



# ஆய்த எழுத்து

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## Andal – One Who Immersed In Devotion

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In India, from very ancient time, as a result of the underlying devotional flow in the culture, the spiritual impact on music is very strong. Here music served as a medium to express the spontaneous and subjective feelings, arising out of the intimate relationship with the Divinity. Such persons are referred to as saints, who dedicated their lives to God itself. They referred to themselves as slaves of God.

There were a number of saints in both Vaishnava and Saivamathas, who were excellent composers. These compositions are known as BhakthiKavyas. In Tamil region, the 'Pasurams' of Alwars (Vaishnavite Saints), the 'Patikams' of Nayanmars (Saivite Saints), and Thiruppugal of Arunagirinadhar (15th cent. A.D) are representatives of sacred Music.

Among the Vaishnavite Saints, the 12 Alwars are the most famous. The centre of devotion of the Alwars is God Vishnu. The name Alwar means one who has sunk into depths of existence or one who is lost in a rapturous devotion of the Lord. The Alwars came from all stratas of society. The total works of Alwars are known as 'Nalayiram Divya Prabandham' (4000 holy hymns). In the magnitude, they are not exactly 4000, but it is to denote the size of the work. Another name of this is 'Aruliseyyal'. They are considered by the Vaishnavites as sacred as Vedas. The reciters of these hymns are known as 'Araiya's'. The prime nature of the BhakthiKavyas is the group singing.

Among the 12 Alwars, the only Lady composer was Andal. The period of Andal was considered to be the middle of the 7th cent. A.D. There is another suggestion of the period as the 9th cent. A.D. There were many legends and myths associated with her life. She was supposed to be discovered as an infant lying under a basil plant by the temple priest of Srivilliputhur, Periyalwar also known as Vishuchitta and Bhattanada. He also came under 12 Alwars. The child was given the name Goda Devi (Kothai in Tamil). It's meaning is bestowed by Earth. Young Goda Devi was grown up in Krishna consciousness, and before 5 years old dedicated her life to the Lord's service.

The legend is that Periyalwar, a devotee of Vatapatrasayee (the deity of Srivillipathur Temple), served the temple, by fashioning garlands out of fresh flowers from the garden which he maintained. Andal, his daughter, was in the habit of wearing the garland prior to submitting them to the deity. One day Periyalwar happened to see her wearing the garland and looking at herself in the mirror. Struck with amazement, Periyalwar tried to stop her deed. But, it was directed by the deity, that he, indeed, preferred garlands which had been worn