Chapter - II

The Bhakti Movement and its Contributions
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THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS

The period from the 6th to 12th century A.D. is of seminal concern in the religious history of Tamilnadu. It was the age in which bhakti “devotion” was nurtured utmost. However, the high bhakti period was the early Pandyas and Pallavas from AD 500 to 850. While North India from the Indus valley to Bengal witnessed the iconoclastic zeal of the Muslims since the days of Mohammad Bin Kasim (AD 712)\(^\text{110}\) to the Slave kings and later,\(^\text{111}\) South India was free from these onslaughts. It was only in the early years of the 14th century that Ala-ud-din Khilji sent the arrow of Islam with Malik Kapur to the South. Approximately the 12th century was the fag end of the Cola period. Down to the 6th century AD the Kalabhras held sway over Tamilnadu. It was in the early years of the 7th century that the state power (the Pallava Mahendravarman I and the PandyaKun (Identified with Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman I whom Cuntarar calls Ninracir Netumaran) was converted to Saivism.\(^\text{112}\)

The Kalabhras were not detrimental to the native religions. The origin of bhakti in the Tamil tradition is traced back to the 5th century AD, the high tide of Kalabhra rule. Few of the Nayanmars (Eg. Karaikkalambaumaiyar) and the Mural-Alvars (Poykai, Pey and Putam) were dated in the 5th century. The roots of bhakti could be found in

\(^{110}\) V.A.Smith, \textit{The Early History of India}, New Delhi ,1981, p. 95.
\(^{111}\) \textit{Idem.}.
\(^{112}\) Raju Kalidos, \textit{History and Culture of the Tamils}, Dindigal, 1976, p. 177.
the *Paripatal* (4\textsuperscript{th} century AD)\textsuperscript{113} and *Cilappatikaram* (5\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.) that extol the praise of *Mal/Tirumal*.\textsuperscript{114} The most luminary aspect of the *Paripatal* is that it views the Lord in Visvarupa form. It appears first in the *Mahabharata*. The *Cilappatikaram* presents a pen-picture of the temples for Visnu at Maliruncolai and Venkatam.\textsuperscript{115} However, it is in the hymns of the Alvars and Nayanmars that bhakti was cultivated systematically.

The origin of bhakti in the North was traced back to the Bhagavatas (Vasudeva-Krsna worship) in the early centuries of the Christian era. It was during the Gupta period that it grew into a mighty tree and migrated to the South. The Alvars and Nayanmars systematically propagated bhakti through their soul-stirring hymns. The savants of bhakti adopted a simple language that caters to the needs of a layman.

It was not the classical *Cankam* Tamil that they employed but a pure bhakti Tamil, simple in diction and style that a layman could get by heart and recite during worship.

**Defining Bhakti / Concept of Bhakti**

Bhakti is a Sanskrit word derived from the root word ‘Bhaj’ that means to *adore*. Bhakti means fervent, devotion, devotion to an *istadevata* (Personal God). He may be Siva or Visnu. Interestingly,
the bhakti movement had no appeal to Devi, Ganapati and Murukan. Though the origins of the concept of bhakti are traceable in Sanskrit sources, bhakti movement as much originated in the Tamil land. Personal relationship between the devotee and the god was its main characteristic, and worship became a fervent personal experience in response to divine grace. The name given to the way of devotion in Hinduism also then the name of those sects of Hinduism, stressing devotional faith as the way to salvation rather than either the path of works (\textit{karma}) knowledge, (\textit{Jnana}) or bhakti (devotion, total surrender). It is also to ‘participate’ or to share in the Godly activities in total surrender and dedication to him. Bhakti or in Tamilised form ‘\textit{patti}’ means as emotional love towards the Lord(s). The Saiva Siddhanta mentions four. Sadanas to attain moksha, which is the ultimate goal of the soul. They are \textit{Cariya}, \textit{Kriya}, Yoga and Jnana. It would help to liberate the human beings from \textit{Pati}, \textit{Pasu} and \textit{Pasa}. Ramanuja whose analysis remained rooted in the bhakti as an experience and tradition. But in course of time it will grow wider and brighter and may become the church of the future.\footnote{Reese W.L., \textit{Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion, Eastern and Western Thought}, New Jersey Humanities Press, U.S.A., New York., 1980, p. 57.}

Religion for the devotees is no longer a matter of contemplation of a transcendent, impersonal absolute, but of ecstatic response to an intensely personal experience. This leads to a profound sense of the devotee(s) own short comings and to a trustful recourse to the god’s forgiveness with the whole personality being surrendered
to the deity. It is this position which inspired the scholar-missionary. The Vedic religion or the Brahminical religion-became a popular religion of the Tamils, through the bhakti movement.

Some scholars trace the roots of bhakti in the Vedas, Bhagavat Gita and Cankam literature. R.G.Bhandarkar finds its root in the Upanisadic idea of upasana (fervent meditation). In the Gita the Lord Krishna advocates jnana (wisdom), Karma (action) and bhakti (devotion) as the marga (way) to reach God. Bhakti and sraddha (blind faith) are inter-wined.

According to Rupagavsmi bhakti is madhura (sweet) rasa. Mira Bai unconditionally surrender herself to Krishna and says “Even if you severe, My Lord, I will not”.\(^{117}\) Bhakti is born in faith, and is followed by attraction, adoration and suppression of mundane pleasures and ultimately ends in contentment. Bhakti is Parama Prema (eternal love). A genuine bhakta (devotee) thinks, speaks and recites his God’s fame endlessly. The steps to bhakti are Sravanam (listen to God’s fame), kirttanam (sing his praise), Smaranam (cherish his memories), Padasevanam (be at the Lord’s feet), Archana (adore), vantana (prostrate), Dasya (be a slave), Sakhya (be friend) and Atmanivedana (total surrender). Visnu is full of grace with which conjugal union, punarcci, is possible through prabhatti (self-surrender). Antal cultivates this idea in her Nacciyar Tirumoli.\(^{118}\)

\(^{117}\) Raju Kalidos, *History and Culture of Tamils, op.cit.*, pp.100-106

A successful bhakta is supposed to attain transcendental bliss. The four stages of bliss or beatitudes are *Salokya* (reach paradise), *Samibya* (be in the vicinity of God), *Sarupya* (get the God’s form) and *Sayuja* (merge with God).

We aims to attain the integral life of spirit, cognition will and feeling though logically distinguishable are not really separable in the concrete life and unity of mind. We can reach the goal of perfection to attain the saving truth in three different ways (i) by a knowledge of Reality (*jnana*) (ii) by adoration and love (Bhakti) of the supreme person (iii) and by the subjection of the will to the divine purpose (Karma). These are distinguished on account of the distribution of emphasis on the theoretical, emotional and practical aspects.

Bhakti or devotion is a relationship of trust and love to a personal God. Worship of the unmanifested (*Avyaktopasama*) is difficult for ordinary human beings, though there were instances of great aviations, who were given to the impersonal Reality a warm emotional content. Worship of the personal God is recommended as the easier way open to all, the weak and the lowly, the illiterate and the ignorant. The sacrifice of love is not so difficult as the tuning of the will to the divine purpose or ascetic discipline or the strenuous effort of thinking.

The origin of the way of devotion is hidden in the mists of long ago. The praises and prayers of the Rig Veda, the *upasanas* of the
Upanishads and the ardent pieties of the Bhagavata religion influenced the author of the Gita. He struggles to develop an order of ideas belonging to the religious side of the Upanishads to which they were not able to give free and unambiguous utterance. The supreme is not a God who sleeps in serene abstraction, while hearts heavy laden cry out for help; but a saving god of love believed and experienced as such by the devotee. He bestows salvation on those who believe in Him. He declares; "this is my word of promise that he who Lovett me shall not perish". It is a loving attachment of God. Narada defines it as intense love for God. For Sandilya, it is supreme lounging for God, for its own sake. It is surrender to trusting appropriation of the grace of the Lord. It is Isvarapramidana of yoga, Sutra which according to Bhoja is the Love in which without seeking results, such as sense enjoyment etc., all works are dedicated to the teacher of teachers. It is a profound experience which negates all desire and fills the heart with love for God. Advocates of the way of devotion are not interested so much in supra mundane redemption as in absolute subjection to the abiding will of God. The human soul draws near to the divine by contemplation of God’s power, wisdom and goodness by constant remembrance of him with a devout heart, by conversing about his qualities with others, by singing his praises with fellowmen and by doing all acts as his service. The devotee directs his whole being to God.

Adoration is the essence of religion. It involves a duality between the worshipper and the worshipped. If a philosophy of
inmanentism is so interpreted as to destroy man’s sense of creativeness or God’s transcendence, it has no place for devotion and worship. The distinction between creature and creator is the ontological basis of the religion of bhakti. The eternal one is viewed in the Bhagavad Gita not so much as the God of philosophical speculation as the God of grace such as the heart and the soul need and seek who inspires personal trust and love, reverence and loyal self surrender. Before the rise of knowledge, duality is misleading but when our understanding is enlightened we perceive that duality is more beautiful than even non duality and is conceived so that there might be worship. Again ‘The Truth is non-duality, but duality is for the sake of worship and thus this worship is a hundred times greater than liberation.

Bhakti in Gita is not an amour intellectuals which is more reflective and contemplative. It is sustained by knowledge but is not knowledge. It involves no reference to yoga technique or longing for speculative knowledge of the divine. It gives us spiritual peace even without knowledge as in the case of milkmaids. The devotee has a sense of utter humility. In the presence of the ideal he feels that he is nothing. God loves the utter prostration of the self surrender. Love and devotion; Mercy and tenderness are the qualities associated with bhakti, which are to be found more in women. As bhakti embassies humility, obedience readiness to serve, compassion and gentle love as the devotee longs to surrender himself, renounce self will and experience passivity. It is said to be more feminine in character.
Women expect, suffer, help and receive. They long for compassion, mercy, peace. Femininity is in all beings. Bhagavata said that girls prayed to Katyayani to get krish as their husband. Women given everything, claim nothing. They want to love and be loved. Radha typifies the loving soul. In relation to God, Bhaktas are more like women.

When the soul surrenders itself to god, he takes up our knowledge, error and casts away in all forms of insufficiency and transforms all into his infinite light and the purity of the universal good. Bhakti is not merely the fight of the alone to the alone. The soul’s detachment from the world and attachment to God. But is active love for the divine who enters into the world for redeeming it. Mankind should win the grace of the lord by their own efforts. While bhakti requires faith and love, in prapatti. We simply surrender ourselves to God, place ourselves in his hands leaving it to him to deal with us as he elects. It perceives genuine piety in the completeness of the surrender rather than in the intensity of the bhakti discipline. According to Periyar bhakti is considered to be individual property. But discipline is the public property. If we have not followed the bhakti nothing is lost, at the same time we have not followed discipline every thing will lost. He gave more importance to discipline than bhakti.\footnote{Periyar Viduthalai, dated: 29.12.1965.}
When we are emptied of our self God takes possession of us. The obstacles to this God-possession are our own virtues pride knowledge our subtle demands and our unconscious assumptions and prejudices. We must empty ourselves of all desires and wait in trust on the *Supreme Being.* The difference between *bhakti* and *prapatti* is symbolized by the *ape way* (Markataki Soranyaya) and the *cat way* (Marjaraki Soranyaya) the young ape clings fast to the mother and is saved. A little effort on the part of the young is called ape way. In cat way, the mother cat, takes her young one in her mouth. The young one does nothing to securities safety. In bhakti the grace of God is earned to an extent, in prapatti it is freely bestowed. Sankara admits that the supreme alone can grant the saving wisdom.

The distinction of *prapatti* and bhakti relates to the issue in Christian thought which is as old as St. Augustine and Pelagius, whether man as a fallen creature is to be saved only by the grace of God or whether he can make something of himself and contribute by his own effort to his salvation. Faith (*sraddha*) is the basis of bhakti. So the gods in whom people have faith are tolerated. Some love is better than none, for if we do not love we become shut-up within ourselves.

So long as worship is done with devotion, it purifies the heart and prepares the mind for the higher consciousness. Every one shapes the god in the likeness of his longing. The nature of god can be higher as the level of our consciousness.
In the lower stages we pray for health, wealth and life. The divine is regarded as the provider of material needs. Later it is meditation where we identify ourselves with the good cause, which is god’s cause. In the highest stages god is the final satisfaction, the other which completes and fulfills the human spirit.

Madusudana defines bhakti as a mental stage in which the mind moved by an ecstasy of love assumes the shape of god when the emotional attachment to god became highly ecstatic, the devout lover forgets himself in God. Prahalada in whom we find the spiritual condition of complete concentration in God expresses his unity with the supreme person. Such self forgetful ecstatic experiences cannot be regarded as supporting Advaita metaphysics. In aparoksanubhava or the ultimate stage in which the individual (as such does) is absorbed in the Absolute the separate individual as such does not survive.

Bhakti leads to jnana or wisdom. For Ramanuja it is Smritisantana. Even prapatti is a form of jnana. When the devotion glows the lord dwelling in the soul imparts to the devotee by his grace the light of wisdom. The devotee feels united intimately with the supreme who is experienced as the being in whom all antithesis vanish. He sees god in himself and himself in God. For the devotee, the higher freedom is in surrender to God. Participation in Gods work (Iraippani) for the world is the duty of all, when we truly surrender’s to the divine. God becomes the ruling passion of his mind, and whatever the devotee does he does for the glory of god. Bhakti is an
utter self giving to the transcendent. It is to believe in Lord, to love him, to be devoted him to enter into him. It is its own reward. Such a devotee has in him. The content of the highest knowledge as well as the energy of the perfect man.\textsuperscript{120}

However the bhakti movement or neo-Hindu movement was a mass movement, secular in character, popularized by all sections of population. It refers as Sanskritic-Brahminical-Hindu religo-culture is highly biased to the core.\textsuperscript{121} The Alvars and Nayanmar were the prime movers of this cult that swept across the Tamil plains during the 6\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} centuries AD. The aim of the bhakti movement was to eliminate the non-Hindu sects like Jainism, Buddhism from the Tamil country and to revive the spirit of Hinduism. It had an electric effect throughout the Tamilaham. It created awareness among the people and helped restoration of Hindu faith. Saiva and Vaisnava movements were presented to the Tamil people as Tamil religions.

**Proponents of Bhakti Movement** (for details see Appendix No: 2)

**Nayanmar (devotee)**

Nayanar is singular and Nayanmar plural. Nayanmar stands for a slave of the Lord. They were god-intoxicated persons, deeply immersed in love for Siva. The *Tiruttontartokai* (part of 7\textsuperscript{th} *Tirumurai*, the Tevaram of Cuntarar) gives the earliest list of the


Nayanmar, traditionally believed to be 63. Cuntarar gives a list of 71 of them. Nampiyantar Nampi’s (10\(^{th}\) - 11\(^{th}\) century) *Tiruttontar-Tiruvantati* presents another account. Cekkilar in his Tirutontar or *Periya Puranam* elaborates the hagiologies. All the 71 did not belong to the intellectual community. There were Brahmanas, saints (Tirumular), kings, queens, landlords, merchants and dalits. Nanacampantar (brahmana), Navukkaracar (vellala) alias Appar, Cuntaramurti (Adisaiva) and Manikkavacakar (minister) were prominent among them. Kurrivan-Nayanar was a Kalabhara king. Katavarkon-kalarcinkan, Aiyatikal-Katarvarkon and Kunaparan were pallava kings. Meypporul-Nayanar and Naracinka-munai-araiyar were Pallava feudatories. Ninracir-netumaran was a Pandya king. Pukalcolar and Cenkanan were Cola kings. Mankaiyarkkaraci was a Pandya queen, the wife of the traditional Kun Pandya. Karaikkalammaiyar was a she-saint. Therefore, bhakti was a benevolent movement that encompassed the entire fabric of the society and appealed to all from the king to the drumbeater.

The classification of Nayanars has given below:

1. Nayanmars prior to Appar Campantar epoch = 17
2. Contemporaries of Appar Campantar = 11
3. Nayanmars in the mid between Appar-Campantar and Sundarar epoch = 22
4. Contemporaries of Sundarar = 13

Total = 63 \(^{122}\)

The *Tevaram* trio and Manickavacakar present the quiet essential thought of Tamil Saivism whose hymns are muttered with utmost reverence for the past thirteen hundred years by devotees of the faith. S.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says 'Sambandar's artless and moving strains Sundarar's haunting lullabies of Love. Appar's home-spun smiles and images bespeaking ripe wisdom and experience all these fuse into a unity, dazzling like the midday sun and profound as night. Manickavacakar is indeed, in his profound humility and all embracing humanity among the most infallible of our ambassadors of the absolute.\(^{123}\)

Each Nayanar had a *marga* “way” of his own to reach God. *Nanacampantar* (644-660 AD) (one wedded to Wisdom) by birth was ciyali-brahmana. His parents were Siva patha Irudayar and Bagavathy. Supposed to have his mother as a child, his father rested him on the bank of the temple tank at Cirkali and was bathing. The child cried for milk, which was attended by the Mother Goddess herself who is said to have fed the child with her breast milk. Siva appeared on the site and commended him to compose the *Tevaram* hymns. The first song that he sang was *Totutaiyaceviyan*, the first of the 8000 and odd *Tevaram* (1.1.1) hymns. Since he consumed the divine milk of the divine Mother, he was held in high esteem as the son of Siva and Devi. His way of approach to God was *kriyamarga* or *satputramarga* (the son’s path). Mankaiyarkkaraci was a Chola princess given in marriage to the Pandya Kun. He was a Jain to begin

with. The Queen requested Campantar to come over to Madurai and bring the king to the orthodox fold. Campantar, according to the *Tiruvilaiyatar Puranam* is said to have argued with the Jains, performed the *analvatam* (argument by fire) and *punalvatam* (argument by water), and atlast he won the Jains and converted the king to Saivism.\(^{124}\) The myth relating to the persecution of the Jains has no historical justification by way of epigraphical records. However, in the arts of the Maturai region the impalement of Jains on stakes is a popular theme in Vijayanagara-Nayaka art.\(^{125}\) Nanacampantar's several of the hymns pours out his bhakti in eloquent terms. He calls the Lord mother and father.

To quote, *Tayu niye tantaiyu niye*\(^{126}\)

“You are the Mother, you are the Father”.

He looks at the Lord and his mind loves him. To quote,

*Kantu konte yunranaman katalikkinratullam*\(^{127}\)

The Lord is his body, its life and its feelings:

*Utale yiyiraiye yunarve yelile*\(^{128}\)

He collects choicest flowers, showers and worships the Lord. To quote,

*Teniyanra mamalar kontu ninretta*\(^{129}\)

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\(^{124}\) Tiruvilaiyatar Puranam of *Perumparrappuliyar Nambi*, No. 26.

\(^{125}\) Raju Kalidas, *op.cit.*, p.103.

\(^{126}\) *Tevaram* (Tirumurai) 1. (Patikam) 50. (v) 7.

\(^{127}\) *Ibid.*, 1.50.3.

\(^{128}\) *Tevaram* – Tirumurai, 2.156.2.

\(^{129}\) *Ibid.*, 1.3.6
He offers the paste of sandal perfumes and offers worship. To quote, 

Konkalun kamalcantu makirpukaiyun tontarkon

Tankaiyar rolutetta…

He carries water for abhiseka and offers flowers to the Lord:

Nalum puvotu nir cumakkum.

All these are done to keep the Lord in mind: Nencilvai. The Lord’s grace is so powerful that it removes all the hardships and hurdles: itarkalai and that all the sins vanish: pavam Karaiyume.

Navukkaracar (A.D. 575-657) native of Tirumunaipadi holiest among the Nayanmar. He was an elder contemporary of Nanacampantar and lived upto a ripe old age. Even as an octogenarian his love to the Lord was so deep, that he is said to have crawled upon the Himalayas to reach the Abode of Siva. He was to begin with a Jain who contracted an incurable abdominal disease. His sister, Tilakavatiyar, cured it by applying the holy ashes on the stomach and converted him to Saivism; He converted the Jain Mahendravarman I (A.D.600 - 630) Pallava to Saivism. Appar is the author of the 4th-6th Tirumurais. His approach to God is known as carya-marga or dasa-marga. He was a slave of Siva. He calls himself a dog: nayan. He showered 1000 flowers to worship the Lord:

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130 Ibid 1.61.4
131 Ibid., 1.52.3
132 Tevaram., 1.52.1
133 Ibid., 1.52.11.
134 Tevaram, 4.13.1, 6.24.3; all hymns, 6.26.10 all hymns.
‘Ayiram pukkontu arcittar’.  

The ritual worship involved the uttering of several mantras”.  

Tottiram palavuncolli.  

He performed several kinds of Vedic rituals: Panninar marai parpala puvanai.  

He ardently declares that all those days are waste in which the glories of the Lord were not sung: ‘Perumparrappuliyuranai Pecatanalellam piravata nale’.  

Navukkaracar’s faith in Siva was so deep that he felt if one ties him to bounder and throws into the bottomless ocean, it acquires buoyancy, takes him to the shore, and not immerses him in water: Karrunaip-puttiyor katalinir paccinum narrunai yavatu Namaccivayame.  

Here in a bhakta touches the roots of bhakti.  

Cuntarar was a native of Navalur a Brahmin by birth. His parents were Satayanar and Isainaniyar. As a child attracted the attention of the local chieftain. Narasinga munaiyaraiyar, who with the consent of the parents, brought him up. His another name was Aruran. Siva stopped his marriage and redeemed, claiming him to be his bonded slave. Cuntarar considered Siva as his own friend and sent him a herald in his romantic dealings. He was also credited with many miracles and he was the contemporary of Cera ruler, Cheraman Perumal. He was known as Tampirantolan (alter ego of the Nayanar). His approach to God was known as yogamarga or

135 Ibid., 4.49.5  
136 Ibid., 4.56.4  
137 Ibid., 5.133.7  
138 Ibid., 6.2.1.5 all hymns  
139 Tevaram 4.11.1.
sakhamarga. He was the author of the 7th *Tirumurai* that forms the last part of *Tevaram*. He calls himself a dog, nayinen.\textsuperscript{140} His eloquence is torrential:

\begin{verbatim}
Ponnar meniyane pulittolai yaraikkacaiuttuti
Minnar cencataimel milirkonrai yanintavane
Manne mamaniye malapatiyin manikkame
Anneyunai yalla iniyarai ninaikkene\textsuperscript{141}
\end{verbatim}

“Lord, thy mien is golden, you wear the hide of the tiger,
On your shining tiara, thou wear the konrai flowers
You are the earth, you are the great gem,
You are the diamond of Malapati\textsuperscript{142}
My father, I shall not think of anybody else other than you”.

*Manikkavacakar* is fourth among the greatest Nayanmar. He hailed from Tiruvatavur, a hamlet near Maturai and was a minister to a Pandya king, probably Varaguna Pandya II (AD 862-885). He was said to have performed many miracles. He was commissioned to buy horses for the royal army. He spent all the money in building a temple and returned empty handed. He informed the king that the horses will arrive soon and make the foxes (*nari*) into horses (*pari*). He was said to have debated with Buddhists from Ceylon at Citambaram and to have utterly vanquished them.

\textsuperscript{140} *Tevaram*, 7.100.1.
\textsuperscript{141} *Tevaram* 7.24.1.
\textsuperscript{142} *Idem.*
His contribution to the saivite corpus is the 8th *Tirumurai*. It consists of the Tiruvacakam and Tirukkovaiyar. The Tiruvacakam is the epitome of the philosophic mysticism of Tamil Saivism. It comprises 51 decades totaling 656 verses. The melody of his hymns are appraised, it is said *Tiruvacakattirkurukar oru Vacakattukkum urukar* ‘Those who do not melt for the *Tiruvacakam* will not melt for any other Vacakam (Statement). Because of its virtue, it is translated into English by G.U.Pope, a Christian father.\(^{143}\) His another work is *Tiruchitrambalakkovai*. His approach to god is called sanmarga.

The *Tirumandiram* of Tirumular enunciates the Saiva siddhanta doctrine of *Pati-Pasu-Pasa* in 3000 mantras.

The hymns of Cambantan, Appar and Sundarar form a varied treasure house of religious experience which tells of mystical raptures and ecstasies of moments of light. When there is a vision of God and the world is transfigured in the light of his love and of periods of gloom when all is dark and the blind seeker is filled with a sense of fear. Somewhat different and more exuberant are the outpourings of Manikkavacakar, whose confessions are more outspoken and whose devotion is more impassioned of the twelve *Tirumurais*, some of them were been controversialists and had no soft word for Buddhists and Jains.

The Saiva canon, in which these hymns found a place, was arranged in the first instance in the reign of Rajaraja I (AD 985-1014)

by Nambi Andar Nambi and continuously added to till about the middle of the 12th century AD.

The entire Saiva canon was edited/compiled by Nambiandar Nambi into 12 Tirumarais for which the break up details are shown below:

The following table shows the details of Tirumurais.

**Table 3**

**Saiva Canon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Name of the Saint</th>
<th>Age CAD</th>
<th>Saiva Treatise</th>
<th>Portion Tirumurai</th>
<th>No. of Prapandams</th>
<th>Verses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gnanacampantar</td>
<td>7th CAD</td>
<td>Tirukkaikkappur (Palya Tevaram / Viruthapiya Tevaram)</td>
<td>I, II</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>4158</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Navukkaracar</td>
<td>575-656</td>
<td></td>
<td>IV, V, VI</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>3066</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sundarar / Nambiarurar</td>
<td>8th CAD</td>
<td>Tiruppattu / Yuna Tevaram</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1026</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manickavachagar</td>
<td>8th CAD</td>
<td>Tiruvasagam, Tiruchitram balakkovaiyaru</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>658</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tirumaligai Tevar, Kandiradittar, Centanar, Karuvurar, Venattadikal, Tiruvalamuthanar, Purutottaman, Nambikada Nambi &amp; Cetiraiyar</td>
<td>9th CAD</td>
<td>950-957</td>
<td>Tiruvissippa</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10th CAD</td>
<td>Tirupallandu</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10th CAD</td>
<td>11th CAD</td>
<td>Tirupallandu</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tirumular</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Tirumandramalai 10 Works of Prapandalmalai</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>3047</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Karamkalasaiyaiar</td>
<td>5-6 CAD</td>
<td>600-650</td>
<td>Including</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kalladar Asyadikal, Kadavarkon Ceranam Perumal Kabilar, Paranar, Tiruvalayadayaiyar Ham Peruman Adikal, Adira Vadikal Pattinathupillai &amp; Nambiandar Nambi</td>
<td>7th CAD</td>
<td>8th CAD</td>
<td>Including</td>
<td>Mummanickovai</td>
<td>1403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8th CAD</td>
<td>8-9th CAD</td>
<td>Including</td>
<td>Rattaimanimalai</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>9th CAD</td>
<td>9th CAD</td>
<td>Including</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>9th CAD</td>
<td>875-950</td>
<td>Including</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>970-1040</td>
<td>Including</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sekkilar Peruman</td>
<td>12th CAD</td>
<td>Tirudondar Puranam</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4286</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>18348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nambi Andar Nambi, the author who arranged the Saiva canon substantially in the form in which we now find it, was most probably a contemporary of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. It has been said that the inclusion in the canon of Nambi's own poems and those of other writers like Karuvur Devar who was also a contemporary of Nambi, imply a later date for the redaction of the canon. Even in the Nambi's time it was very difficult to collect the hymns completely as may be seen from the hymn on Tiruvidaivayil by Nanasampandar, un-known to the canon and preserved in the inscription and from the legend of the destruction by white ants of the bulk of the palm leaves containing the hymns.\(^\text{145}\)

**Alvars: (one immersed in God ) A.D.500-800**

The revival of Hinduism in the Tamil country was not only due to the efforts of Nayanmar but also to the Vaishnava Alvars. Alvars means one in deep wisdom and immersed in God. They were twelve in numbers. They hailed from different parts of the Tamil country. The Pallavanadu produced the first four Alvars. Ie Poykai Alvar, Buddattalvar, Peyalvar and Tirumalizai Alvar. Pandya nadu produced four Alvars ie Andal, Periyalvar, Maruthakavi Alvar and Nammalvar Chera Nadu produced one ie Kulasekaralvar. Chola Nadu produced three Alvars ie Thondaradippodi Alvar, Tiruppanalvar, and Tirumangai Alvar. They rendered remarkable service to Vaishnavism.

Their works are known as *Nalayira-Divya Prapandam* a sacred book with four thousand stanzas which are divided into four more or

less equal parts. The first thousand stanzas include the work of seven Alvars is called Tirumoli. The second thousand is called Periya Tirumoli. The third part called Iyarppa and the last thousand hymns is called Tiruvaimoli. It advocated nine wise means to attain the kamalapadam of lord Vishnu. They are Sravanam (hear) Kirthanam (sing) samaranam (cherish) Padasevanam (serveat feet) Archanam (ador) Vantanam (prostrate) Dasyam (serve as slaves) Sakhyam (be friend) and Atmanivedanam (total surrender).

Among the Alvars the trio were Poykai Alvar, Budattalvar and Peyalvar belong to the early period. The legend is that one rainy day, they stayed at Tirukoilur Vishnu temple. While they were sleeping, they felt the divine pressure of Lord Visnu on their mortal bodies who commanded them to sing His praise. Only at the instance of lord presence or Dharsan they composed Nalayira Divyaprapandams. Each one have contributed one hundred stanzas in venba metre in praise of Tirumal.146

Mutal - Alvar movare. Ammuvarullum Mutal Alvar Mori Nirvannan147 – (2096). Poigai Alvar feels that visnu is prime among the trio morti. Thirumalizai Alvar was born in a village in Chingleput district. He belongs to a Sudra and contemporary of Pallava king Mahendravarma I he is said to have practiced Jainism, Buddhism and Saivism. Later he married the daughter of Vaishnavite of higher caste.

146 Varadharasan, Mu., Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru, (Tamil), New Delhi, 1994, p.127.
147 Poigai Alvar, Divyaprabandam First Tiruvantati, S.2096.
It paved the way for him to become a Vaishnavite.\footnote{Indian Express, Madurai, July-6, 1997, p.5.} He has written two poems an \textit{Antadi} of 96 \textit{venbas} and Tiruchandaviruttam of 120 verses totally 216 hymns set in a rigid rhythmic pattern. His works are philosophical in content. Some of his verses contain great truths spoken in a very simple lucid language.

\textit{“Nanmuhanai Narayanan Padaittan, Nanmuhanum Thanmuhamaic Cankaranaittan padaittan”} – 2382.\footnote{Divya prapandam, Tirumalizai, Nanmugan Tiruvantati, stanza2382.}

He looks at the lord Visnu as a creator and the creator of Bramma. \textit{Nammalvar} was a Vellala family from Alvar Tirunagari (Kurugur) in Tirunelveli district. He also known as Satharipu, Satakopa Satani, Maran, Kurukkaipiran Vakulabharanan, Tirukkurukur Nambi and Parankusan. He practiced yoga at the age of 35. He was a mystic in excels is one of the greatest of God intoxicated men. His hymns embodied with deepest religious experience and are philosophical in nature. His \textit{Tiruvaimoli} is sub-divided into 10 parts contains of 1102 stanzas. It is one of the most superior composition among the philosophical literature of the world as a \textit{Divya prapanda} and as a Tamil Veda. His contribution to the \textit{prapandam} consists of the whole of the fourth part called \textit{Tiruviruttam} (100 hymns) \textit{Tiruvasiriyam} (7 Hymns) \textit{Periya Tiruvantati} (87 Hymns) and \textit{Tiruvaimoli} (1102 hymns) totally 1296 hymns which form the largest contribution in the \textit{Nalayiram} collection.
“Nalirmaticatayanum Nanmuhakkatavulum
Talir oli Imayavar Talaivanum…..
Emperuman mayanai Allatu oru
Mateivam matru udaiyamo – 2584. 

He extols the praise of Lord Mayon as the superior god to all.

His dear and staunch devotee was Madurakavi Alvar. He was a Brahmin scholar and saint. His whole life was dedicated to Nammalvar. He contributed eleven hymns.

Periyalvar was also known as Vishnu cittar, and Battarpiran. He was a Brahmin of Srivilliputtur in Ramnad district. The legend is that he found the child Andal at the foot of a tree while digging in his garden and taking her to his home and brought up with more care and love. He belonged to the later half of 8th century AD. His most famous song is *Tiruppallandu*, *Periyalvar Tirumoli* and has contributed about 473 hymns to the tradition.

He reputed to have established the greatness of Vishnu at the court of Madurai and received reward from the Pandya king Srimara Srivallaba. (AD 835-862) He converted the Pandya king to Vaishnavism. He has sung the childhood of Srikrishna in his *Periya Tirumoli*. This has given rise to a new kind of literature singing the childhood of any hero or God which is called *Pillaitamil*. He refers

\[150\] Nammalvar, *Divyaprapandam, Tiruvaciriyam*, S. 2584.
the Pandyar ko-Nedumaran proves that he was a contemporary of Nedumaran.\footnote{Govindasamy, M.S., \textit{The Role of feudatories in Pallava History}, Annamalai Nagar, 1965, pp.65-66.}

Andal an adopted daughter of Periyalvar is one of the famous religious saints and poetesses among the religious women of (Srivilliputtur) Tamilnadu. He was the greatest among the women mystics of India. Her contributions to the Tamil literature were \textit{Tiruppavai} 30 hymns and \textit{Nacciyar Tirumoli} 143 hymns \textit{Tiruppavai} of Andal had its origin from a religious observance among the maidens of marriageable age. The verses are sung by the spinsters in the early morning of the Tamil month \textit{Markali} (Dec-Jan) “Markali Tingal Matinirai nannalil” recited in the Vishnu temple every year by Vaishnavites. Her \textit{Tiruppavai} and \textit{Nachiyar Tirumoli} are among the sublimate of world religious literature. The \textit{Tiruppavai} contains an astronomical detail referring to the rise of \textit{Velli} (venus) and fall of \textit{Vyalan} (Jupiter) which gives the date 731 A.D.\footnote{\textit{Andal Tiruppavai}, V.13, "Velli Elluntu Vyalan Urankitru".}

Kulasekara Alvar was a king of Tiruvancore. He renounced the throne and whole heartedly consecrated himself to the service of the divine. His contribution is \textit{Perumal Tirumoli} that consists of 105 hymns and \textit{Mugunda mala} in Sanskrit.

\textit{Tirupanalvar} belongs to 8th c.A.D. was responsible for only ten hymns. He was a member of the untouchable caste i.e. Panar but his devotion of lord Renganatha was so great. He was denied
permission to get into the temple of Srirangam Lord Renganatha ordered the temple priest (Brahmin) Loga Saranga Mamuni to carry Tiruppanalvar on his shoulders to his presence.

“Palarum Kana nin Tolil; Pannalvanai parintetti
Nilavum pathiyai valam ceitu konarka”.\textsuperscript{153}

Herein we traced the earliest reaction against the social evils like untouchability and unapproachability. Tondaradipodiyalvar was originally called as Vipranarayan.

He was redeemed from the bonds of a devadasi by the Lord of Srirangam. He dedicated himself to God and wrote the two hymns ie Tirumalai 45 hymns and Tirupalliuchi 10 hymns addressed to the lord Renganatha.

Tirumangai Alvar a chieftain king, belongs to Alinadu, choladesam, was a kallar by birth. He was the last of the Alvars and seems to have been an adventurous one. He was a prolific poet and a skilful versifier. He contributed 1253 hymns. Among the 108 Divyadesam 86 Divyadesams are made Mangalasasanam by Tirumangaiyalvar.\textsuperscript{154} His songs have much tumult and decorative matter. He resorted robbery to renovate Srirangam temple. He was responsible for the plundering of the gold Buddhist vihar at Nagapattinam.\textsuperscript{155} Lord Vishnu came in person and uttered the eight syllables mantra to the belligerent devotee and converted him into benevolent one.

The hymns of the Alvars and Nayanmars constitute a body of devotional literature revealing the characteristic features of the distinctive devotional philosophy of south India which is regarded as an essential element in Indian religions.\textsuperscript{156}

The \textit{Vaishnava canon}, received its definitive shape at the hands of \textit{Nathamuni}.

Table -4

\textbf{Vaishnava Canon}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Alvar’s Name</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>No.of Hymns</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Poykaialvar</td>
<td>First Tiruvantati</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Budatalvar</td>
<td>Second Tiruvantati</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peyalvar</td>
<td>Third Tiruvantati</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tirumalizaialvar</td>
<td>1. Nanmugan Tiruvantati</td>
<td>96</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Tiruccanta Virutham</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nammalvar</td>
<td>1. Tiruviruttam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Tiruvasiriyam</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Periya Tiruvantati</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Tiruvaimoli</td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>1296</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Madurakavialvar</td>
<td>Kanninu sirutambu</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Kulasekaralvar</td>
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<td>Periyalvar</td>
<td>Periyalvar Tirumoli</td>
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<td>Andal</td>
<td>Tiruppavai</td>
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<td>Nachiyar Tirumoli</td>
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<td>Tondaradippodialvar</td>
<td>Tirumalai</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thirupalliuchi</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Tiruppanalvar</td>
<td>Amalanadipiran</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Tirumangaialvar</td>
<td>1. Periya Tirumoli</td>
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<td>2. Tirukkurundakam</td>
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<td>3. Tiruneduntandakam</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Tiruudukkurirukkai</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Ciriya Tirumadal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6. Periya Tirumadal</td>
<td>78</td>
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</table>

\textbf{Total}\textsuperscript{157} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{3892}


\textsuperscript{157} Kandasamy, \textit{Op-cit.} Pp. 2-5
The total is not exactly 4000. But is by traditionally so called of these collections the first thousand Hymns is called *Tirumoli*, the second 1000 Hymns is called “*Periya Tirumoli*” the third thousand *Iy-arppa* and the fourth thousand is *Tiruvaimoli*. The Vaishava hymns relating to Lord Krishna are erotic in nature. The longing of the soul for God is symbolically represented by yearning of the mistress for her lover.\(^{158}\)

The history of Vaisnava hymnology in the period was quite similar to saiva hymnology. Tradition confers upon Nathamuni the honour of having done for vaisnava lyrics what Nambi Andar nambi achieved for the Saiva ones. If Srinada who seems to be mentioned in the Anbil plates may be taken to be the same as the Vaisnava saint Nathamuni. His age would be the end of the 9th c.A.D and the beginning of tenth centuries A.D. and this accords well with other testimony we have, meagre as it is on the subject. He was the first of the great succession of *Acharyas*, who carried forward and completed the work started by Alvars of an earlier time. He went to Kurugur, the birth place of Nammalvar, in the hope of discovering the whole collection there. Finally Nammalvar and Madurakavi appeared before Nathamuni and imparted to him the knowledge of four *prabandhas* with their full import. There after he stayed at Kurugur meditating upon the *prabandhas* until he was summoned by Viranarayana krishna, the god of his native place to go back to

Viranarayana Krishna, the God of his native place to go back to Viranarayanapuram, where he collected a band of disciples round himself and made them sing these hymns to divine tune.¹⁵⁹

Another important aspect of the same revival is seen in the work of Kumarila and sankara. They were smart as (traditionalists). Who laboured in the cause not of any one sect in particular but of the ancient brahminical religion as it had been developed through the centuries. He elucidated the philosophy of ritualism (mimamsa) in all its aspects.

Sankara, (AD 788-820) the greater thinker was born in 788. he is taken to be a Nambudiri Brahmin from Kaladi, in Travancore. Govindayogi, a pupil of Gaudapada, is as hia guru. He traveled all over India propagating his new philosophy of a rigorously consistent monism and triumphing against all rivals who met his in debate. He reorganized the ascetic order of Hinduism on the model of Buddhist order, and founded a number of mathas in different parts of India and Tamilnadu eg: Sringeri, Dvarka, Batrinath, Puri and Kanci.

Yamunacariya the grandson of Natamuni was the next great name in the succession of Vaishnava Acaryas of the Period. The greatest of the Vaisnava acaryas was Ramanuja, born at Sriperumpudur near madras in the 11th C.A.D. He had his early philosophical training under Yadavaprakasa of Kanci. Who belonged to the school of Sankara.

Apart from the work of Nayanars and Alvars, Meykandar a Vellala saint of Tiruvengadu, expounded the theory of Saiva Siddhanta is a consistent manner during the early decades of 13\textsuperscript{th} C.A.D. His treatise Sivagnana Botham presents the first systematic form of the theology of Tamil Saivism. Pugalendi 9\textsuperscript{th} C.A.D, the author of Nalavenba, explains the story of Nalamaharaja; the erotic Jivakacintamani by Tiruttakkatevar a Jain ascetic (10\textsuperscript{th} C.A.D) Kambar’s Ramayana at the end of the 11\textsuperscript{th} C.A.D. Jayankondar’s Kalinkattuparani a brilliant description of the Chola conquest of Kalinga (early 12\textsuperscript{th} C.A.D and later Villiputturar adoption of the \textit{Mahabharatha} etc. Thus this age is wittiness as the age of literary religious revolutionary age. The stream of Lyrics and narrative verse continued to flow and flourished the land of religious history.

**Contributions of Bhakti Movement**

The Bhakti inculcated by the Alvars and Nayanmars had a tremendous effect on the changing face of Tamil society. Heterodox sect like Jainism and Buddhism were facing doom and ultimate extinction. Saivism and Vaisnavism came to stand on a strong foundation. It was a mass movement in which the whole society irrespective of caste and creed participated, kings, chieftains, brahmanas, peasants, shepherds potters, weavers, hunters, \textit{panchamas} etc. contributed their share for the propagation of Bakti Tamil literature flourished to an extent unknown in history. Tamilagam gets an immortal place in the history of India as the birth place of Bhakti cult.
Sankara, Ramanuja and Madva, hailed from the southern country are the founders of the three main systems of Vedanta. Saiva siddhanta another prominent philosophical system has its exponents in the Tamil country. The Vedas were commented on more than once in this part of the country and the constant study of the ritual manuals of the different Vedic schools was kept up. This great wave of religious movement with great enthusiasm attained its peak in the early seventh century and their divine literary works reached its zenith. The divine work during this period came to be treated as equal as to _veda_ and were collected and arranged in canonical books. The Saiva canons in which these hymns also found a place and were arranged in the first instance in the reign of the Chola ruler Rajaraja I, by Nambiandar Nambi.

The Vaishnava canon received its definitive shape at the hands of Nathamuni. In his work he expressed the clear need he felt for the support and guidance of a living god and pointed the way to philosophical justification of the path of love.

Another important and popular aspect of the same revival is seen in the work of Kumarila and Sankara. They were _smartas_ (traditionalistic) who laboured in the cause not of any one sect in particular but of the ancient brahminical religion as it had been developed through the centuries. They held up as the religious ideal a youth occupied with ritual observances followed by an old age given up to philosophic contemplation. Kumarila frequently attacks
Buddhists in his works and tradition asserts that he did much to discredit them in the course of his many scholarly journeys. He elucidated the philosophy of ritualism (*mimamsa*) in all its aspects.

Sankarar (AD 788-820) was the great thinker few details of his life are very well attested, but he is generally taken to be a Nambudiri Brahmin from Kaladi on the banks of the Alwayes river in North Travancore where he was born in 788. He lost his father early in life and turned ascetic with Govinda Yogi, a pupil of Gaudapada as his guru. In a short life he traveled all over India propagating his new philosophy *Advaida* of a rigorously consistent monism and triumphing against all rivals who met him in debate. He reorganized the ascetic order of Hinduism on the model of the Buddhist order and founded a number of *mathas* in different parts of India. The best known being those at Sringeri, Dvaraka, Badrinath, Puri and Kanci. His philosophy (*Nirguna Brahmmam*) which traces all apparent multiplicity and difference to illusion (Maya) is indeed derived from the Upanishads. But clearly owes much in detail to Mahayanist speculation, nevertheless, he regarded Buddhism as Hinduism’s chief enemy.

One of his pupil Siva soma, was spreading his doctrine in distant countries like Kamboja across the seas not without justice. It has been said that Sankara would have a higher place among the famous names of the world had not his respect for tradition prevented him from asserting the originality which he undoubtedly possessed.
Nathamuni’s grandson was Alavandar or Yamunacharya. In his early years he wants to become a man of the worldly life, but his Guru Nathamuni called him to the higher life. He then turned ascetic and led a life of religious teacher. Gathering disciples round him and preaching, writing and conducting debates. In his writings he often cited by Ramanuja, he sought to establish the real existence of the supreme soul and the eternal independence of the individual soul.

The greatest of the Vaishnava Acharya was undoubtedly Ramanuja. He was born at Sriperumbudur near Madras in the first quarter of the eleventh century AD. He had his early philosophical training under Yadava Prakasa of Kancipuram, who belonged to the school of Sankara. Yamunacarya (Alavandar) once met Ramanuja at Kanchi. Then he disagreed with the teaching of his guru and was strongly attracted by those of the Srirangam School. He succeeded Yamunacarya as a head of the matha at Srirangam; which gave him control over the temple and the school and held a position of authority in the sect; he soon proved his mettle as a teacher and organizer and his influence grew day by day. In his lectures and writings he refuted the mayavata of Sankara demonstrated that the upanishads did not teach a strict monism and built up the philosophy of *visishtadvaita*. Which reconciled devotion to a personal god with the philosophy of the Vedanta by affirming that the soul, though of the same substance as god and emitted from him rather than created can obtain bliss not in absorption but in existence near him. He attempted to unify the sect by a reform of temple ritual where ever possible. Though he respected
the rule that none but the twice born may read the Veda; he was
eager, like Alvars to spread the doctrine of bhakti among Sudras and
even among the outcastes. He arranged that in certain important
temples the outcastes should have the privilege of entering the temple
on one-day in the year. He traveled throughout India to propagate his
ideas and these journeys may well account for the wide influence of
the sect in Northern India. He died in 1137 He is worshiped as an
avatar in all Vaishnava temples.

A younger contemporary of Ramanuja was Nimbarka, a
Bhagavata Telugu Brahmin from Nimbapura in Bellary district who
spent his time in Brindavan. In religion he accepted the doctrine of
surrender (prapatti) and translated it into a total devotion to Krishna
and Radha. Philosophically he accepted the position that the god the
soul and the world were identical yet distinct the position described as
bheda-bheda. He became the founder of a new sect allied to
Ramunaja. He expounded his views in a commentary on the Vedanta
sutras and in another work called *Siddhanta Ratna* or *Dasasloki*.160

The philosophic debate which as against Sankara laid
increasing stress upon the reality of the world and the soul in
distinction from Brahman ended in complete pluralism in the system
of Madva, Born shortly before 1200 in a Brahmin family at
Kalyanapuram, south Kanara district. He became a *sanyasi* while he
was young and had his training in the system of Sankara. He broke it

160 K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, Oxford University Press,
and evolved his own philosophy *Dhvaïda;* mainly based on the Bhagavatapurana. He published his commentary on Vedanta sutras. He built a temple to Krishna at Udupi and disappeared as he sat teaching at the age of ninety six.

He claimed to be an incarnation of *Vayu.* He taught that universe is ruled by God as two persons-Vishnu and Lakshmi. He recognized different orders of souls. The centre of his religion is bhakti to Krishna as taught in the Bhagavata, Radha having no place in it but all other avatars are revered Siva is worshiped and the five gods are recognized.¹⁶¹

Besides the collection and conservation of sacred literature, the new life in religion manifested itself in the erection of stone temples, great and small in all the holy places hallowed by association with the lives of the alvars and nayanmars of the earlier age. As a religious institution the Tamilnadu temples reaches back to a remote antiquity and existence of numerous temples of Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain deities is fully attested by the Sangam literature.

The recitation in the temples of the sacred hymns in Tamil emphasises the rank assigned to them by the side of the Sanskritic Vedas, both by the Saivas and Vaisnavas.

The practice of reciting these hymns in temples had come into vogue long before the time of Rajaraja Chola. In the reign of the

Pallava Vijayanandi Vikramavarman, reciters of the *Tirupadiyam* are enumerated in a list of persons employed in the service of a temple at Tiruvallam.\textsuperscript{162}

At Lalgudi and Attur in the Tiruchinopoly district are found inscriptions of the reign of Parantaka I, providing for Brahmanas singing the *Tirupadiyam* during the daily service in the temples. The inference is clear that the hymns had attained the status of divine literature. From the reign of Parantaka I, there is a regular series of endowments recorded in epigraphs of the Cola and Tondainadu for the recitation of these divine hymns in temples in the accompaniment of musical instruments.\textsuperscript{163}

No doubt the 6\textsuperscript{th} century AD abled the beginning of a new wave of classical civilization is the history of Tamils. We come across dark ages followed by the bright pages such as the Renaissance in Europe. It was also the age of religious mysticism flourishing under the serene atmosphere created by the saints poets. The Tamil hymns came to be treated as equal to the Veda and were collected and arranged in canonical books. Gradually they were regularly employed in the daily worship in temples, and their authors came to be regularly worshipped as manifestation of divinity. In fact the rise of the temple to an important place in the religious and social life of the land was the direct result of the revivalist movement.


\textsuperscript{163} K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, *op.cit.*, p.637.