



The Sacred Foundation of Thiruppavai



Thiruppavai Pasurams Collection

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Description: Understanding the divine context, authorship, and spiritual purpose of Andal's timeless devotional masterpiece

Tags: thiruppavai, andal, devotional-poetry, margazhi, krishna-bhakti, divya-prabandham

The foundational context and background of the Thiruppavai are rooted in its authorship, purpose, setting, and structure, drawing heavily on the persona and devotion of Andal.

Author and Composition

The Thiruppavai is a revered prabandham (literary work) and a divya prabandham (sacred compilation). It was sung by Andal, who was born as the daughter of Periyalvar in Srivilliputhur. Andal, also known as Gotha Devi, is believed to have been born to alleviate the defect concerning the natural fragrance of women's hair, a point of contention in her native Pandya kingdom.

The Thiruppavai consists of 30 pasurams (verses), intended to be sung at a rate of one pasuram per day throughout the month. The entire prabandham is considered to encapsulate the essence of the 4000 Divya Prabandham.

Setting and Persona

Andal composed the work by immersing herself in the experience of the Dwapara Yuga, despite living in the Kaliyuga. The composition takes place during the Margazhi month, and Lord Krishna Himself stated, "Among the months, I am Margazhi".

Andal mentally transformed her physical surroundings to create this divine vision. She envisioned her home of Srivilliputhur as the Aayarpadi (Gokulam/ cowherd settlement) and regarded the temple of Vadaperum Koyil Udayar (Vadapathrasayi) as the house of Nandagopalan.

Although she was the daughter of a Brahmin (Andhanan), Andal assumed the persona of a girl belonging to the cowherd class (the Aayar community or Vaishya caste) to sing the first 29 pasurams. She only returns to her own state as the daughter of Vishnu Chittar (Periyalvar) in the 30th pasuram (the phala shruti).

The Vow and Its Goal

The Thiruppavai is essentially the song of the Paavai Nonbu. Andal's core desire was to marry Krishna (Kannan), and she researched how the women who lived during Krishna's time achieved this. They observed a vratham (vow) directed towards Goddess Ambhal (Katyayani Mahamaye).

Andal introduced a modification, deciding that to attain Krishna, they should pray directly to Krishna himself instead of through Ambhal. The collective purpose of the vow was to come together with friends (tholigal) and be cooled or refreshed (kudiyirundhu kulira vendum) through the experience.

The highest goal of the Paavai Nonbu is the acquisition of Parai. Parai primarily refers to a musical instrument or drum, but spiritually, it signifies the ultimate blessing of Moksha (liberation) upon leaving the physical body.

The Thiruppavai is often referred to as a Tiruppalli Ezhuchi (awakening song), but its purpose is not to wake the Lord (as in the work by Thondaradipodi Alvar) but to awaken the fellow devotees (Bhagavata Uttamams) so they can join the observance. The verses serve to describe the rules of the vow (what to do and what not to do), praise the Lord in various forms, and call upon other cowherd girls to join the pursuit of divine experience.

Reference

[Thiruppavai Pasurams Playlist](#)



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).

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