

= Anbe Sivam =

Anbe Sivam (English : Love Is God) is a 2003 Indian Tamil @-@ language comedy @-@ drama film directed and co @-@ produced by Sundar C. The film 's story and screenplay were written by Kamal Haasan , and the dialogues were provided by Madhan . Anbe Sivam features Haasan , R. Madhavan and Kiran Rathod in the lead roles , with Nassar , Santhana Bharathi , Seema and Uma Riyaz Khan playing supporting characters .

Inspired by the 1987 road film Planes , Trains and Automobiles , the film tells the story of an unexpected journey from Bhubaneswar to Chennai undertaken by two men of contrasting personalities , Nallasivam (Haasan) and Anbarasu (Madhavan) . The musical score was composed by Vidyasagar . Arthur A. Wilson and M. Prabhakaran undertook responsibility for cinematography and art direction , respectively .

Produced on a budget of ? 120 million , Anbe Sivam takes on several themes , including communism , atheism , and altruism , and depicts Haasan 's views as a humanist . The film was screened as part of the Indian Panorama section of the International Film Festival of India in 2003 . At the 51st Filmfare Awards South , it received a Special Jury Award and received nominations in the Best Film and Best Actor (Haasan) categories . Madhavan was awarded Best Actor at the 2003 Tamil Nadu State Film Awards . The film was released on 15 January 2003 to positive reviews from critics , but it underperformed at the box office . However , it is now regarded as a classic and a cult film in Tamil cinema .

= = Plot = =

Two men waiting for a flight to Chennai at the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar engage in conversation . One is an advertisement filmmaker , Anbarasu (R. Madhavan) , who prefers the abbreviated name " A. Aras " , and the other is a scarred , deformed but witty socialist , Nallasivam , alias " Nalla " (Kamal Haasan) . When the flight is cancelled due to heavy rain , Aras suspects Nalla is a terrorist and informs the authorities , only to discover that he was mistaken . When the entire city becomes flooded , the two men find themselves forced to share a room for the night . Both need to return to Chennai : Aras to be present at his wedding , and Nalla so he can deliver a ? 300 @,@ 000 cheque , recently awarded to him after he won a court case , to a group of union workers . After a traumatic night , and no hope for a flight , the two men take a bus to board the Coromandel Express train . Aras ' bag gets stolen on the way leaving him with only his credit card , which no @-@ one accepts . Using his presence of mind , Nalla repeatedly bails Aras out of trouble while Aras tries escaping from him at every juncture , only to end up with him again . While waiting for the train at the Ichchapuram railway station , Nalla begins to tell Aras his story .

A few years earlier , a healthy Nalla took part in various street theatre performances protesting against multinational corporation @-@ driven industrialisation , that resulted in the marginalisation of the labour force . He was at odds with Kandasamy Padayatchi (Nassar) , a manipulative factory owner who refused to give his workers a raise . Nalla satirically imitated Padayatchi in many of his shows . However , in an unexpected turn of events , Nalla and Padayatchi 's daughter Balasaraswathi , called Bala (Kiran Rathod) , fell in love with each other . Realising their chances of getting together would be slim if Padayatchi knew about their relationship , Nalla and Bala decided to elope to Kerala . Nalla boarded a bus bound for Kerala , and on his way to meet Bala , the bus crashed on a hillside leaving him scarred , disfigured , and partially paralysed for life . After recovering from his wounds , he visited Bala only to be informed by Padayatchi that his daughter was already married and has settled abroad . Padayatchi had earlier lied to Bala that Nalla died in the accident . It was also at this time that Nalla became a firm believer in kindness and love . Despite suffering from an inferiority complex due to his scarred and deformed body , Nalla performs community service and social work with renewed fervour while continuing to fight for union causes .

Upon their arrival at Chennai , Aras delivers Nalla 's cheque to the union workers . He invites Nalla to his wedding , where , to his utter astonishment , Nalla sees that Aras 's bride is Bala . Padayatchi spots Nalla and asks him what he is doing there , to which Nalla replies that he was invited by Aras

to the wedding . Nalla then persuades Padayatchi to sign the papers which will help the workers obtain a raise . To prevent disruption at the wedding and avoid damaging his reputation , Padayatchi yields to Nalla 's demands . After signing the papers , Padayatchi instructs his assistant (Santhana Bharathi) to eliminate Nalla . Padayatchi 's assistant , however , has a change of heart as he is about to kill Nalla . Padayatchi 's assistant believes that the wrongful deeds he committed for Padayatchi resulted in the death of the assistant 's daughter . Padayatchi 's assistant requests Nalla to leave the city and stay as far away from Padayatchi as possible ; Nalla assents and walks away .

= = Cast = =

Kamal Haasan as Nallasivam alias Nalla
R. Madhavan as Anbarasu alias A. Aras
Kiran Rathod as Balasaraswathi
Nassar as Kandasamy Padayatchi
Santhana Bharathi as Kandasamy 's assistant
Seema as Balasaraswathi 's mother
Yugi Sethu as Uthaman
Uma Riyaz Khan as Mehrunissa
Sujatha Narayanan as a tea shop owner who helps Nallasivam .
Balu Anand as the train ticket checker for the Coromandel Express
R. S. Sivaji as a railway guard

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

After completing a draft of the film 's script in early 2002 , Kamal Haasan approached the Malayalam filmmaker Priyadarshan to direct the film . The two men were keen to work together since the late 1990s , and upon reading the script , Priyadarshan believed that it had the potential to be an " emotional love story " . The film 's title was derived from the Shaivite saint Tirumular 's poem Tirumantiram .

In June 2002 , Priyadarshan opted out of the project . Regarding the director 's exit , Haasan said Priyadarshan wanted to collaborate with the director on a bigger project than Anbe Sivam . He was replaced by Sundar C. , who agreed to produce the film as well . Anbe Sivam was co @-@ produced and distributed by Swaminathan , K. Muralitharan and G. Venugopal under the production banner of Lakshmi Movie Makers . In a 2008 interview with The Times of India , Sundar C. stated that Anbe Sivam " changed [him] personally and professionally " , making him a more confident person and changing his outlook towards life .

= = = Cast and crew = = =

R. Madhavan was selected to play the film 's second lead in January 2002 . According to Kiran Rathod , she received a phone call from Haasan 's office informing her that she was offered the role of Balasaraswathi , which she accepted . Rathod 's voice in the film was dubbed by the singer Anuradha Sriram . Uma Riyaz Khan played the role of Haasan 's friend and professional colleague , Mehrunissa . In an interview with Deccan Chronicle in 2013 , Uma Riyaz Khan described her role in the film as " her magnum opus " .

[Haasan] came over to me and said , ' Madhavan , I have seen some of your work and they were good . ' [...] Then he continued , ' I have something for you . We should catch up ! ' [...] that was how Anbe Sivam happened .

The actors Nassar and Santhana Bharathi played the roles of Kandasamy Padaiyatchi and his assistant , respectively , while cartoonist Madhan featured in a cameo appearance as himself in

addition to writing the film 's dialogues . In an interview with S. R. Ashok Kumar of The Hindu in 2006 , Bharathi considered both Anbe Sivam and Michael Madana Kama Rajan (1990) to be the most favourite roles of his career . Arthur A. Wilson , M. Prabhakaran and P. Sai Suresh handled the film 's cinematography , art direction and editing , respectively . Brinda , Chinni Prakash and Dinesh Kumar were in charge of the choreography while the stunt sequences were co -@-@ ordinated by Vikram Dharma . Muthulakshmi Varadhan , Bharathi 's sister @-@ in @-@ law , worked as an assistant editor in the film .

The make @-@ up for Haasan 's scars was designed by Michael Westmore and Anil Premkarikar . The make @-@ up process was completed in Los Angeles in April 2002 after Haasan filmed the song sequences for Panchathanthiram (2002) . When Haasan was en @-@ route to Los Angeles from Toronto , he was detained by the authorities at the Toronto Pearson International Airport , who suspected him of being a terrorist because of his surname , which he described as sounding " very Islamic " . Haasan was left stranded at the airport until the authorities from the American Embassy at Toronto intervened and resolved the issue .

= = = Filming = = =

Principal photography for Anbe Sivam commenced in July 2002 . The first scene featuring the lead actors was shot at Pollachi Junction railway station . Haasan and Madhavan interacted closely during the initial stages of the shoot to ensure that the on @-@ screen chemistry between the pair was apparent .

Anbe Sivam was shot on a restricted budget of ? 120 million , with the train and bus disaster sequences involving the use of settings and CGI . According to R. Madhavan , the team also shot in relatively empty locations . The flood scenes set in Odisha were re @-@ created with outdoor sets consisting of city roads submerged under water erected in the Odisha @-@ Andhra Pradesh border . Filming also took place in Chennai , Visakhapatnam and on the Tamil Nadu @-@ Karnataka border . Post @-@ filming , Haasan revealed to film critic and journalist Subhash K. Jha that he was impressed with Madhavan 's enthusiasm and performance during the making of the film , subsequently signing him to appear in his production venture , Nala Damayanthi (2003) .

= = Themes and influences = =

Anbe Sivam follows the events of a journey from Bhubaneswar to Chennai undertaken by two men of contrasting personalities , Nallasivam (Haasan) , a physically challenged and witty socialist , and Anbarasu (Madhavan) , an arrogant advertising filmmaker who supports capitalism and globalisation . Due to unforeseen circumstances , the two are forced to undertake the journey together . During the journey , a series of themes pertaining to communism , compassion , globalisation , atheism , and altruism are addressed ; the film also shows Haasan 's views as a humanist . According to Kalyanaraman M of The Times of India , Anbe Sivam proposes that when faced with death , a man may make a morally superior choice . By making that choice in the form of humanism against capitalism and globalisation , Haasan indicates that man 's transformation into God occurs through the belief that " Siva is love " .

According to Haasan , the characterisation of Nallasivam was inspired by the life of Communist playwright , actor , director , lyricist and theorist Safdar Hashmi , who was chiefly associated with his work with street theatre in India . Hashmi died on 2 January 1989 after being attacked by members of the Indian National Congress while staging a play , Halla Bol . S. Anand of Outlook magazine notes that Haasan 's views on humanism in the film were also inspired by those of Charlie Chaplin . M. Kalyanaraman and Abdullah Nurullah of The Times of India opined that Nallasivam was " akin to " street theatre artist Pralayan .

The film critic Baradwaj Rangan , in his review of another Haasan film , Vishwaroopam (2013) , found the ethnicity of the characters in the film to be a continuation of Haasan 's inclusion of non @-@ Tamil characters in his films . Rangan considered this to be Haasan 's acknowledgement of the " interconnectedness of the nation " and " the world beyond India " . He pointed out in his article

that Haasan had experimented with the concept before by including the usage of Bengali language and meeting Bengalis in Mahanadi (1994) , a Telugu @-@ speaking love interest in Nammavar (1994) , marrying a Bengali woman in Hey Ram (2000) , conducting investigations with an American associate in Vettaiyaadu Vilaiyaadu (2006) , and marriage to a Frenchwoman in Manmadan Ambu (2010) . Rangan notes that in Anbe Sivam , the inclusion of and interaction with the Odia people was another example of including non @-@ Tamil characters in his films . Rangan also compared Haasan 's fight sequence with the use of an umbrella to the way he used a book and stool in Thoongadhey Thambi Thoongadhey (1983) .

The basic plot of Anbe Sivam bears resemblance to the 1987 road film , Planes , Trains and Automobiles directed by John Hughes , which starred Steve Martin and John Candy in the lead roles . Haasan and Madhavan reprise the roles played by Candy and Martin in that film , respectively . The portrait painted by Nallasivam on the walls of Kandasamy Padayatchi 's house is inspired by the Mexican painter Diego Rivera 's fresco , Man at the Crossroads . The painting shows Nallasivam posing as Padayatchi 's deity Lord Shiva , the number 910 indicating the salary Padayatchi pays to his factory 's workers , and the communism symbol . Srinivasa Ramanujam , writing for The Times of India in 2008 , noted that the religious undertone in the film was similar to that of Rajinikanth 's Baba (2002) .

= = Music = =

The soundtrack album and background score for Anbe Sivam were composed by Vidyasagar , and the lyrics for the songs were written by Vairamuthu and P. Vijay . After composing the tune for the title song , Vidyasagar explained the situation of the song to Haasan , who wanted the song to be sung in such a way that the protagonist is singing according to the situation he finds himself in . Vidyasagar suggested that Haasan should sing the song himself to achieve the desired result , which Haasan accepted . The song " Mouname Paarvayai " was not included in the film . The song " Poovaasam " is based on the Shuddh Sarang raga . The male portions for the reprise of " Poovaasam " were sung by Sriram Parthasarathy , while the original version was sung by Vijay Prakash . Sadhana Sargam sang her portion of both versions of the song .

Malathi Rangarajan of The Hindu wrote , " Vidyasagar is scaling great heights as a composer . The theme song and the melodious " Pon Vaasam " [sic] are pointers . Vairamuthu 's lyrics deserve special mention here . " Singer Charulatha Mani , in her column for The Hindu , " A Raga 's Journey " , noted , " Poovaasam " possessed " a charm that is born out of classicism incorporated in a populist piece " . Arkay of Rediff.com found the songs to be " at best , okay " . M. Suganth of The Times of India , in his review for the music album , " Lovers Special ? Vol . 2 @-@ 4 " , included " Poovaasam " among the " Hot Picks " of the album .

= = Release = =

According to S. R. Ashok Kumar of The Hindu , the producers were so confident that Anbe Sivam would be a strong competitor at the 50th National Film Awards that they had the film reviewed by the Central Board of Film Certification , which cleared it with a " U " certificate , before the end of 2002 so that they could enter the film into the 2002 awards list . The film 's release coincided with the Thai Pongal festival and opened alongside five other films , including Vikram 's Dhool , Vijaykanth 's Chokka Thangam , and the Vijay starrer Vaseegara .

Anbe Sivam was screened as a part of the Indian Panorama section of the International Film Festival of India in 2003 . As a tribute to Safdar Hashmi , a special preview of the film was organised by Haasan in association with Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT) on 9 January 2003 at Siri Fort Auditorium . The film was dubbed into Telugu as Sathyame Sivam and released on 28 February 2003 . It was dubbed into Hindi as Shivam two years later in 2005 . After the release of the original Tamil version , the dubbing rights for the Hindi version were sold at a low price , much to the irritation of the lead actors as they were not able to dub for themselves in Hindi .

== Critical response ==

A reviewer for the Tamil magazine Ananda Vikatan expressed appreciation for the film , mentioning that it deserved respect for the subject it had chosen and that the film was " like an oxygen cylinder to Tamil cinema " . Baradwaj Rangan described the film as " Kamal 's latest solo attempt to bend , twist , shape @-@ shift Tamil cinema into forms never @-@ before seen . " Malathi Rangarajan of The Hindu believed that " well @-@ defined characters , a strong storyline and intelligent screenplay " were the film 's " vital ingredients " . She further noted Haasan 's treatment of the story , and that his " diligence that has gone into the chiselling of the story and screenplay is only too evident " , while calling the film " a laudable effort " .

P. Devarajan of Business Line praised Haasan 's performance and facial expressions and concluded his review by stating , " This man has intrigued me and will always . " In his review of the film 's DVD , M. Suganth , writing for The Times of India , called it " one of the finest movies of the decade " and praised the story , screenplay and dialogues before concluding his review by terming the film as " a modern classic " .

Reviewing the Telugu version , Sathyame Sivam , Jeevi of Idlebrain.com said that " this art @-@ kind @-@ of film does entertain the people who love Kamal Hassan flicks " while concluding that it " would remain as one of the good films made in the recent times " . Another critic from The Hindu , Gudipoodi Srihari , appreciated the pair of Haasan and Madhavan , noting that the duo " make a fine combination of pals each with different mental make up , but goodness overflowing . " A reviewer from Sify , in comparison , labelled the film as " average " , stating that it was " another predictable and corny film which is neither a comedy caper nor a class act . " Similarly , Arkay of Rediff.com praised the performances of the lead cast but wrote the film " tries to do too many things , and ends up failing at most , if not all , of them . "

Additionally , the film has been criticised for carrying much anti @-@ Hindu bias with a pro @-@ Christian tilt .

== Box office ==

During the first week of its theatrical run , an analysis by Sudhish Kamath of The Hindu showed the film to have grossed ? 13 @.@ 1 million in Chennai alone . Despite this , the film underperformed at the box office and incurred heavy losses for Lakshmi Movie Makers , effectively stopping them from investing in other ventures for the year 2003 . An estimate by D. Govardan of The Economic Times places the losses at ? 65 million , while Arun Ram of India Today states the losses incurred to be ? 50 million . Srinivasa Ramanujam of The Times of India compared the film 's failure at the box office to that of Baba . Both K. Muralitharan and Haasan defended the film 's failure by blaming video piracy , with the latter stating that " lots of people saw it , but they didn 't pay " . Sundar C. revealed that due to the failure of Anbe Sivam , he did not have any chance to direct further films , his bank accounts were blocked , and he remained unpaid for his work .

== Accolades ==

== Legacy ==

Following its release , Anbe Sivam has attained cult status in Tamil cinema and receives re @-@ runs on television channels . Baradwaj Rangan wrote that Anbe Sivam was " leagues ahead of the average Tamil ? why , even Indian ? film " , though he felt that " the masses were unwilling to accept the experimental nature of the film " , while talking about the film 's box office failure . During his acceptance speech after winning the Vijay Award for Best Director in 2010 for Naan Kadavul (2009) , director Bala revealed that a scene in Anbe Sivam where Kamal Haasan says to Madhavan , " when we love others unconditionally without any expectation , we become Gods " , inspired him to make his film . Bala also made a reference to Anbe Sivam in his 2003 film , Pithamagan , in a scene

where Suriya 's character goes for a screening of the film with his friends .

In 2008 S. R. Ashok Kumar of The Hindu listed Anbe Sivam among the " top five directorial ventures of Sundar C. " In 2013 Haricharan Pudipeddi of the Indo @-@ Asian News Service agency , included Anbe Sivam in his list of " Kamal 's most underrated films " . He believed the reason for the film 's commercial failure was that audiences misunderstood the " sarcastic undertones associated with atheism " . On Haasan 's birthday , 7 November 2015 , Latha Srinivasan of Daily News and Analysis considered Anbe Sivam to be one of the " films you must watch to grasp the breadth of Kamal Haasan 's repertoire " . The character of Nallasivam was ranked fourth in The Times of India 's list of " Kamal Haasan 's top 10 mind @-@ blowing avatars " .

In Vasool Raja MBBS (2004) , Vasool Raja (Kamal Haasan) , while attending a class says " Anbe Venkatachalam " , to which one of his classmates gently asks him , " isn 't it Anbe Sivam ? " . The street theatre sequence featuring Haasan 's character , Nallasivam , and his friends performing to make people aware of the atrocities committed by Nassar 's character , Kanadasamy Padayatchi , was re @-@ created in Tiruchirappalli in 2008 by Pralayan and his troupe from " Chennai Kalai Kuzhu " under the title Nammal Mudiyum . In contrast , Pralayan 's play explored gender inequality and domestic violence instead of unemployment . Kannada actor Vishnuvardhan noted in 2010 that fellow actor Sudeep 's film Just Maath Maathalli (2010) bears resemblance to Anbe Sivam . Hari Narayan , writing for The Hindu in 2014 , mentions in his article on the Indian rationalist and author Narendra Dabholkar that Umesh Shukla 's OMG ? Oh My God ! (2012) was " a toned down version of Anbe Sivam where rationality propels humans to find God in themselves , with flaws , which extols the virtue of becoming as much as that of being " . In 2015 Uthiran of The Hindu in Tamil , mentions in his review of Orange Mittai (2015) that the film 's plot " might remind viewers of Anbe Sivam " .