam siRu 24ale vandhu unnai sEviththu un-* In this pasuram AndAl says “Krishna – You are the Upayam as well as the Upeyam. That means attaining Lord Krishna (moksha prapti) is our goal and the means to attain that should also be suggested by the Lord. She does sharanAgati. AndAl says we have come here to pray at your lotus feet during the early hours of the morning without worrying about the showering mist. She seeks moksham (parai) from the Lord and also prays God to ensure that they are not diverted towards the earthly things which would hamper reaching HIM.

Conclusion: First type of bhakti Shravanam. From the time we start listening to the lord's glories we should start Keerthanam and meditate on him. By performing archanam to His lotus feet, we should do Pada sevanam. We should be servant to the Lord and develop friendship. In the end, offer everything unto his feet and do sharanAgati (surrender – Atma samarpanam). HE will lead us to the Moksha Samrajyam where we can do eternal kainkaryam to HIM.



ORIGIN OF THE GODHA STHUTHI

- The first sLOkam of GodhA sthuthi arose from Swami Desikan spontaneously as he stood on a side street at SrivilliputthUr on a PradhOsham evening to find out the origin of fast approaching sounds of the mangaLa vaadhyams.
- He was visiting Srivilliputthur on a VaikAsi VasanthOthsava uthsavam time, when ANDAL has PuRappAdu to the Mantapam in front of Sri VenkatAchalapathy sannidhi in SrivilliputthUr at Naataka Saalai street.
- Even today, Sri GodhhA Sthuthi uthsavam takes place at this site, when the descendant of PeriyAzhwAr, Sri VedappirAn Bhattar receives the aruLappAdu and commences the GodhA Sthuthi for the AdhyApAka Swamis.
- During his visit time, Swamy Desikan was observing mounam (silence) befitting the occasion of the PradhOsham evening. He was planning to go to ANDAL Sannidhi later for MangaLAsAsanam.
- When he heard the sounds of Koil vaadhyams, he stepped out from the inside of the house, where he was staying to find out as to what was happening. To his greatest surprise and joy, he saw the archA moorthy of ANDAL approaching him as it was being carried on the backs of the temple servants.
- ANDAL's normal processional route did not include the street, where Swami Desikan was staying. On this special day, there was some theettu on the main street and the temple priests had rerouted the procession to include the street where Swamy Desikan was staying as an alternate route.
- Swami Desikan's astonishment at this unexpected bhAgyam and his parama bhakthi for ANDAL poured out in the form of 29 sLOkams in two beautiful Sanskrit poetic metres known as Vasantha Tilakam and Maalini.

ANDAL'S SPECIAL AFFECTION FOR SWAMI DESIKAN :

- ❖ ANDAL seems to have created a situation to receive MangaLAsAsanam from Swami Desikan as soon as possible instead of waiting for Swami Desikan to come to Her Sannidhi inside the temple.
- ❖ Hence, She came to where Swami Desikan was, as if to welcome him to Her dhivya DEsam as soon as She could.
- ❖ In the case of AchArya RaamAnujA, She left Her sanctum (Garbha graham) and rushed to welcome him as Her elder brother for fulfilling Her pledge to offer 1000 vessels of akkAra-adisil to Lord SundararAjan of ThirumAlirum ChOlai. After that reception to AchArya RamaunjA, the ThiruppAvai Jeeyar, She never went inside Her sanctum and stays even today at the ardha manTapam.
- ❖ In the case of Swami Desikan, She engineered to arrive in front of the house outside Her Thiru MaaLikai Veedhi, where Her parama bhakthan was staying during his visit to Her city.
- ❖ Moved by that extraordinary display of Vaathsalyam and dayA of ANDAL, the LOka MaathA, our Kavi Simham poured forth in rapture his eulogy of Her anantha KalyANa guNams.

Thus originated the GodhAsthuthi and its 29 sLOkams.



WORKS ON ANDAL

BY ANBIL RAMASWAMY

(INCLUDING SOOKTAMS, STHUTHIS, NAAHYIYAAR TIRUMOZHI AND ANDAL'S TIRUKKALYANAM)

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These are excerpts from the series of my lectures on Andal's life and works delivered through conference call from Atlanta, Georgia and arranged by Bhaktas in U. S. A. These are based on the KaalakhEpams listened by me while in India over a whole lifetime from Achaaryas and eminent scholars of our Siddhantam.

A concentrated study of these, will help you to have insight into rare and new interpretations that you might not have come across earlier.

We already saw how Bhoo Devi incarnated as Andal to teach us the "laghu upaayam" of attaining the feet of the Lord that Lord Sri Varaahan had instructed her during Varaaha Avataara. So, we naturally begin the day with the Vedic salutation to BhooDevi contained in "Bhoo Sooktam: followed by Swami Desika's "Bhoo Sthuti" and move on to "gOdaa Sthuti" concluding with the Tirukkalyaana MahOtsavam.

SOOKTAMS

- "Sooktam" means "Well said". The esoteric meanings of the *Vedic Sooktams* may be beyond our understanding (being in the form of aphorisms); their very resonance of utterance and the vibrations have incredible effects.
- Of the five Vedic Sooktams called "Pancha Sooktams" that include *Purusha Sooktam, VishNu Sooktam, Sree Sooktam, Bhoo Sooktam* and *NeeLaa Sooktam*,

BHOO SOOKTAM

- This deals with the glories of BhooDevi, who incarnated as Andal. We commence with a few Mantrams contained in "Bhoo Sooktam"
- "*bhoomir bhoomnaa dhyouvariNaa antariksham mahitvaa/ upasthE tE dEvyaditE agnimannaaddh dhyaayatE//*" 1

Though "Bhoomi" is popularly believed to refer to this earth, this mantram avers that "BhooDevi" is the presiding deity (*adhishTaana dEvatai*) of the terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial worlds as well - all of which give delight to all souls. The *mantra* appeals to her to grant us not only all these mundane delights but also the ultimate joy of eternal bliss in "MOKsham"

- "*aayangou prasni rakrameeda sanan maataram punah/ Pitarm cha prayant suvah*" 2

The mantra proceeds to describe how *Soorya* (Sun god) does circumambulation of mother earth and holds within him the universal father, Sri Narayana. In other words, Sri Narayana shines from the centre of the *Soorya maNDala (Savitru manDala Madhya varthee sarasijaasana sannivishTah)* and imparts brilliance to all shining entities.

*"na tatra sooryO bhaati, na chandra Taarakam,
na imaa vidhyutO bhaanti kutOyam agnih/
TamEva bhaantam anubhaati sarvam,
tasya bhaasaa sarvam idam vibhaati"*//

This mantra emphasizes that even though the love to father is great, the respect for mother should be greater still.

Is it not the duty of the son to circumambulate the mother?

- "*Om. Dhanurdharaayai vidmahE,
siddhyai cha Dheemahi /
tannO dharaa prachOdayaat//*" 12

This is the "Gaayatri Mantra" of Bhoo dEvi.

Oh! Mother! Holding a bow (*dhanus*) in your hand, you bestow all that one aspires for. You are the supporter of all living beings and insentient objects.

We prostrate at your feet. Please ignite our thoughts (*Jnaana yogam*) and actions (*karma yOgam*) in the right direction and help us to attain the feet of the Lord"

SWAMI DESIKA'S BHOO STHUTI:

- This StOtram has 33 SLOKas and deals with how the Lord in *Varaaha Avataara* rescued Bhoo DEvi from the depths of the Ocean where she was hidden by HiraNyaakshan. When she was being rescued, the Lord instructed her on the way for *Jivatmas* to attain Him. She requested him to instruct on the "easy way" (*laghu upaaya*) for Jivas to reach Him:
- *"aham sishyaa cha daasi cha bhaktaa cha tvayi maadhava!
Math kritE sarva bhootaanaam laghu upaayam vada prabhO"*
- Accordingly, what He advised her came to be known as "*Varaaha Puraana*". To spread the message to the suffering humanity, she incarnated as Andal and in it she revealed the truths through two thought provoking songs (Tiruppavai and Nachiyaar Tirumozhi) reflecting her bridal mysticism.
- In Bhoo Sthuti, Swami Desika brings out several aspects of the glory of Bhoo Devi. We will savor a few sentiments expressed by Swami Desika.
- *"sarvam sahEti avaniir iti achalEti maatah
viswambharEti vipulEti vasundarEti /
anyaani cha naya vimukhani abhidaana vriityaa
naamaani amooni kathayanti tava anubhaavam // 6*

Meaning:

Mother Earth is known by several names.

- She is "sarvam Saha" because she tolerates the faults of devotees
- She is "Avani" because she protects the world (ava+ protect)
- She is "Achalaa" because she is firm and determined in such protection
- She is "Viswambhara" because she bears and supports the worlds
- She is "vipulaa" because her glory is immeasurable
- She is "Vasundara" because her wealth is immeasurable
- Similarly, she has several other names like- "ananthaa" Dharitree", "Prithvee" etc. each name revealing a special quality uniquely her own.
- *bhootEshu yat tvam abhimaana visEsha paatram
pOsham tadEva bhajathi iti vibhaavayantah /
bhootam prabhoota guNa panchakam aadhyam yEtat
praayO nidarsana tayaa prati paadayanti // 12*

Meaning:

The whole creation is made up of five elements called *Pancha bhootas*.

They are Ether (*Aakaasa*), Air (*Vaayu*), Fire (*Tejas*), Water (*Appu*) and Earth (*Prithvi*). By the process of "*PancheekaraNam*" the Lord creates the Universe by combining these elements in different formulations. Ether is experienced as Sound (Sabda), Air as Touch (Sparsa) combining, Fire as Color and shape (Roopa), Water as flavor (Rasa) and Earth as Smell (Gandha). Each element is said to have its own quality in predominance plus the quality or qualities of the others. By this, earth has all the five elements in it. That is why earth is called "*Prapancham*"

How does the earth get this distinction?

It is because of the grace of its presiding deity who is none other than "Bhoo Devi", says Swami Desika.

- **Why did BhooDEvi get caught and hidden under the depth of the Ocean?**

Swami answers:

Though being omnipotent as her Lord, and therefore she could have saved herself from the clutches of HiraNyaakshan, she acted as if she were helpless and needed her Lord to come and save her. Swami says that this is all just acting to serve a dual purpose of bringing out the concern (Tvara) of the Lord for the fallen (*SaraNaaagatha rakshaNam*) on the one hand and the assurance to the fallen souls that if they surrender at the feet of the Lord they will be assured of salvation.

***Aaswaasanaaya jagataam purushE parasmin
Aapanna rakshaNa dasaamabhinEtu kaamaE/
Antar hitE tara guNaadabala svabhaavaath
oudanvatE payasi majjanam abhyanaishheh:// 14***

- Swami Desika says that the sins committed and being committed by Chetanas every moment of their life could be obviated only by suffering the effects thereof for over millions of years. When such an effect takes a heavy toll on the Chetanas, then and then only they regret having committed such enormous amount of sins. But it becomes too late to mend or neutralize their effects. Right in time, BhooDevi intervenes and out of her innate compassion transforms Lord's anger into Lord's grace to "Save Our Souls"(SOS)

***"pratyEkam abda niyutairapi durvyapOhaat
praaptE vipaaka samayE janita anutaapaath /
nitya aparaadha nivahas chaki tasya jantOh
gantum mukunda charaNou saraNam kshamE tvam // 28***

- Swami Desika gives us the *Dhyaana SIOkam* of Bhoo dEvi before concluding his Bhoo Sthuti thus:

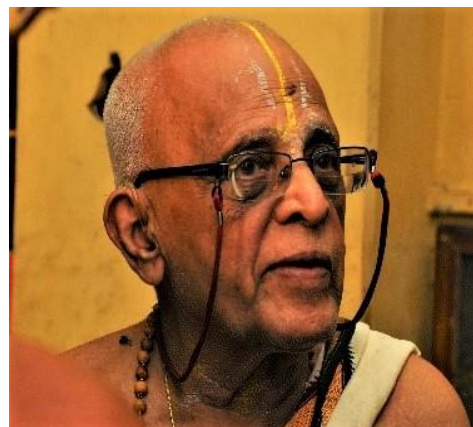
Bhoomi piraaTTi places her lotus feet on the right palm of Varaahap perumaal. His left palm is like the great AdhisEsha. Bhoomi Devi reclines on this bed. When her cheeks met His cheeks, they get horripilation. This makes her eyes blossom. May always this Bhoomi PiraaTTI grant me all auspiciousness .

***"patur dakshiNa paaNi pankaja puTE vinyasta paadaambujaa
Vaamam pannaga saarva bhouma sadrusam paryankayantee bhujam /
pOtra sparsa lasat kapOla phalakaa pullaaravindEskshaNaa
saa mE pushyatu mangaLaani anudinam sarvaaNi sarvam sahaa // 32***

SWAMI DESIKA'S GODAA STHUTI

- This StOtram on Andal (gOdaa) has 29 SIOkams. She offered a garland of flowers (*Poo Maalai*) and her poem of bridal mysticism (*paa Maalai*). This offering forms the theme of this StOtram and is dedicated to Andal. Swami Desika himself has named this StOtram as "gOdaa Sthuti".
- Among the StOtrams for piraaTTis, only Periya PiraaTTi has many stotras. For Bhoo Devi, there was only Bhoo Sooktam. Even Emperumaanaar made only a passing mention: thus: "*yEvam Bhoomi neeLaa naayaka*". Swami obviously felt that a StOTra was due for her. And so, composed this. Several Acharyas appeared between the time of Andal and that of Swami Desika and none had thought of dedicating a whole StOtram for her. And it was Swami who felt this void and ventured to make good. Each one of the SIOkams bristles with deep esoteric meanings matched with poetic felicity.
- She not only loved Arangan through bridal mysticism. She was a great **Bhaktai** also
- She not only loved Arangan but also married him. Therefore, she is great among **Azhwars**.
- She taught us clearly in her nectarine verses Tattva, Hita, Purushaartah etc. as also many esoteric doctrines of SrivaishNava Siddhantam. Therefore, she is also a prime **Acharya**.
- Arangan ruled over Arangam; she ruled over Arangan Himself! Therefore, she is "**Andaal**."

....Excerpts from the ebook of Anbilramaswamy



NEERATTAM-MOTIVATION-YASODHAA VASUDEVAN M. G.

INTRODUCTION: ‘Mothers are generally great motivators to their family members in their own way’ say almost all management experts. ‘Learn management from your wife’ was a title and I had few short duration films seen in my days as ‘trainer’, while in service. Here, in the film on motivation, the ‘narrator’ talked about the several ways how **a mother motivates her child** – in

- a. Learning Eating
- b. Learning Bathing
- c. Learn Walking,
- d. Learn Playing, [with parents first, and then with others]
- e. Learn the Languages etc.

These are at the early stages in the child’s life. And perhaps the grownup child [the boy or girl] may take a long time to realise how he learnt many things from his mother. This is unless he has a bent to respect to his mother as the first teacher, then the father who cared for his education.



OTHER ASPECTS of ‘learning management from your wife’ are, [as I have picked up] on –

- Planning for family events
- Budgeting for the family,
- Inventory management in the kitchen in particular and the house in general
- Logistics management [transport for Husband, child; self if she is employed, etc]
- Crisis management, [the sudden appearance of guests etc - I add only +ve things]
- Problem solving,
- Change management- [like shifting of house or moving to a new town]

YASODHAA, THE MOTHER OF SREE KRISHNA: In this article, I would like to study and ‘analyze’ “how Mother Yasodhaa works on ‘Motivation’ on her / our pet child Sree KrishNa”. This ‘motivation’ by YasOdhaa is on a simple task viz. to make him ‘take his usual daily bath and keep himself clean’.

We all know young KrishNa is very naughty and playful, with people of all ages in the Gokulam village. That is because he is dear to all; besides his naughty behavior covered and included the number of cows and calves – these animals, being the wealth of the ‘yaadhava’ or the ‘vraj’ people. And that naughtiness and KrishNa’s trickster nature is evident as stories and songs, titled ‘KrishNa’s baala leelaas’ and are from

- Sage Sukha maharishi in Sreemadh Bhaagavatham
- Aazhvaars in their individual prabhandhams; and
- Poets and singers of all languages in Bhaarith, viz. India.

I have to mention here specifically Ootthukkaadu VenkaTa Subbu Iyer, the staunch KrishNa bhaktha for some lovely krithis.

Motivation in what ways: But before we take on Yasodhaa's dealing with KrishNa on motivation, we must know in what different ways a person can be motivated.

a. If he is a child – can be motivated in an easy way -

- By praising /appreciating
 - a. his beauty and his 'samatthu' [is it, clever, intelligent, 'goody- goody'- for I cannot give an equivalent word to this 'samatthu', let it be a boy or girl, let us have certain words as it is]
 - b. his activities – even though it may have caused some damage and / or/ but great in the eyes of his mother
- by offering incentives – 'if you do this you will get this' kind of incentives – it can be eatable kinds like candy or fruits or some such.
- by comparing with other children – this has to be handled carefully – otherwise this can be a very good de-motivator
- creating a fear – in small amounts - 'if you do this again you will be punished' type of mild threats, only in words and not in action really.

[instead of 'hey you should not do this' type of phrases. This 'don't do or not to do' will kill the curiosity of child to do new things].

A comment here – how can you say this, on that 'you will be punished if you do this again' is a real motivator for a child – what the child would do is to try and do something else instead of what mother indicated to him as 'not to do'. Is this not something that will add to experimentation with a new thing for the child; and a motivator.

To look at another angle - when you say 'do not do this' –the curiosity on why mummy or daddy said 'not to do this' – why not we do that and let us see what happens next. That also is a motivator in another way. That is why it is said on the motivation topic in management – "it is so difficult one view at a time may be +ve and same at another time –ve".

- b. To a good extent what applies to a child **generally applies to an adult also** – but **added ones** are
 - Incentives can be - Offer of Money – if he is an employee – like increase in wages / salaries/ bonus etc [actually covered under incentives; but not so much applicable to a child for money should not be given to a child]
 - Rewards – Gadgets – if he is an upper class student or college goer, nowadays the easy reward offer is the essential ones like a mobile phone or a two wheeler

HELP FROM AAZHVAAR: To study on Mother YasOdhaa's motivation methods - I seek help from 'Periyaazhvaar' through his "thirumozhi" - who talks about KrishNa's 'neeraaTTam' or bathing [in padhigam 2 - 4 - 1 to 10 paasurams or verses]. And these 10 verses are recited every day by us during the 'thiru manjanam' of our PerumaaL's 'thiru aaraadhanam'. [please note I will add v1, v2 etc to refer the word is taken from which paasuram]

NEERAATTAM: The 'neeraaTTam' paasurams start with "veNNai aLaindha kuNungum, viLaiyaaDu puzhudhiyum" [v1] – and ends as how she finished - 'manjanam aaTTiyavaaRRai' [v10]. So Aazhvaar covers the bathing of KrishNa as how mother YasOdhaa will do.

A. KuNungu means our KaNNan or KrishNa smells - in his body - that unique smell of old butter and curd, having been consumed by him, but as a child may not have cleaned himself properly. So it leads to the

'kuNungu - muDai naaRRam' as they say – a characteristic smell of the curd and butter; and another specific to that environment of moving with the cows and calves.

b. Further while playing with children of equal age – he rolls down in the dusty streets in Gokulam – dusty because of movement of large number of cows and calves – so his body is covered with dust. 'pooNith thozhuvinil pukku puzhudhi aLaindu'[v9] says mother.

'Thozhu' or thozhuvam is the place where cows are locked in for their care during nights and at times of milking. So it is a fact that Krishna is covered with lot of dust and smelly.



PRE-REQUISITES for a NeeraaTTam: How to bring the child KrishNa to the bathing tub? Because he is playful and have company of boys and girls around him, he cannot be made to 'hold on' to take the bath or 'make him wait' till preparations are complete to bathe.

So the steps to be taken in advance are identified and carried out by YasOdhaa – and the list runs like –

- first have a bath tub ready filled with water,
- have oil and the body cleaning powders - mixed with some good smelly additions.
[so that the powder smell itself is a motivator to take bath – hey KrishNa, once you finish the bath, you will be smelling so nice and that will make me [YasOdhaa, the mother] hug you immediately – this hug is also a motivator as well as a reward].

[That 'kuzhandhai vaasanai' – smell of the child - just after a bath is something unique to be relished by parents],

- clean towels and dry dress - clothes ready to wear once bath is over
[if it is modern days nicely pressed or ironed and neatly folded to make the wrinkles disappear – to give a decent look. What about in 'olden days?']
- bring some of KrishNa's friends around the bath tub - to encourage KrishNa finish taking his bath fast and join them to continue playing - giving company by these friends is also a motivator.
- some eatables ready [for mothers know once child finishes the bath, the child would feel hungry and would like to eat some delicious stuff]

Comment: 1. See aazhvaar guides us to do **planning for a simple bath** also in the following words –these **pre-requisites - essentials – they are done** – as --

1. ThEitthuk kiDakka naan [v1] – I am ready to give a bath to you – mother YasOdhaa says so.

2. Kaaicchina neeroDu nelli kaDaaratthil pooritthu vaitthEn [v2] yes, hot water collected in the tub. That is ok – but what is this neeroDu – that ‘oDu’ – I made water for bathing ready - that ‘kaaicchina neer’ - to the ‘right temperature’ by mixing cold water to the extent required and the water is just hot to suit you KrishNa.

that too in this vessel- kaDaaram is made of ‘nelli’ - the aamlaa tree – that which will make the water sweet – even if the child drinks some water during bathing, it is tasty and safe.

Further since it is wooden vessel, water inside will not lose temperature and become chill, till KrishNa arrives to the bathing place or scene.

3. eNNaip puLippazham koNDu [v1] – ready with oil for body – and soap-nut for cleaning the applied oil from the body
4. manjalum senkzhuneerin vaasikaiyum naaru saandhum anjanamum [v4] – ready with
 - turmeric powder,
 - the soap nut powder to apply during bath,
 - the garland made of senkzhuneer poo – neelOthpalam?
 - sandal to apply after bath,
 - the black colour ‘kaN mai’ – to the black colour Krishna - mai to the lotus eyes
5. ‘appam kalandha siRRuNDi akkaaram paalil kalandhu soppaDa suTTu vaitthEn [v5] – the sweetmeats like appam and akkaaram – eatables – ready
6. uNNak kanigal [v6] - ready

Comment: If these arrangements are not planned and not executed properly, then how KrishNa will react? Please think for a moment - how the mother YasOdhaa will mess up the bathing of KrishNa; so aazhvaar plans and make them happen. Already we saw in time management article how YasOdhaa messed up that breast feeding of KrishNa.

Dear readers, you may say “hey –these are all something normal – any rural or village folk and /or urban mother will do, without the list prepared / as stated herein - to bathe her child”. But where is the ‘motivation’ as talked [in modern management] that comes into play in ‘Yasodhaa’s role’ as mother of KrishNa.

MOTIVATION POINTS: To answer your question I have to lean again on aazhvaar --

1. PRAISING
 - a. ‘azhaganE’ [v4] – naaraNaa neeraaDa vaaraai [v1] – oh, my beautiful KrishNa come. She feels and says ‘en kuzhandhaiyaakkum azhagu’ – praising on the beauty of child. That praising by mother is one of biggest motivator to the child.
 - b. ‘Oli kaDal Odha neer pOIE vaNNam azhagiya nambee’[v6] – hey, you, the beauty, having blue tint – similar to the blue colour of the sea, having waves sounding always.
 - c. maNi vaNNaa [v3] – golden hue; maNiyE,[v9] ‘pon mEni kaaNap peridhum ugakkum’[v9] – [aazhvaar in many paasurams is so specific about the blue colour – seethak kaDal anna- the 1st paasuram of 2nd padhigam] – but here ‘pon mEni’ – golden hue –for a mother always her child is unique.
[‘kaakkaikkum than kunju pon kunju’ is the proverb – so the dark colour body of Krishna suddenly becomes of ‘pon mEni’ for YasOdhaa – maybe the proverb generated herein through YasOdhaa calling KrishNa]

- d. maaNikkamE [v9], Kaar mali mEni niRatthu kaNna piraanai [v10] -- Krishna, having the black or dark blue coloured body. Points 2, 3 and 4 falls in praising the child category –in motivation.
2. nee piRandha thiruvONam – nee piRandha thiru nannaal - hey Krishna - today it is your birthday – at least today take bath- ‘inRu neeraaDa vENDum’[v2] - have a nice bath - ‘nanRu neeraaDa vENDum’[v8].
With lot of expectations the child will respond to this call, being his birthday. This ‘increasing the expectation level’ is another motivator.
3. ‘nappinnai kaaNil sirikkum’[v9] – comparison with another and saying she is doing better – is a big motivator to Krishna – that too Nappinnai – the girl friend of Krishna - identified as the likely wife of Krishna’s on a later date – [Nappinnai is the tamil version of Raadhaa in hindhi version]
4. ‘seppiLa menmulaiyaargal siru puRam pEsi sirippar [v5] – the young girls, who are all friends of Krishna - will make fun and pass some sarcastic comments.
[that touches the ego of any body – let it be child or adult – that too from other gender - maybe he may not fully realize the impact as a child - but even then it is a motivator to tread on the right track]
5. ‘uNNak kanigal tharuvan’[v6] – fruits as an incentive - a starter in the form of fruits.
6. ‘appam kalandha siRRuNDi akkaaram paalil kalandhu’[v5] – next incentive - by way of variety of eatables – that to the liking of Krishna with ‘appam’ and ‘akkaaram’.
[these two sweets, even today, we prepare during the Sree jayanthi].
7. piRar munnE maRandhum urai aaDa maaTTEn [v7] – ‘I admit my mistake’ – offer of an apology by the biggie or boss – a great motivator for anybody – be it a child or adult.
8. Nin thiRatthEn allEn [v8] – hey Krishna – you are great – you achieved great feats and extraordinary things like – [praising on past achievements is a great motivator] -
- ninRa maraamaram saaitthai, [v2]
 - pEicchi muLai uNna,[v3] vanjap pEi magaL thunja vai mulai vaittha,[v4]
 - kaDiya sakaTam udhaitthu, [v4]
 - kanRinai vaal Olai kaTTi kanigaL udhira erindhu,[v8]
 - paambai piDitthuk koNDu aaTTinaai [v8]

In spite of all these, if Krishna had not taken bath, it is the trick of Krishna to tease mother YasOdhaa and nothing else. And that is similar to that ‘two inches short in length of the rope’ to tie Krishna by mother YasOdhaa – ‘kaNni nuN siRu thaambu’.

Dear readers, please enjoy aazhvaar paasurams – the way mother YasOdhaa bathed Krishna - bit by bit – and see how the so called modern theories are already in built in our 4000 prabhandhams. This will help you to do the bathing of Krishna, the saalagraama perumaaL [during your individual aaraadhanam daily] to your liking and taste of enjoying HIM.



TIRUPPAVAI: LOVE SONG OF THE LADY

Three Minutes Series By Nigamanth -May 2, 2012

<https://anudinam.org/2012/05/02/tiruppavai-love-song-of-the-lady-three-minutes-series/>

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tol pAvai pADi aruLa valla pal vaLaiyAi
(taniyan for ANDAL by uyyakkoNDAR)

pal = (Oh!) many
vaLaiyAi = bangles worn (ANDAL),
tol = (those) ancient
pAvai = hymns
pADi = (You can) compose /sing
valla = (and has the) ability
aruLa = (to) bless (us)

Today, we will look at the life of ANDAL, the only female among the AzhvAr-s (saints who were immersed in depths of enjoyment of the Lord shrIman nArAyaNa). AzhvAr-s visualized the Lord and their experiences broke out and overflowed as sweet tamizh verses (nAlAyira divya prabandham), which are the essence of holy scriptures (veda-s). Yet, ANDAL has a unique place among the AzhvAr-s in instructing the intricacies of upaniShad-s in a nutshell and so svAmi deshikan called her two compositions tiruppAvai and nAcciyAr tirumozhi as "ANDAL's upaniShad-s". Hymns written in praise of ANDAL (vAzhit tirunAmam) also call the mystical lyrics of tiruppAvai as the seed for all the scriptures (vedam anaittukkum vittAgum) and pronounces further that those who are ignorant of these thirty verses are wasting their life on this earth (aRiyAda mAniDarai vaiyyam sumappadum vambu).

ANDAL, who is the descent (avatAra) of earth goddess (bhUdevi), the divine consort of Lord shrIman nArAyaNa, appeared as a small baby lying on the ground of viShNucittar's (periyAzhvAr) flower garden. Her original name was gOdA, the daughter of the earth. You can see even from the name gO[vin]da, she has captured the Lord Himself and tied Him up within herself.

The main purpose of Her appearance on earth was bi-fold: (1) Wake up the individual souls and teach them the means for liberation from bondage of birth/death cycles (2) Wake the Lord up and instruct Him to forgive our mistakes and accept our surrender and service. This intrinsic mediating adventure, she carried out through explicit verses on Her love, reveals her strong yearning and extreme devotion towards Lord KR^iShNa.

The word tiru means shrI. The word pAvai has several meanings – a girl; a picture; the pupil of the eye; a doll or statue when it is a shortened version of padumai; a garland etc. Even days long before ANDAL, it was customary in tamizhNADu for young unmarried girls (kanyA peN) to perform the vow or ritual (pAvai nonbu). It involves making up the dolls out of sand on the shores of the river and pray to God to be blessed with a good husband or for the rain and general prosperity of the town. Here also, ANDAL's vow (pAvai nOnbu) has two main themes: prosperity of the devotional wealth (bhakti selvam) and the inner craving of the individual souls (cetana) to reach the Lord to redeem themselves via their eternal relation to Him. Scriptures call Lord as the only male (puruSha) and all rest of the souls as females.

The life of ANDAL is remarkable with a romantic simplicity. She may be just five years old at that time and was in deep love with Lord KR^iShNa. Her passion intensified to the level that she couldn't distinguish the imagination from reality. In her mind, she went back on a time machine to the days of KR^iShNa, completely out of sync with the reality of time, space or state. She pretended to be one of the cowherds living with Lord KR^iShNa in AyarpADI and poured out the verses filled with bridal mysticism.

She chose the month of mArgazhi (dhanur), which is the last month before the post vernal equinox period (uttarAyaNam) begins. Why this month? It is considered each day of angel calendar is equivalent to one year in

human calendar. So this month represents the hours just before dawn which is auspicious (brahma muhUrtam). Lord KR^iShNa also refers that He represents this month amongst all months (mAsAnAm mArgaShlrSho aham). This early morning period is filled with calmness and spiritual feeling and is the best to meditate on Lord.

ANDAL's tiruppAvai expresses the main theme of waking up Her friends, proceeding to the river bed with singing prayers, and eventually bathing the deity and themselves. Filled with beautiful dialogues, these apparently playful verses subtly incorporate the highest philosophical concepts. ANDAL worships Lord KR^iShNa, yearns to serve Him eternally, and seeks to achieve permanent happiness.

Bhagavad rAmAnuja declared that tiruppAvai, as a verification of shrivaiShNava philosophy. Bhagavad rAmAnuja spreads the greatness of this by reciting (anusandhAnam) this stotram daily and insisting that everyone else should do so. Hence, he was aptly named tiruppAvai jlyar (saint). The history of ANDAL and her eminence was an example for many. svAmi deshika's composition of godAstuti, in saMskR^it, could have been instrumental to spread her fame in north. Amukta mAlyada, a telugu composition by King KR^iShNa devarAyalu includes ANDAL and tiruppAvai; even in Southeast Asia, places like Indonesia has rituals reflecting ANDAL's tiruppAvai and this vow.

ANDAL's life and legend and the essence of tiruppAvai can be summarized in two phrases – Her unswerving relationship to the Lord (uRRomE yAvOm), and ceaseless service only to Him (unakke nAm AT seyvOm). In fact, just like Lord KR^iShNa used arjuna to reveal the bhagavad gItA, here ANDAL used Herself as an excuse (vyAjam) to reveal the supreme philosophical concepts.

What we learn from here –

- 1. DEVOTION WITH EMOTION. ANY FORM OF DEVOTION (BHAKTI) LIKE SINGING, MEDITATING, MAKING GARLANDS, DRESSING UP THE LORD'S ARCHA-VIGRAHA, COOKING FOOD TO OFFER FOR HIM ETC. INDULGE YOURSELF IN SPIRIT.**
- 2. PLAYMATE IS THE SOUL MATE. HERE ANDAL'S ASSUMED PLAYMATE, LORD KR^ISHNA, IS THE SAVIOR FOR EVERYONE.**
- 3. CAN'T WIN IF YOU ARE NOT IN. LORD LOVES SERVICE TO HIM AND HIS DEVOTEES (BHAGAVAD, BHAGAVADA KAIMKARYAM). PARTICIPATION ON THESE IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE SOUL'S FINAL OBJECTIVE OF ETERNAL SERVICE.**



Guru Parampara Series – Andal The Unique Azhwar

anudinam.org/2014/03/22/guru-parampara-series-andal-the-unique-azhwar/



Srivilliputtur has the distinction of being the avatharasthalam of two Azhwars – namely Periyazhwar and Andal. In the Tamil month of Aadi (between July 15th and August 15th), on a Purvaphalguni (Pooram) morning, when Vishnu chittha was collecting flowers and Tulasi for Perumal, He found in the midst of the Tulasivanam a beautiful girl child. Taking the baby in His arms He accepted Her as the gift of Mother Earth and named Her Godha (Go is sanskrit for earth) Godha was nurtured by Krishna stories and she joined Her father in all activities: collecting flowers, Tulasi and making beautiful garlands for Vatapatrasayee the Lord of Srivilliputtur and accompanying Her father to the temple was part of Her daily routine. All songs were about Krishna. All Her thoughts were Krishna-centric and She was totally in love with Him. Wondering if She was worthy of Him She tried on the garland to be offered to Him and peeped into the well to look at Herself and then put the garland back in the basket. One day She was so lost in Krishna that She never realized that Her father had come. Shocked by Her act He chided Her and that day no garland offering was made. That night Vatapatrasayee came in Periyazhwar's dream and said that thenceforth only the garland worn by Godha was to be offered to Him. Thenceforth Godha came to be known as Andal meaning One who ruled the Lord and as Sudikodutha Sudarkodi (One who offered the garland to Perumal after adorning it.)

Periyazhwar the doting father was worried about finding a suitable alliance for His unparalleled daughter. When He brought up the topic She said that She had given Her heart to Krishna and wanted to marry Him. But Krishna was an avathara in Dwapara Yugam and beyond the reach of mortals. But He is Eternal, said Andal so like the Gopis of Vraja She called all Her friends in Srivilliputhur and together they observed The Pavai Nonbu in the month of Margazhi for 30 days resulting in the masterpiece called Tiruppavai which contains the essence of the Vedas and has been named Godhohanishadh.

Her next creation was “Nachiyar Thirumozhi” consisting of 143 verses divided into 14 Thirumozhis. Andal’s longing to unite with Krishna is expressed and the 6th Thirumozhi contains Andal’s dream “Varanamayiram” containing all the Vedic rites of a Brahmin wedding and is sung till date during SriVaishnava weddings. Andal sent the cloud as a messenger to Tirumala Hills, She wished to offer 108 vessels of Akkaravadisal and butter to Azhagar of Tirumalirumcholai. This wish of Hers was fulfilled much later by Yathiraja which made Him Her elder brother. Ramanuja is referred to as “Godhagraja .(elder brother of Godha)”. Andal wanted to wed Periya Perumal of SriRangam and Vishnuchittha brought His daughter to SriRangam where as they reached the sanctum Andal got united with SriRanganatha. Periyazhwar was distraught but Perumal assured Periyazhwar that He would marry Andal in Srivilliputtur. Thus Andal Rangamannar wedding took place according to Vedic injunctions in Srivilliputtur and Garuda who carried Ranganatha to the spot was accorded a place next to the Divya Dampathis inside the sanctum sanctorum.

Thus Andal earned the name Periyazhwar for Her father who became the father-in-law of Periya Perumal. She is Unique because She is Bhumi Piratti and an Azhwar. Her mother is Tulasi, father Vishnuchittha, brother is Ramanuja and husband Ranganatha, undoubtedly connections of the highest order but our relationship with Andal is eternal and cannot be severed under any circumstances.

To sum up:

“Praises to The One who took avatharam on TiruAdiPooram Day!
Praises to The One who spoke the thirty verses of Tiruppavai!
Praises to The Daughter of Periyazhwar!
Praises to The Sister of Perumpudhur Mamuni!
Praises to The Creator of The 143 verses (Nachiyar Thirumozhi)!
Praise be to The One who offered Herself to Ranganatha!
Praises to the town of Srivilliputtur!
Praises to the Lotus Feet of Godha!

Write-up by Smt Vyjayanthi Rajan

TiruppAvai

(Sri u. vE. Thirupputkuzhi Sri Srisaila Thathacharyar, Kanchipuram - Perumal Kovil)

[Preface: TiruppAvai is the most significant and important among the entire divya Prabandhams. One who doesn't know tiruppAvai is not blessed; SvAmi Deśikan addresses TiruppAvai as "viśvopajIvyam amrtam". Further he quotes TiruppAvai on several occasions where he refers to ŚaraNAGati concept clearly. This article is about the anubhavam on TiruppAvai and its beauty.]

அந்தமிலாவாரணங்கள் நாலாகி நின்ற
அதன் கருத்தை ஆழ்வார்கள் ஆய்ந்தெடுத்து
செந்தமிழாலருள் செய்தவகை தொகையும்
சிந்தாமல் உலகங்கள் வாழ்வென்று.

SvAmi Deśikan wonderfully captures the clarity and power of AzhvArs' nAlAyira divya prabandhams and mentions that four vedas have transformed into four (thousand) prabandhams mainly depicting the Upanishadic statements and highest philosophy for ultimate redemption, as blessed to us by the divine AzhvArs for the sake of the humanity. At the very beginning of Srimad RahasyatrasAram, SvAmi Deśikan pays a tribute to the AzhvArs, mentioning each by name. He further says that apparently incomprehensible Vedic passages are clarified by a perusal of the AzhvArs' SrI sUktis. Our PoorvAcAryAs have clearly indicated that the divya Prabandhams are indeed the quintessence of the Vedas. Among divya Prabandhams, tiruppAvai is even the ultimate. In tiruppAvai, tattva (entities), hita (way) and purushArtham (goal) are explained in a very clear manner.

GodA pirATTi enlists in her SrI sUktis, the code of conduct for those who have performed ŚaraNAGati (PrapannAs); the glorious divine name and the utterance's importance and sweetness; the pastime one needs to have by mere utterance of divine names of our most compassionate Lord SrIman Narayana and those who are qualified to do such sweetest nAma sankeertanam.

There are thirty verses in tiruppAvai.

The first five elaborates the life style of PrapannAs. The nishThA kramams are explained.

1. First verse mentions the saulabhyam, Prapattavyam of the ŚaraNAGata vatsalan, the Supreme Lord, SrIman Narayanan; how easily He is accessible for us and the verse thus glorifies His avatar am beautifully.
2. In the second verse Andal differentiates between krtya and akrtya (do's and don'ts) for a prapannan. Further it is pointed out that the Lord does not wait for the AśritALs to approach Him for refuges in the spirit of "ते ये शतम् इत्यनुक्रमात् , यतो

वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह" and think of them during His Yoga nidrA. PerumAL without even expecting the BhagavatAs and bhaktAs to come and plead, He always thinks and plans for our sake in His yoga nidrA. Andal mentions the necessity and significance of constant utterance of dvaya anusandhAnam forever by Prapannan, contemplating on the lotus feet of KsheerAbdi nAthAn- who is with MahA Lakshmi and is giving dvaya Upadeśam to Her. The Prapannan is to stay clear from desiring honey, curd and other sweet delectables (तवामृतस्यन्दिनि पादपङ्कजे निवेशितात्मा कथमन्यदि इच्छति). He has no desire for material sukham but has attuned taste only for the Lord's His Lotus Feet and holds onto Them. He reflects on when those sacred feet will adorn his head (त्रिविक्रम त्वचरणांबुज द्वयं मदीयमूर्धानामलङ्करिष्यति).

3. Third verse is on how we benefit from the observance of ŚaraNagati in a comprehensive manner including aihika phalans (worldly bhogams). We gain the most wonderful fruit of BhAgavata kinkaryam, we also get the worldly and material benefits as byproducts as well.
4. For those, who utter the Bhagavan nAma and Bhagavad smaraNam at all times with no desire for any other fruits or any other benefits as ananya prayoJanar, even the celestial bodies like Devendra and other demigods, become the dAsa bhUtars. The greatness of the Prapannan over divine beings is pointed out here (सर्वेऽस्मै देवा बलिमावहन्ति).
5. Those who perform such ŚaraNagati nOnbu (vratam), there are no hurdles (in line with श्रेयाम्बिस बहुविघ्नानि - always there are hurdles when we want to do good deeds in our lives) and these hurdles are removed by the divine anubhavam and power of Bhagavad cintanai and reflections on the KalyANa guNams of the Lord. This verse invites (as per एकः स्वादु न भुञ्जित) everyone to join the Bhagavad anubhavam like SvAmi NammAzhvAr inviting "தொண்டர் எல்லீறும் வாரீர்" (tiruvAymozhi 5.1.2).
6. Sixth verse explains SrivaishNavam. By waking a bhaktai with Krishna anubhavam, the verse mentions about our duty of being considerate and caring for fellow beings, without anticipating any benefit. SrivaishNavAs perform ananya prayoJana kinkaryam out of compassion for their fellow beings.
7. बोधयन्तः परस्परम् - By waking a bhaktai who was sleeping with KrishnAnubhavam and asking her to join explains how SrivaishNavas in KrishnAnubhavam share and enjoy their bhagavad anubhavam. Krishna's devotees have their minds and thoughts fully engaged in Him; their lives devoted to Him; and they derive great satisfaction and bliss enlightening one another and talking about Him perpetually.

8. Here she wakes up those who are praised and celebrated by Krishna as the embodiment of Sri VaishNava svarUpam.
9. Waking up those who think, I am just doing my duty; let Krishna come when He wants; (तत् तस्य सदृशं भवेत्) and asking them to join.
10. She asks those who are His ardent devotees, whom Krishna calls as j~nAnis, of these, the one who have full Jn~Anam and who are always engaged in pure devotional service to Him. They are the best. KrishNa says that they are very dear to Me and I am dear to them. (ज्ञानि त्वात्मैव मे मतम् , अहम् स च मम प्रियः). Andal invites these J~nAnis to join their goshThI for nOnbu.
11. She explains in this verse the glorification of Bhagavad samaśryaNam. She also mentions that the bhagavatottamAs are our uddheśyar.
12. In this verse, she awakens the ardent devotees, bhaktais, who are like the legendary Lakshmanan, who never ever separated himself from the Lord since he could not bear even a fraction of separation from Him.
13. Thirteenth verse is about inviting the j~nAna vairAgya bhakti paripUrNars; they are resplendent with Bhagavad anubhavam.
14. Fourteenth describes the svarUpam of a devotee full of Bhagavad kalyANa guNAnubhavam.
15. In this verse Andal points out as how SrivaishNava community should coexist together and rejoice being with each other with paraspara neeca manobhAvam. This is considered to be the very essence of **SrI VaishNava lakshaNam**, the characteristic trait of SrivaishNava.
16. In this verse, she wakes up the blessed gate keeper of Nandagopa's palace.
17. This verse and previous praise kainkarya parars, who shine with Bhagavad anubhavam .
18. Andal wakes up the most merciful JaganmAtA, Nappinnai PirATTi for intercession (SipArisu) with Her Lord for forgive the sins of all AsritALs.
19. Here she explains the dayA guNa of PirATTi.
20. Andal suggests that the divine couple as the Mithunam standing for eka Śeshitvam and states that our true nature requires us to approach Them as PrApyam, the ultimate goal of Life. Taking both of Them as our Ultimate recourse is the only nature for us - she hints.
21. Andal reminds us that our only duty is to reflect on His kalyANa guNA-s and Aśritars carry out only that, as explained in this verse (in line with NammazhvAr's tiruvAymozhi 2.2.11- ஏத்த ஏழுலகம் கொண்ட).

22. GodA PirATTi in 22nd verse, enjoys our ananArya śeshatvam (not being a śeshan/servant to anyone else other than Him) as the prerequisite for receiving His vailakshaNya, viśesha kaTAKsham.
23. He alone is Prabhu, our Supreme Lord. He only needs to be asked and hence she asks for His consideration of what we need, and asks Him to think and give what we would need.
24. This is considered to be Andal's MangalAśAsanam, occurring in every line is reminiscent of her father's 'PallANDdu'. She instructs us about the need for the MangaLAśAsanam of the Lord as essential for AśritALs seeking His lotus feet as their refuge. Vishaya vailakshaNyam is brought out beautifully.
25. This verse states that we gain svarUpa lAbham (cognition of our True Self) from Him. He alone is our benefit; our fruits and ultimate objective, nothing and none else. He is also identified with the removal of our samsAric sufferings.
26. He alone is dukkha nivrtti. He is the One who grants us our pleasures too.
27. Bhagavad prasAdam is what and who we are; all our beautifications are for His pleasure. (ब्रह्मालङ्कारेणालङ्कुर्वन्ति)
28. Andal explains so beautifully the means, the way, the path and upAya sveekAram in this.
29. Here she glorifies that kainkaryam alone is the ultimate goal (anubhavam, objective, target, destination and Bliss).
30. Here she blesses us, the reciters and observes that we are fortunate with sarvakAla viśesha kaTAKsham by SrIman Narayana, at all times under all circumstances and we live happily here and thereafter, and blesses us with Her kaTAKsham as well.

Sri Saila tAtachar svAmi summarizes beautifully:

TiruppAvai explains the quintessence of Guru paramparai dhyAnam and dvayam and it is always the mandate for a Prapannan, beautifully narrated as below:

piLLAy ezhuntirAy - can be referred to asmad gurubhyo namaH

nAyaka peNpiLLay - asmad parama gurubhyo namaH

kODukulamuDaiya pAvAy, maNikkatavam tAL tiRavAy - asmad sarva gurubhyo namaH

nORRu cuvargam pukugkinRa ammanAy - ŚrI parAnkuśAya namaH

kOvalartam poRkoDiyE - ŚrImad yAmuna munaye namaH

naRcelvam nangAy, manatukkiniyAnay pADavum - ŚrIrAmamiśrAya namaH

pOdarikkaNNinAy, pankayak kaNNanaip pADa - ŚrI puNDarIkAkshAya namaH

nAvuDaiyAy - ŚrIman nAthamunaye namaH

eIlE iLankiLiye - ŚrImate ŚaThakopAya namaH

nAyakanAy - ŚrImate vishvaksenAya namaH

nappinnAy - Śriyai namaH

ŚrIdharAya namaH

Thus, She enlists the **entire** Guru parampara.

Narayanan alone is for us and for us alone. This is explained so beautifully and in lucid manner by Her ciRRam ciRu kAle pAsuram with a wonderful means of attaining Him as ultimate goal in the 30th verse. Other verses of tiruppAvai also mention these succinctly and hence these two verses (29th and 30th) can at least be uttered and recited every day **by us**. It is crystal clear that tiruppAvai grants us all benefits. SrIman Narayanan alone is the One to be prayed to and as desired for, as instructed mercifully by compassionate GodA PirATTI.

SrImate nigamAnta mahA deśikAya namaH

(Translated in to English by Sri. Madhavakkannan from the Tamil mUlam by Sri SriSaila Tatacharyar svAmi)

[Note on Author: Sri SriSaila Tatacharyar svAmi is the grand son of Tirupputkuzhi Narasimhatatachar svAmi. He is blessed to have kainkaryasrI at PerumAL Koil. He is of the most wonderful lineage of SrIman NathamunikaL. He learnt the Vedas from Sri u. vE. Navalpakkam Narasimha Tatachar svAmi, He sought the kaTAKsham and pleasure of Sri u. vE. Navalpakkam Varada tatarya MahA desikan SvAmi.]



ANDAL THOUGHTS

Koyil T. S. Sundara Rajan

The asterism tiru-āḍi-pūram (which falls in July-August) marks a fragrant day in our calendar, as the tiru-nakshatram of Andal. This blessed day is highlighted by Sri Manavala Mamunigal in the Upadesa Ratnamalai stanza

பெரியாழ்வார் பெண்பிள்ளையாய் ஆண்டாள் பிரந்த
திருவாடிப்-பூரத்தின் சீர்மை, ஒரு நாளைக்கு
உண்டொ? மனமே உணர்ந்து பார், ஆண்டாளுக்கு
உண்டாகில் ஒப்பு இதற்கும் உண்டு.

On this day, the rathōtsavam/tiruttēr (car) festival is celebrated in Srivilliputtur, when Andal in her bridal finery and her winsome consort Sri Rangamannar mount the imposing ratham (the loftiest in the country), to course through their domain. This is verily a heavenly celebration of the profoundest of mystical and literary traditions of the country.

Andal is venerated as divinity per se. The great hagiographer Pinbaḷagiya Perumāḷi Jiyar affirms this by citing the sloka

देवस्य महिषीं दिव्याम् आदौ गोदाम् उपास्महे ।
यन् मौलिमालिकां प्रीत्या स्वीकरोति स्वयं प्रभुः ॥

It is said that for the mental peace of a disciple who confessed to restlessness, Sri Paraśara Bhaṭṭar composed two slokas: the first one, "bhūtaṁ sarashcha mahadāhvaya..." naming the ten divya sūri (Alvars) and Sri Udaiyavar [Ramanuja], and the second one, "niḷā-tunga-stana-giri-taṭi-suptam..." exclusively devoted to the 'daivatam' (Andal). These two slokas constitute important 'taniyan' to 'aruLic-cheyal anusandhAnam' (recitation of 'divya-prabandham').

kōdai and gōdā

'kOdai' was the first name Periyalvar gave to Andal. This Tamil word stands for 'a string of flowers'. In the golden quadrangle of Tirukkurungudi, Vanamamalai, Alvar Tirunagari and Srivilliputtur, girl-children were commonly named 'mAIA-nAcciyAr'. When the Tamil name was Sanskritised as 'gOdA', it yielded a rainbow of meanings. In Sanskrit, the root 'gAuh' means, inter alia, the 'vEdam'; hence, 'gOdA' signifies one who gives of the 'vEdam'.

Andal Book is scripture -"vēdam anaittukkuṁ vittākuṁ kōdai tamil" is how Sri Vedappiran Bhaṭṭar affirmed Tiruppavai's scriptural status. As Sri Parasara Bhaṭṭar perceives it, Andal in her Book seems to instruct Isvara Himself on his majesty, on the several proofs of the Sruti, in his being One without a second: "kr̥shṇaṁ pārārthyam svam śruti-śata-śiras-siddham adhyāpayantī". This was no parochial or denominational boast.

It was given to Sri Kanchi (prativAdi-bhayankaram aNNA) Svami of blessed memory, to identify the several Vedic sources of not only Tiruppavai but of Nacciyar Tirumozhi as well. In the best of poets' traditions in all climes and languages, the Andal Book registers many an echo of revelations in the smRti as well. The well-known line "acalāṁ śriyam āpnōti" (in the 'sahasranAma phalaSruti') reads as "nīngāda celvaṁ niraindu" (in the 'ōngi ulakaḷanda...' Tiruppavai).

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यद-उक्तम् ...
अजानता महिमानं तवेदम् ... तत् क्षामये...
(from Srimad Bhagavad Gita 11:41-42)

அறியாத பிள்ளைகளோம், அன்பினால் உந்தன்னை
சிறு-பேர் அழைத்தனவும் சீறி அருளாதே,
இறைவா!

in the karavaika! Tiruppavai.

The dear and auspicious 'rukmiNI-pariNayam' chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam contains Rukmini Devi's heart-rending appeal to Sri Krishna to rescue her from being forced in marriage to Sisupala. She urges that a lowly character like Sisupala be not allowed to appropriate the offering (that is, herself) already dedicated to Sri Krishna.

मा वीरभागम् अभिमर्शतु छैद्य आराद्
गोमायुवन-मृगपतेः बलिम् अम्बुजाक्ष!

These charged lines, we know, translate into Nacciyar Tirumozhi (1:5) as

vAniDai vAzhum avvAnavarkku maRaiyavar vELviyil vakutta avi kAnidait-tirivadOr nari
pukundu kaDappadam mOppadam Seivadoppa...

One could stray outside of Sri Vaishnavam and discover in the Bible books of Solomon's Song and the Psalms several parallelisms (of lyrical expression, sentiment, episodic situation and even doctrine) with texts from Nacciyar Book, and from the entire run of aruLiccheyal. Thus, the following texts read like translations of each other:

"the smell of thy garments..." (SSong 4:11)

"peNNin varuttam aRiyAda perumAn araiyil pItaka- vaNNa-vADai..." (Nacciyar 13:1);

"his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh" (SSong 5:13)

"karuppUram nARumO, kamalap-pU nARumO? tirup-pavaLac-chevvAi tAn.." (Nacciyar 7:1)

The 'aruLiccheyal' occasionally brings up to an episode or two which are not traceable in the popular Sanskrit canon. I for one could not guess the source of "Amay-yAi gangai-yAi" of Periyalvar (4:9:5) till I came across a 'rasOkti' essay of Sri Kanchi Svami tracing it to Harivamsam. Likewise Andal speaks of a fine point of ritual procedure in,

"muLLum illAc-chuLLi eri maDuttu muyanRu unnai nORkinREn kAmadEvAI!" (Nacciyar 1:2).

I discovered (and I regarded the discovery as a blessing of Andal) from the relatively less-known 'vishNu-dharmOttara- purANam' that the pippala (ficus indicus?) samit (twigs offered in hOmam/oblation) with spiky notches were prescribed for 'black' rites (abhisArika yajna) provided for in the (AitarEya?) brAhmaNa; accordingly, in organising the rite for winning over tiruvEnkatam-uDaiyAn, this young prodigy takes care to select for her sAttvika-hOmam the notch-free twigs. These are only a few illustrations of Andal Book as scripture.

Andal in Srirangam

It is important to note that as many as three shrines are dedicated to Andal in Srirangam. It is well-known that to-day's chitra (originally, mADa) vIthi constitutes the seventh and last of the dedicated enclosures (tiru-vIdi / prAkAram) of periyā- perumAL. There is an eighth enclosure, known as 'aDAiya- vaLAINdan' (meaning, 'all-embracing'). [Even though this

eighth enclosure is the 'outer' one, its name served as a metaphor for a gloss ~ aDAiya-vaLAindAn arum-pada-urai ~ on Tiruvaymozhi, written after the IDu.] At the time when Periyalvar escorted Andal on pilgrimage to Srirangam, the present-day utara (trivikraman) and chitra (mADa) vIdi were tenanted by only the temple functionaries; accordingly, the Alvar (and, of course, Andal) put up in the south-western part of 'aDAiya-vaLAindAn', so as to be within easy reach of the streamlet 'tirumanjana- kAvEri'. On this site came up the first Andal sannidhi in Srirangam. Here Andal is represented in the 'seated' posture and is worshipped only in the 'mUla' form; since the sannidhi is on the 'veLit-tirumuRRam' [outer yard] of the periya-kOyil, it is referred to as the 'veLi ANDal sannidhi', and it could be almost as ancient as the Srivilliputtur ANDAL sannidhi. This sannidhi is administered by SrI kOyil kandADai aNNan tirumALigai.

The second Andal shrine (commonly referred to as the 'uL ANDAL') is approached from the 'ranga-vilAsam'; the 'utsava mUrti', also in the seated posture, was moved here from the veLi ANDAL sannidhi. Sri Rama is also worshipped in this sannidhi, and one can notice a replica of Udaiyavar's 'tAn-Ana tirumEni' in a sub-shrine here. It is on this spot that the enchanting episode of "vAraNam Ayiram" is recalled, after namperumAL dismisses the Anai-vAhanam (elephant mount) and pauses to exchange garlands with Andal.

A few steps to the east of chandra-pushkariNI, and across SrI-kODanDa-rAman sannidhi, is the parama-pada-nAthana sannidhi where all the Alvars are in 'sAIOkyam' with perumAL. In this sannidhi, Andal (in standing posture as in Srivilliputtur) is worshipped in a sub-shrine. In simhAchalam (near viSAkhapatnam), uDAiyavar had raised a shrine for Andal (in the same stance) near the SrI varAha-nRsimha sannidhi, to recall the "mARI-malai muzhanchil mannik-kitandu uRangum SIriya Singam..." Tiruppavai.

Periyalvar's darling child

'arCA' or vigraham or pratimA, for the Sri Vaishnava, is the sentimentally satisfying and self-sufficient proof, and manifestation of the Deity; this is the case in every one of our 108 'divya-dESam'. The Lord beckons to each of us and admits us to His epiphany in a 'divya-dESam' of his choice; the entirety of 'aruLic-cheyal'/'divya-prabandham' is but a luminiscent record and testament of each Alvar's experiences during such ecstatic visitations. Just to gaze ('sadA paSyanti) at Andal at Srivilliputtur is indeed such transport; one verily is reminded of Periyalvar's remembrance (8:1) of Andal:

oru-makaL tannai-yuDaiyEn, ulakam niRAinda pukazhAl tirumakaL pOI vaLarttEn, SenkaN-mAl tAn konDu pOnAn!

Periyalvar is consistent in the memory of his precious child Andal. His initial book Tiruppallandu declares that he had 'no want', being in the service of the Lord:

ennAL, emperumAn! un-tanakku aDiyom enRu ezhuttuppaTT annALE aDiyOngal aDik-kudil vIDu-petru uindadu kAN!

Andal having attained mystic union with 'periya-perumAL' in SrIrangam, Periyalvar returned all by himself; nevertheless, he exclaims (in his final decad) in fulfilment, "Who in this world but me can be so blessed as my being yours?":

"ninnuLEnAip-peRRa nanmai ivvulakinil Ar peRuvAr?"

Andal's shrine in Srivilliputtur

We cannot but marvel at the manner in which Andal shrine dominates that of SrI-vaDa-perum-kOyil-uDAiyAn ('vaTa-patra- SAyI) in Srivilliputtur; just the same with Nammalvar

shrine and that of Adip-pirAn in Alvar Tirunagari, of Udaiyavar and of Sri Adi Kesava Perumal in Sriperumbudur.

The vaTa-patra-SAYI 'gOpuram' at Srivilliputtur acquired a distinction of recent history when it was adopted as the emblem of the government of Tamil Nadu; the sacred temple's lofty gOpuram is presently in near-ruin condition nevertheless. Not much is being spoken of the huge and surpassingly beautiful terra-cotta images of lakshmi-nArAyaNa and SrI-nRsimha cresting this gOpuram. The fine-carved wooden images in the courtyard (tirumuRRam) of vaTa-patra-SAYI, like the breathtaking stone friezes on the interior of Tirukkurungudi gOpuram, deserve notice.

We should learn to contemplate a divya-dESam in its entirety. When great souls like Udaiyavar visited any of these, they absorbed everything that was to a place: the streams, the mountain-stretch, the orchards and arbours, the approaches and streets around the temple, et al. In Srivilliputtur, there is a whole street (to the north of the temple) named after the 'kandADaiyAr' clan which yielded jewels of AchArya like SrI mudali-ANDAn (uDaiyavar's nephew), SrI kOyil aNNan, tirumaNi appan svAmi, sholingur (SOzha-singha-puram) doDDAchar who wrote the well-known 'chanDa-mArutam' commentary on svAmi dESikan's 'SatadUshaNI'.

Srivilliputtur happens to be among the places where Sri Nathamuni's institution of aRAiyar / viNNappam-seyvAr (reciters of 'aruLiccheyal') has survived. Other places are Srirangam, Alvar Tirunagari, Tirukkurungudi and Melkote/Tirunarayanapuram. It is blessed soil, this place named after the wild bowmen tribe of 'villi'; mutter to yourself the verse of Vedappiran Bhattar if you sought to know how rich it is in vibrations:

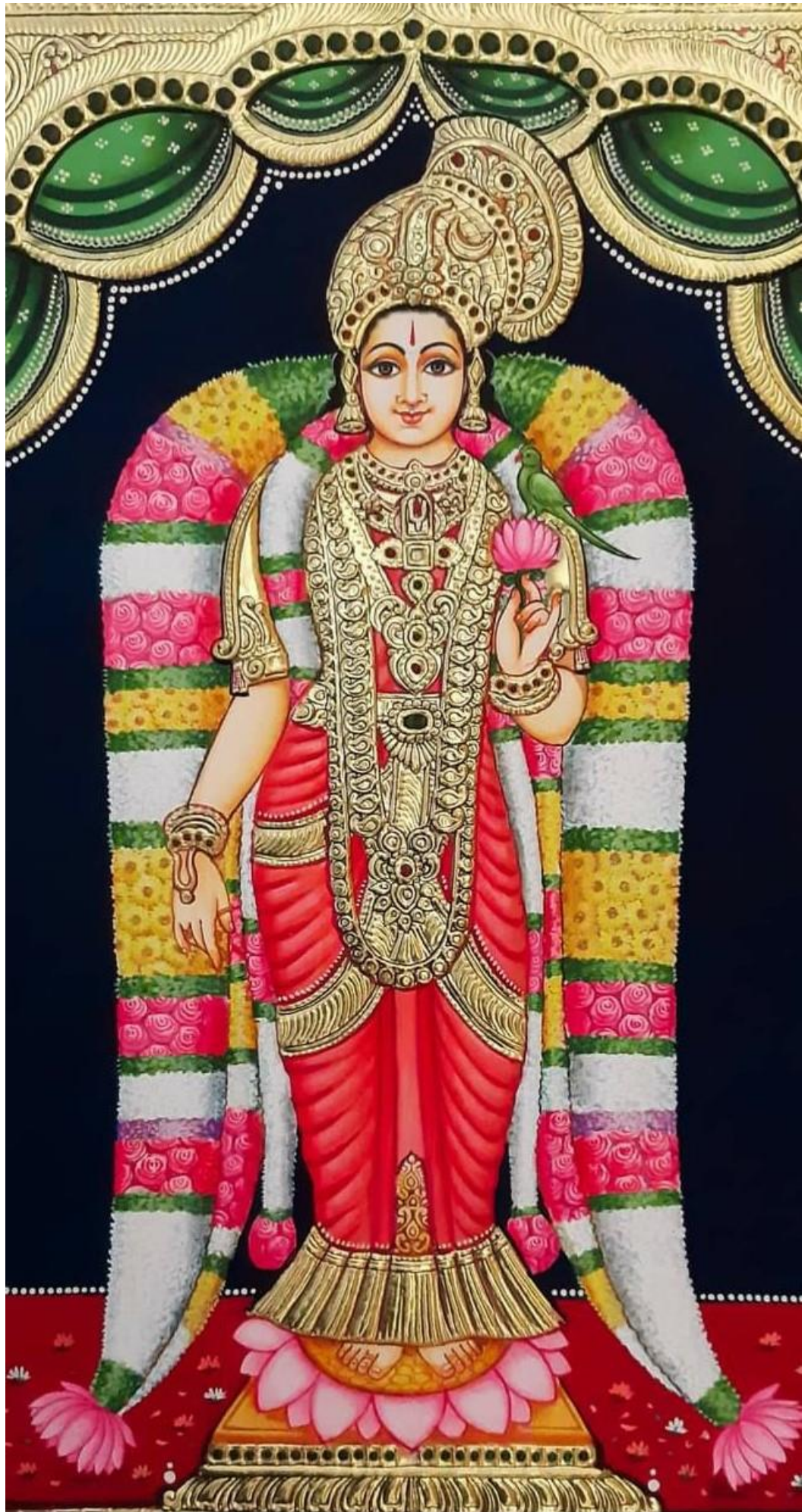
kOdai piranda Ur, gOvindan vAZhum Ur, SOdi maNi-mADam tOnRum Ur — nItiyAl nalla pattar vAZhum Ur, nAn-maRaigaL Odum Ur, villiputtUr vEdak-kOn Ur !

While in Srivilliputtur, wait for the bewitching moment when aRAiyar recites Svami Desikan's hymn-consummate 'gOdA-stuti':

श्री-विष्णुचित्त-कुल-नन्दन-कल्प-वल्लीम्
श्रीरङ्गराज-हरिचन्दन-योगदृश्याम् ।
साक्षात् क्षमां करुणया कमलाम-इवान्याम्
गोदाम् अनन्य-शरणः शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥



Thanks for reading & enjoying the contents. Photo gallery follows.....





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Sri Godhadevi naayikaa sametha
Sri Vadabhadra sayee Parabrahmanae
namaha.