

AVVAIYAR



Avvaiyar was a Tamil Saiva saint and bhaktha lived in South India , was an ardent devotee of Sri Ganesha. Since childhood, her seeking was tremendous, and when her parents started seeking alliance for her marriage, she deeply prayed to Sri Ganesha, to transform her form to that of an old lady, and immediately, Sri Ganesha blessed her with an old form. Since then, she continued to spread the Divine message. Her messages were well received by the kings of Sangam period, and many times brought peace to warring states, by her wise words. Among them, Avvaiyar I, lived during the Sangam period (1st and 2nd century CE) and had cordial relation with the Tamil chieftains Paari and Athiyaman. She wrote 59 poems in the Purananuru. Avvaiyar II lived during the period of Kambar and Ottakoothar during the reign of the Chola dynasty in the 10th century. She was often imagined as an old and intelligent lady by Tamil people. She wrote many of the poems that remain very popular even now and were inculcated in school textbooks in Tamil Nadu. These books include a list of dos and don'ts, useful for daily life, arranged in simple and short sentences.

Avvaiyar



Legends in the life of Avvaiyar

There is a very famous legend that is associated with Avvaiyar, a prominent female poets/ethicist/political activist of Sangam period (Tamil literature), and Naaval Pazham (Jambu) in Tamil Nadu. Avvaiyar, believing to have achieved everything, was said to have been pondering her retirement from Tamil literary work while resting under Naaval Pazham tree. But she was met with and was wittily jostled by a disguised Lord Murugan (regarded as one of the guardian deities of Tamil language), who later revealed himself and made her realise that there was still a lot more to be done and learnt. Following this awakening, Avvaiyar is believed to have undertaken a fresh set of literary works, targeted at children.

Another Legend associated with Avvaiyar, was that a great king Athiyaman gave an eternal gooseberry (Nellikani - a special and powerful) fruit to Avvaiyar, whoever eats it would have a healthy and long life. Athiyaman wanted Avvaiyar to eat the eternal fruit as she was the right person who could serve the Tamil community in the long run in the field of literature. If she could live forever, so would the Tamil heritage and language.

Principles & Practices in Spiritual Life

Avvaiyar began her journey as a wanderer after she was transformed as an old woman. The life gave her the much education and inspiration and this social conscience started to reflect in her poetry also. The love Avvaiyar had for the common man, her contempt towards pretensions of the rich, etc, all were beautifully brought forward in her poems. During her lifetime, Avvaiyar also came across Lord Muruga, brother of Ganesha.

Her last public service was the prevention of the war between King Adiyaman and King Thondiaman.

Spiritual Works

Avvaiyar an ardent devotee of Shri Ganesha performed pujas to him. She heard that Sundarar, another Shiva devotee had started to Kailash. Avvaiyar too wanted to join him and reach Kailash, the abode of Shiva.

With this thought in mind, she started performing Sri Ganesh Puja in a hurried manner. Sri Ganesha appeared before her and asked her why she was performing the puja to Him in a hurried manner today. Avvaiyar replied that Sundarar had started for Kailash and that she wanted to join him and thus was performing her puja a hurried manner.

Sri Ganesha told Avvaiyar to perform puja to Him in a slow manner with full involvement and one mindedness and promised her that at the end of the puja he would take her to Kailash before Sundarar. Avvaiyar

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performed the puja with full faith and as promised at the end of the puja , Sri Ganesha , lifted her up and took her to Kailash .(The real meaning is Sri Ganesha revealed to her Kundalini Yoga , and made her reach Sahasrara , to merge with the Divine couple (Sada Shiva and Adi Sakthi).

Having experienced the Divine Yoga (Kundalini Yoga), Avvaiyar rendered VINAYAKA AGAVAL, explaining the Divine form of Shri Ganesha, and how Ganesha came to her in the form of a mother and showered Grace revealing Kundalini Yoga and she also beautifully explained the functioning of the chakras, nadis and the Kundalini instrument and blessing of this Supreme Yoga.

Celebrations

Annual Avvai Vizha is organised & conducted by Government of Tamil Nadu to commemorate Avvaiyar's contribution to Tamil literature. This festival is celebrated every year in the month of Panguni on Sadhayam star day. Avvai Vizha has been started by local community long time back and still continuing willingly. Now Govt of Tamil Nadu is continuing this function and adding more values. Local community, Tamil scholars and scholars from various fields participating with passion on this occasion and deliver their speech. Avvai Vizha is conducted in the temple Avvaiyar situated at Thulasiyappattinam village, Vedaranyam, Nagapattinam District, in the temple premises of Arulmigu Visvanathaswamy Thirukovil. Also this place is referred to famous interaction between Lord Muruga & Avvaiyar "Suttapazham Venduma Sudatha Pazham Venduma". This temple is under the control of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department.

Writings / Celebrated books

Following are the celebrated works of Avvaiyar

- Aththichudi
- Konraiventhan
- Nalvazhi
- Moodurai)
- Gnanakural)
- Vinayakar Agaval
- Nalu Kodi Padalkal

In 2009, Red Hen Press published a selection of Avvaiyar's poetry from the 12th century, entitled Give, Eat, and Live Poems by Avvaiyar. The poems were selected and translated into English by Thomas Pruiksma, a poet and translator who discovered Avvaiyar's work while on a Fulbright scholarship at The American College in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Location

In Muppandal, a small village in the Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu. there is an image of Avvaiyar. By tradition, this is stated to be the spot where the great poet left the mortal world.

Sources

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