



## Musicality of Flute from Periyapurānam

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### Abstract

The 12<sup>th</sup> Century Bakthi Literature Periyapurānam speaks about 63 Saiva Saints dealt with matchless devotion. Out of 63 Saints Aanāyar was one such Nāyanār who was a Flutist. Through Periyapurānam Sekkizhār ( Author) brings out the Musicality, Technical terms, Structure and Construction of Flute which was astonishing and highly commendable to the field of music and to the Flute in particular. The scintillating power of music especially from Flute was brought out very effectively through Aanāyar saint of Periyapurānam.

**Keywords:** Aanāya nāyanār – Periyapurānam - Flute - Technical terms – Rhythmic patterns - Musicality

## INTRODUCTION:

Periyapurānam was written by Sekkizhār who was a Chief Minister at the court of Chola kingdom. (Klothunga Chola - 1013 - 1150 AD) Periyapurānam speaks about 63 Saiva Saints who followed Bakthi Mārgam. The enthralling stories of 63 saivite saints bring about the matchless devotion and fathomless love for God. Aanāyar was an nāyanār saint venerated in the hindu saivaite sect. He was 14<sup>th</sup> of 63 Nāyanmārs. Aanāyar was a cowherd because he was tending cows he was known by that name. (Aan - cow, Aayar – cowherd) Aanāyar was a flutist. His music through flute was as sweet as nectar that melted the very bones of every living creature. Periyapurānam praises Aanāyar's music through flute as.

“ The Music of the fluting through the hollow Reed

Filling the World and capturing Heavens Rose in volumes vast enough “



Aanāya Nāyanār in Periyapurānam

## MUSIC TECHNICAL TERMS :

- 1) Anburu Gānam - music with love ( 12<sup>th</sup> hymn )
- 2) Thulai karuvi kuzhal - Wind Instrument Flute ( 12<sup>th</sup> )
- 3) Naramburu Thānam - Svarasthānam (13<sup>th</sup> )
- 4) Vāyu mudal vazhangu thulai - hole in the flute through which air blown (13<sup>th</sup> )

- 5) Anguli en idaiyeetin vazhi - Inch measurement for construction of flute (13<sup>th</sup>)
- 6) Kuzhar karuvi - flute (14<sup>th</sup>)
- 7) Ezhisai – Sapthasvaras (14<sup>th</sup>)
- 8) Sruthi – Pitch (14<sup>th</sup>)
- 9) Isai amudhu - sweet music (14<sup>th</sup>)
- 10) Veinguzhal - Bamboo flute (18<sup>th</sup>)
- 11) Amuda kuzhal Isai oli - Sweet flute music (22<sup>th</sup>)
- 12) Innisai Veingkaruvigal – Wind Instruments (22<sup>th</sup>)
- 13) Ezhu viralidai itta Innisai Vangiyam - A Wind Instrument with 8 holes (23<sup>th</sup>)
- 14) Thani Perunthulai - Single Mouth Hole (23<sup>th</sup>)
- 15) Adaram vaittooda - Lips to be placed to blow on flute (23<sup>th</sup>)
- 16) Muthirai - Name of one hole in flute (24<sup>th</sup>)
- 17) Muraithānam - checking Svarasthanas (24<sup>th</sup>)
- 18) Vakkarānai - Method of Playing (24<sup>th</sup>)
- 19) Ondru mudal padi murai – step by step (24<sup>th</sup>)
- 20) Aarōsai - Increasing svarā notes Aarohana (24<sup>th</sup>)
- 21) Amarōsai - Decreasing svarā notes Avarohana (24<sup>th</sup>)
- 22) Māru mudal Pannal - Modal shift of Tonic (25<sup>th</sup>)
- 23) Mullai Pan - A Pan Variety (25<sup>th</sup>)
- 24) Thāram - Nishada svarā (25<sup>th</sup>)
- 25) Uzhai - Madyama svarā (25<sup>th</sup>)
- 26) Pattadai Kural – Sruthi (25<sup>th</sup>)
- 27) Kodi pālai - One variety of Pālai (25<sup>th</sup>)
- 28) Isai kilai kollum thurai Anjin murai - Satja –Panjama method (26<sup>th</sup>)
- 29) mandratthum, madyamatthum ,thāratthum - Thrīsthāyi (27<sup>th</sup>)
- 30) Melivittum, Samankondum, Valivittum - bringing out thrīsthāyi (27<sup>th</sup>)
- 31) Tandhrigal - musical strings (27<sup>th</sup>)
- 32) Peru vannam ,Idai vannam - Rhythmic Variety (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 33) Vanna isai - Rhythmic music (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 34) Nādam - Music (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 35) Pāni - Thāla (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 36) Thooku - fast tempo (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 37) Nadai - Gati (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 38) Mudar gati - First speed (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 39) Pan amaiya - Raga (28<sup>th</sup>)
- 40) Mani thulai vāi veinguzhal - Blowing hole in Bamboo flute (29<sup>th</sup>)
- 41) Ezhisai - Sevan svarās (33<sup>th</sup>)
- 42) Isai mayam - Music spread all over (36<sup>th</sup>)
- 43) kuzhalosai - Flute music (37<sup>th</sup>) (38<sup>th</sup>)
- 44) Kuzhal nādam - Flute music (39<sup>th</sup>)
- 45) Isai virumbum Koothanār - Music Lover (39<sup>th</sup>)
- 46) Kuzhal vāsānai - Flute music (40<sup>th</sup>)
- 47) Kuzhal Karuvi - Wind Instruments (41<sup>st</sup>)

### The Other NAMES Mentioned for FLUTE:

- 1) Thulai karuvi ( 12 th hymn)
- 2) Kuzhal (12, 37, 38, 40, 41th hymns)
- 3) Kuzhal karuvi (14, 41th hymns)
- 4) Veinguzhal (18, 29 th hymns)
- 5) Veingaruvigal (22th hymns)
- 6) Vangiyam (23th hymns)

### CONSTRUCTION OF FLUTE in Periyapurānam:

Mundai marai noonmarabin mozhinda murai ezhunda vei Anda mudal nālirandil arindu naramburu thānam Vanda thulai niraiyaakki vāyu mudal vazhangu thulai Andamil seer idaiyeetin anguli engalin amaitthu (13 th hymn Aanāyar purānam).

Periyapurānam confirms that Flute was made up of Bamboo. The selection of bamboo \was carried out as per the rules said in scriptures which deal with flute construction. The hole through which the air was blown was mentioned as “Vāyu mudal vazhangu thulai”. The other finger holes were made in-between 8 inches. In the above Idaiyeetin means

in between, Anguli means inches, en means number 8. It was called Vangiyam. Aanāyar played this flute with perfect blended pitch. This is mentioned in 14th hymn.

#### Description of Flute:



**Flute with 8 Finger Holes**



**Flute with Blowing Hole**

The flute Vangiyam (-23<sup>rd</sup> hymn) has 8 finger holes which has one finger gap (viralidai-23) for each inbetween. So there were 7 finger gaps. The blowing hole is called “perun thani thulai -23 “which means it is unique single ahead of all other holes. It is explained that only through this hole Aanayar placed his lips for blowing. The musical svarasthānas were checked by blowing. This was called “Vaittha thulai Aaraichi” After exploring the blinding of sruthi step by step increasing Aarohana and decreasing Avarohana recited.

#### Playing of Flute



Ottha nilai unardapin ondu mudal padi muraiyin Atthagaimai Aarosai Amarosai amartthinar (24th hymn Aanāyar purānam)

#### Modal Shift of Tonic:

This Modal Shift of Tonic is mentioned as “Māru mudal panniyadu in 25th hymn”. Māru means shift, Mudal means tonic svarā, panniyadu means carried out. He played Mullai Pan which is devoid of 2 svarās nishādam (thāram) and Madyamam (uzhai). By shifting tonic svarā other pan like kodi pālai was obtained. While playing the flute, the finger holes will be closed and opened according to the nature of the pan. “Meya thulai Viduppanavum Patruvanavum “(26th hymn) Here Meya thulai is finger hole Viduppana is opening. Patruvana is closing. It is also explained that the flutist applied Sadja – Panchama Method for Modal Shift of Tonic (kilai kollum murai - 26 th hymn)

#### Tristhāyi :

There are three octaves (Trisyāyi) in Karnatic Music. They are Manthra sthāyi (Lower octave) Madya sthāyi (Middle Octave) Thāra sthāyi (higher Octave) All the above three octaves and method of blowing also mentioned in Aanāyanāyanār puranam of Periyapurānam.

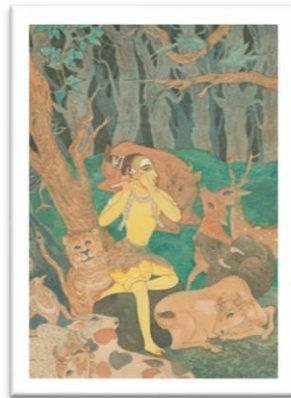
Mantratthum madyamathum thāratthum varan muraiyāl Thanthirigal melivitthum samankondum valivitthum Andharatthu viral thulaigal alavu pera asaitthu iyakki Sundara chengani vāyum thulaivāyum thodakkunna ( 27th hymn Aanāyar purānam)

In the above Manthram is manthra sthāyi  
 Madhyamam is Madhya sthāyi  
 Thāram is thāra sthāyi  
 Melivittu is blowing soft  
 Saman is blowing moderate  
 Valivittu is blowing with pressure  
 Viral thozhilgal is playing the instrument  
 Alavu pera isaitthu is playing according to pitch  
 Chengani vāi is the mouth with rosy lips for blowing  
 Thulai vāi is the hole in flute for blowing

### Rhythmic Patterns:

Vannam means Rhythmic patterns. They are the literary beauties which are seen in poetry. These vannam shows definite rhythmic patterns. These rhythmic patterns will come under a broad heading Thala. Rhythmic patterns have gati varieties otherwise called Nadai. The 28 th hymn of Aanāyanāyanār purānam contains many technical terms of music particularly to Thala. They are Nādam, Pāni, Iyal, Thookku, Nadai, Mudhar Gati, Pan and two types of Vannam Peru vannam and Idai vannam.

### Global Effect of Flute Music In Periyapurānam :



Aanāyar found heartfelt joy in playing holy five letters Manthra of Lord in his flute and felt the perpetual presence of Lord in his melody. His love flowed from heart to his blessed lips as a jet of modulated air which flow through his flute in his hand spread all over the entire forest. He played the holy five letter of Lord (na,ma,si,va,ya) in his flute which are the five swarās of Mullai Pan (S,R,G,P,D). It was like the sound of Bees singing, Sound of breeze in the bamboo forest, Pleasant sound of Dawn, Like the bees that hallucinates at the drinking honey in the best of flowers. He played so mellifluously with love that the Flowing River stopped, the Waves of the Sea looked comforted, the Animals and the Birds behaved as though hypnotized, stopped on their tracks to listen to the enchanting music. The Cowherds stopped chewing while grazing, the calf that had their mouth at the lap of their cows stopped drinking milk, the bulls and wild animals bow down their bliss, snakes fall unconscious on peacocks, Lion and Elephants walk together, Deer dare to come with the Tigers. Wind does not blow fast. River and springs flow calm. Clouds don't roar. That blissful music filled the heart of all and overflows. The flute music that emerged from loving heart of Aanāyar filled the Earth and Celestial world and wafted near. The entire Animate and Unanimate were ineluctably riveted to his Nectarine flow of music which was melting, merciful and all absorbing.

### CONCLUSION:

Aanāya Nāyanār is a great inspiring example for a person who is leading a very simple life reaching the highest state getting liberation and unification with Almighty through musicespecially by Flute. Aanāyar purānam confirms the extraordinary musical knowledge of the Author (Sekkizhār) through Music. It portrays some of the musical features like Pan, Pāni, Sthāyi, Rhythmic structures, and construction of flute, playing methods and Musicality of Flute in a broad and predominant manner.

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