

## THE DIVINITY OF WOMANHOOD, ANDAL, BORN IN THE MONTH OF AADI AND THE ONE WHO CONQUERED THE LOVE OF LORD KRISHNA THROUGH DEVOTION

It is quite often observed that women flock the kovil yard during festivals and ceremonies and they do come regularly for daily and weekly vallipaadu. We often say that kovils would not have existed or expanded without participation of women. Quite true ! God cannot exist without his Shakti. How can one propitiate Shiva without paying homage to Parvathy ,the consort ? Same for Lords Muruga, Ganesha Krishna, and any other deity at the second rung of the ladder in the hierarchy of Godhood. The expression of love and devotion {shakti} is a unique relationship between God and the devotee.

In this month of AADI ,some belief goes on that the period is inauspicious for doing material deeds such as an enterprise yet it is acknowledge that SHAKTI descends on earth ,in South India and people celebrate aadi padinettam peruku . But no marriages take place in the month of AADI for obvious reason that marriages are celebrations with a lot of feasting and amusements filled up with carnal desires too.

AADI LAXMI WITH THE EIGHT SAKTI descends on earth in the month of AADI to feed those who are hungry. In Rajastan ,India , there are many temples dedicated to Sri lakshmi in the form of Sri Sakambari Mother Earth which provides food--vegetables and fruits for consumption .Sri laxmi is believed to be the originator of rice after a severe drought which beset the world for a hundred years.

In history the world had been destroyed and recreated many times during the passing of the yugams some 5 million years on record.

In the Tamil culture Mother Earth appeared as ANNAPURNESWARI as a provider of food ,.It is even advocated that rice has come from the tears of Ammen out of compassion to feed humanity.

This is why RICE forms part of all divine foods offered to God before eating in the customary life of the tamils. This is why Canjee Varrtal is organised in our kovils during the month of AADI.

It is therefore essentially good to relate the story of an AMMEN who has not only appeared on scene for memory but has left the book of TIRUPPAVAI with her songs furnishing the tamil language with some of the high watermarks of God inspired poetry .Andal's words have been a source of joy and comfort to the Tamil people for over twelve hundred years.

Born rather discovered under a Tulsi plant in the eighth century ,her identity had been related to GODAVARI ,the divine woman transformed into a sacred river by Lord Shiva to water the land of India . It is recorded that,Bhudevi ,the Mother Earth ,one day in the month of AADI manifested herself by divine will as a small baby under a tulasi plant in the garden of a devout devotee priest,Visnuchitta ,later known as Peryaalvar {elder saint} who collected the child and cared her with a motherly love. The place is called Srivilliputtur ,fifty miles from Madurai. Peryaalvar preoccupation was to plant flower plants collected the flowers,strung them into garlands and with sacred songs and mandirams offered the garlands to Lord Krishna in the form of Lord Renganatha ,the Deity of Kovil SriRangam,Tamil Nadu.

Hence KODAI ,the name given to the newly found girl by Peryaalvar, did similar activities by collecting flowers ,making garlands to offer to the Lord while singing her praises. The only difference was she wore the garlands around her neck for a

while before letting her adopted father, Peryaalvar , to garland the Lord. However she did not let her father know that she had already worn the garland earlier before donating the garland to the Lord .One day Peryaalvar found one hair on the garland and when asked the reason for this finding ,Kodai confessed that she normally tested the garland on herself before the Lord is offered with. Her father became furious and he refused to offer the garland to the Lord believing the garland had become impure. He made another garland to offer to the Lord It is said that the Lord refused his newly strewn garland by causing the garland to become so loose that the garland fell from his neck. Peryalvar was worried by this event. In the same night the Lord appeared in his dream and requested him to offer garlands which were previously worn by KODAI, by then AANDAL, the one who conquered God by her devotion. Peryalvar seeing her daughter at the ripe time for marriage sought the best guy in the region to become her spouse.

ANDAL refused to get married to a mortal beseeching her father to get her married to Lord Renganatha. Peryalvar thought her daughter had become mad , implored the Lord to save her child. The Lord appeared in his dream and requested him to accept his daughter's proposal and He would come to take her along in a month time as from that time. ANDAL sat down for a fast of 30 days --NOMBU--and wrote the thirty verses of THIRUPPAVAI IN THIRTY DAYS{each one a day}. On the thirtieth day The Lord informed Peryalvar to adorn Andal as a bride and bring her to his altar in the Kovil .Thereupon ANDAL sang the 30th verse of Thirumpavai and as she garlanded Lord Renganatha singing the 30th verse of Thiruppavai she merged into the Lord with melting love and disappeared. This possibility has been assured by Lord Krishna in the BAGAVATGITAwhen He told Arjuna that His devotee with unsurpassed devotion is the greatest and He is prepared to come down and bring the devotee into his realm. Such is the promise of God to his devotees.

In the month of AADI we celebrate AADIPURAM to mark the birthday of ANDAL on the 23rd of July 2012. In some places they call it KADAGAM KALEI. ANDAL is one of the twelve always {really loved devotees} who sing all praises of Lord Visnu and she is the only woman saint among the vaishnava saints,similar as Karaikarammeiyar the only woman saint among the nayanmars of Lord Shiva.

Andal's sacred songs ,Tirumoli,are very relevant to our present needs and they are sung in marriages and the tunes go through the nadeshwaram too. God love is the theme of her poems.They are full of great sweetness and charm. ANDAL relationship with Lord Krishna is that of a gopiyar and she implores all women to love Lord Krishna who is the refuge to all souls. She addressed the Lord thus:

**"We have come to thy presence .O Lord enthrone thyself in our heart.Make us ever remember Thou."**

To motivate one and all let us conclude with Andal's quotations as follows

**"Vaiyattu vazvirgal namum nan pavaikku seiyyum kirisaigal kerliro parakadalul Paiyattuyinra paramanandi padi neyyunom palunnom natkal niradi"**

O! All those born to live in this world ,listen to the disciplines of our ritual!

We shall sing praises of the feet of our Lord who is resting on the milky ocean.

We shall not take ghee or milk.

Yes it is recommended to fast on AADIPURAM and read or sing Thirumoli or

Thiruppavai to Lord Krishna for quite reasonable time and The Lord always attends to deserving devotees.We refer readers to You Tube or Safari on the internet and search for ANDAL or THIRUPPAVAI.

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