

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF RAMALINGA SWAMI

By

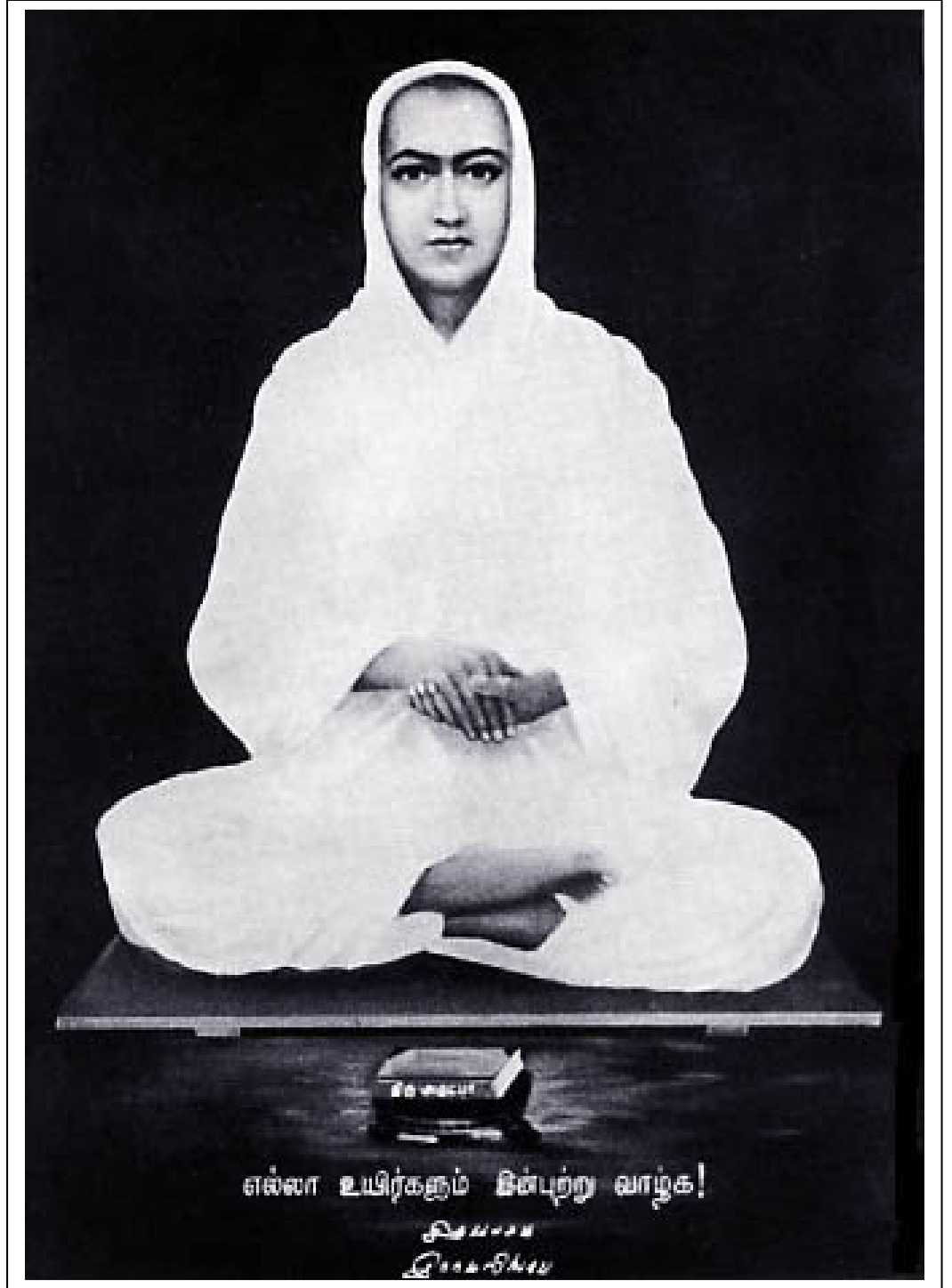
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SAINT RAMALINGA SWAMI

Preface to E - Book Edition

I am very happy to bring this immortal work of Dr.Srinivasan (grandfather) in e-book format. Dr. Srinivasan's motive in translating this book in English from his earlier elaborate version of tamil book (Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam) was to make Ramalinga Swami's philosophy to be known to all the nations and also great thinkers of the world should be aware of the existence of such a philosophy of deathless life. In this digital age of instantaneous accessibility of Information Technology, I find it necessary to bring this work in electronic book format and make it available in the internet to accomplish his motive.

In this edition a few spelling corrections and inclusion of words at appropriate places had been carried out. A small introduction *About the Author* had been included in this edition.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr.Srinivasan's sons (Mr.S.Sivanandam & Mr. Natarajan) and daughter's (Mrs. Mallika Velu, Mrs. Vasantha Ponnaiyaa, Mrs. Sivamani Subramanian & Mrs. Latha Sekaran), Chennai for giving me permission to bring out this book in electronic book format and make it available in the website. I also thank Mr.G. Srinivasan, Salem for his timely selfless help in typing and proof reading this book. I should like to record my appreciation and thanks to Mr. A. Sivakumar, Singapore for making this e-book available in his website. (www.vallalar.org)

Salem - 16
September 2, 2001

K.SARAVANAN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. C. SRINIVASAN, M.Sc., Ph.D.,
(1920 - 1990)

Simultaneously with his Academic pursuit of Teaching Botany in Annamalai University in South India from 1947 to 1980, Dr. C. Srinivasan had a deep and abiding interest in Hindu philosophy. This was but natural as he had been brought up in the cradle of Saiva Siddhanta and the family was intensely religious. By the Grace of God he was initiated to the poem Thiruvagasam of Saint Manikkavasagar when quite young by his uncle Thiru. Akshayalingam and in due course it became a routine to recite those in his daily prayer. By sheer dint of diligent study and discussions with Scholars of repute, Dr. Srinivasan himself became an Erudite Scholar in Saiva Siddhanta.

During the early forties he was introduced to Divine Song of Grace - Thiruarutpa (திருவருட்பா) of Ramalinga Swami of Vadalur and he learnt his philosophy of Suddha Sanmargam (true path way to God) under the ferule of great savants who were closely associated with the devoted disciples of the Swami. Then Dr. Srinivasan became an ardent life-long devotee of Saint Ramalinga Swami. He had mastered Thiruvagasam and Thiruarutpa among other classics and scriptures in Tamil.

His interests were not confined only to Hindu philosophy. He could talk with authority on the Bible and other Christian Religious Literature even amongst Christian scholars. The gentle, persuasive and knowledgeable way in which he could explain even the most subtle and abstruse philosophical concepts, resulted in his being much sought after for discourses and lectures, far and wide.

His greatest achievement is the translation of Tamil classic Thiruvagasam of Saint Manikkavasagar into lucid English with expositions that took him six years of hard work. Even an ordinary reader can go through the pages of that immortal work, understanding, appreciating and assimilating the contents of the text. He is the fourth person to translate it in English (apart from its rendering into number of languages of the world) after Rev. G.U. Pope (1900), Mr.K.M. Balasubramanian (1965) and Mr. Vanmikanathan (1971).

After retirement as professor and Head of the Department of Botany, Annamalai University in 1980 Dr. Srinivasan held the position of Emeritus Professor of Botany and Head, Department of Ancient Science, Tamil University, Thanjavur, from 1983 to 1987. In his own field of Botany, he was an International specialist in Bryology and guided several candidates for M.Phil and Ph.D. in Botany.

The impact of the Saiva Siddhanta on his work is such that he lived a life of pure Saivism and Suddha Sanmargam putting into practice all the principles and Teachings of our great Saints and radiating universal love, Humility and Simplicity.

Publications:

1. **Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam** - Tamil (1960)
2. **Thavaram - Vazhvum Varalarum** - Tamil (1966) is a pioneering one, among three books on Botany in Tamil. Book preserved as National Book in the National Library, Calcutta.
3. **An Introduction to the philosophy of Saint Ramalinga Swami** - (Translation of Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam)English (1969)
4. **Sanga Ilakkiya Thavarangal** - Tamil (1987)
5. **Thiruvaachakam of Saint Maanickavaachagar** - *English Translation and Exposition* (With Tamil Text) - English (1991)

Salem-6K
September 2, 2001

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அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி
தனிப்பெருங்கருணை அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி

Preface

வாய் மணக்குற மனமெலா மணக்க
வையம் வானக மற்றுள மணக்கத்
தூய்மணத்த மாமறைமுடி மணக்கத்
தூயவாகமத் தொல்சிர மணக்கத்
தாய்மணக்குறுங் கருணையினாய் என்
தலைமணக்குறத் தரித்தபூங் கழல்கள்
ஏய் மணத்தசண் முகசிவ குருவோம்
இராமலிங்க ஓம் சிவாயசற் குருவோம்.

Saint Ramalinga Swami has passed on to posterity about 40000 lines of devotional songs and a few discourses in prose as the true path - Sanmargam - for the attainment of Godhood. He has made it clear that his path aims at deathlessness and complete union with God. Thirumoolar, an earlier saint of the Tamil country has indicated that the followers of Sanmargam will not only visualize the supreme light of God but conquer death. Though historical evidences of the life of some saints are ample proof that they not only did not taste death but enjoyed eternal Bliss and Godhood, there is no philosophy cogently setting forth the secret of immortality.

Modern science while proclaiming success in creating life, has also founded that "death is alien to the nature of man". According to Kuprevich of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences ageing is due to damage caused to D.N.A and R.N.A structures. He argues that "if ageing is a disease of the genetic mechanism it must be cured and the cure, the elixir of life is readily available in nature". This elixir of life, "அற்புதமான அமுத தாரைகள் எற்புத்தளைதொறும் ஏற்றினன்"(திருவா.) has been referred to by Saint Manikkavasagar as replacing the marrow of bones. Saint Ramalinga Swami while describing the transforming human body, narrates that an elixir of life overflows and fills the human frame "அமுதம் உடலெலாம் ஊற்றெடுத்து ஓடி நிரம்பிட" of the divine aspirant. The ideas of this discipline lie scattered in his divine contribution.

It appears that only the Grace of God and the sacred acquaintance with a few followers of the Swami, made it possible to disentangle the skein of thought imbedded the divine song of grace-திருவருட்பா-and to

venture to pen this wonderful philosophy as an introduction. My first thought in writing this booklet in English was to make his philosophy known to all the nations. Great thinkers of the world should be aware of the existence of such a philosophy of deathless life. As the Swami has predicted "great men of far north will learn this philosophy and come down to preach unto you", there may come a day when the unique ideals of Sanmargam might be realized in its true perspective. It is therefore; with this motive that I humbly put forward the main theme of this great Universal doctrine.

In fact, this was written about five years ago but my Tamil book - Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam - which is but an elaborate translation of the present treatise, found the light of publication earlier.

Now, but for the financial assistance of my loving friends of Kuala Lumpur to whom this booklet is most affectionately dedicated, the publication would have been delayed further. I thank them all most cordially for their timely help.

I am much thankful to Rao Sahib K.Kothandapani Pillai and Dr. Devasenapathi for giving foreword to this booklet. My thanks are due in large measure to Thiru.V.Natarajan M.A., Lecturer in English, National College Tiruchi for critically going through the script and for correcting the proof. I am greatly indebted to the Publishers Ilakkia Nilayam and the Jothi printers for their devoted service.

Let me invoke the grace of the Swami and God Supreme to bless us all in our spiritual endeavour.

Annamalainagar,
24-03-1969

C.SRINIVASAN

Foreword

By

Dr.V.Devasenapathi, M.A., Ph.D.,

**Professor of Philosophy,
University of Madras, Madras.**

Ramalinga Swami describes God as the Joy that graciously grants joy alike to the unlettered and lettered. We can borrow these words to describe his own *Thiruarutpa*. The hymns of the *Thiruarutpa* have a wide range of appeal. From the devout unacquainted with mystic experience to those conversant with various stages of such an experience, everyone draws inspiration and guidance from the *Thiruarutpa*.

The *Thiruarutpa* is in Tamil. Hence to reach those who do not know Tamil, Dr. C. Srinivasan has given in the present work a gist of his earlier work in Tamil, *Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam*. Within a hundred and twelve pages he has succeeded in giving a biographical sketch and an account of the great achievements of the Swami in spiritual evolution. He has devoted considerable space to an exposition of the Swami's teaching about the transformation of our corporal body into a celestial body. Not all, even among those who believe in the survival of personality at release, subscribe to its survival in a transformed condition. Hence the Swami's teaching may appear contrary to tradition. However, one does come across expressions in mystic writings which seem to demand a literal- not merely a figurative-interpretation. One is reminded of the lines in Manikkavasagar's *Thiruvandappahudi* which speak of a body of love, a body that melts in love. Again one is struck by Sekkilar's statement about Candesvara:

'With that very body he became the son of Aranar.
Who is there who knows this state?'

It looks as if only rare souls like Ramalinga Swami know such a state. What is more, Ramalinga Swami has for the first time, so far as one knows, given us valuable insights about such a transformation.

Dr. Srinivasan is a Botanist, professionally engaged in scientific research. He is fascinated by the evolution he sees in the plant world extending its scope to superhuman levels as described by Ramalinga Swami. He is persuaded that it is not a mere flight of fancy but a solid achievement in the life of Ramalinga Swami. He describes the physiological and biochemical make-up of the corporal body and quotes Ramalinga Swami's verses to indicate how divine light transforms this body into a celestial one. Dr. Srinivasan's devotion to the Swami is strengthened by his scientific training.

I welcome this work and thank Dr. Srinivasan for making a valuable addition to the all-too - meagre literature - especially in English - available on the philosophy of Ramalinga Swami.

University of Madras,
16th January, 1969

V.A.DEVASENAPATHI

Foreword

By

Rao Saheb. K. Kothandapani Pillai, B.A.,

**Retd. Controller of Emigration
and
Member, Railway Service Commission**

The philosophy of Swami Ramalinga to which this book is an introduction is a welcome addition to the philosophic lore of India and to that of Tamil Nadu in particular. The Swami came in the line of the great thinkers and saints of Tamil Nadu with a distinct individuality of his own. He was a great philosopher and spiritualist. He demonstrated by his life that philosophy is not a dream or fantasy of unpractical thinkers or idlers. His very life was a record of his philosophy and spiritual experiences. He was a living embodiment of love, sincerity, purity, spirituality and godliness. His spotless character, the indescribable glow of blessedness with which he was endowed by His grace, the divine wisdom he displayed, his unabating universal compassion for all suffering creatures, his all-absorbing love of God, had bestowed on him an unique position among the saints and philosophers of the Land. In addition to these, he was a profound scholar in Tamil. The numerous verses and songs poured out of his molten heart that wept for the attainment of spiritual eminence are remarkable for their literary excellence, melting rhythm, entrancing melody and great lucidity of expression. They inspired and moved not only the literate but also illiterate masses into tears. The wealth of his thought, his basic approach to spirituality which was not far from common human comprehension, and the lucidity with which he expounded the great mystic heights of spiritual experiences, have offered solace and guidance to many a seeker after truth and true spirituality. His approach was simple and direct not baffling even a person of common understanding. The Swami had thus, by his thoughts and verses, conduct and spiritual achievements, found a sacred niche in the heart of almost every Tamilian who aspires to ascend the glorious heights of spiritual attainment. Without any propaganda, the fame and popularity of the Swami had been growing year by year spontaneously in intensity all these hundred years, after the Swami had bodily melted into the divine arms of the Lord supreme. He is now worshipped as the chosen one of the

Lord, sent into the world to guide humanity to the attainment of eternal bliss.

The advent of the Swami was marked by a wake of spiritual revival all over the world. He was born in the 19th century, when mankind all over the world tired of materialism were eager to turn their gaze towards the ultimate truth and the goal of human existence. Madam Blavatsky, Col. Olcot, Leadbeater and Annie Besant led the spiritual renaissance in the west. Saint Ramakrishna and his disciple Swami Vivekananda and others led this revival in North India. The Swami was the sole representative of the spiritual movement in Tamil Nadu. He was the first to proclaim the universality and equality of all religious truth and the equality of all men in spiritual unity. (ஆன்மநேய ஒருமைப்பாடு). He was thus the fore-runner of theosophical movement and this was admitted by Madam H.P.Blavatsky herself in *The Theosophist*, July 1882.

It will be interesting to note that the Swami evolved no new pet theory of his own. He realized the spiritual basis of the ancient ideals of life of the Tamil land and was well acquainted with the ancient thoughts on philosophy and spirituality and their practical aspects.

The Swami himself calls his philosophy என் மார்க்கம் இறப்பொழிக்கும் சன்மார்க்கம்; இயற்கை தொன்மையாம் சன்மார்க்கம்; ஆநந்த சமரச சன்மார்க்கம். The ancient philosophic thoughts and practices of his land were thus received by the Swami and elucidated in terms and methods suitable to his times. The very name of his philosophy " *Sanmarga* " the good path was adopted from Saint Thirumoolar of Thirumandiram fame.

The basic approach of the Swami to spirituality was not laid in any remote spiritual conduct or practice or in any mystic yoga modes but lay in the active universal love and compassion for all creatures of the world, men, beasts, birds and all that had life.

To understand the full significance of this active universal love, preached by the Swami, it is necessary to comprehend the nature and scope of the concept of love advocated by Jainism and Buddhism the two great philosophic systems of the world which had exploited the philosophic and spiritual value of love.

It was the negative aspect of love which these two systems emphasized. Jainism adopted ahimsa, not to kill or not to harm any living

creatures as its basic doctrine. Ahimsa means renunciation of the mind to kill or harm anything. This is different from the feeling of active love or active compassion. Ahimsa arises from the idea of keeping unattached to the world. Active love implies activity in the world and brings in attachment to those who suffer himsa, misery or harm. Jainism, which aimed at non-activity and non-attachment, rejected active love and adopted ahimsa as its important doctrine. This Ahimsa thus keeps itself within the limits of non-activity and neglects the helpful activity to relieve the distressed.

Buddhism advocated compassion and this was also within the limits of non-activity and non-attachment. According to Buddhism suffering could be ended only by its Eight-fold principles, right knowledge etc. Unless the Eight-fold path is followed and release from the world is obtained thereby, the suffering continued and recurred even if relieved. The suffering and misery could never be relieved or wiped out without renouncing the world and the attachment to it which were the root cause of the suffering and misery in the world. Buddhist philosophy therefore did not preach active compassion, as it will bring man to the bond of attachment with the persons suffering. The compassion developed in Buddhism was thus an ethic of thought not of action. What Buddha advocated was the ethical activity of the mind and spirit in the ethical aspect of love and compassion. This aspect of love or compassion has its own importance. It generates a spiritual power, which goes out to transform the persons who come under its sway. This was the secret of the powerful personality of the great Buddha. The radiation of kindness issuing from him is said to have affected not only human beings but also animals. ("A wild elephant which his hostile cousin Devadatta let loose on him in a narrow lane stopped in its course, so the story relates, struck by the force of his kindness, and lowered the trunk it had already raised to strike."). Similar incidents happened, we are told, in the life of the Swami as well.

The love of mankind which Swami Ramalinga developed and adopted was active universal love which not only comprised ahimsa and the mental love of Buddhism but went far beyond them and reached a stage far higher and nobler and more beneficial to humanity.

Even this basic approach was nothing new introduced by the Swami. From time immemorial the Tamil land had been the home of this universal compassion and active help. They believed that the world exists because

of men who live for others and are ready to sacrifice anything for the cause of humanity. "உண்டாலம் இவ்வுலகம்." (புறம் – 182).

Their love was an universal love which knew no bounds or the limitation of caste, creed, colour or country. யாதும் ஊரே, யாவரும் கேளிர்; all countries are yours and all men are your kith and kin declared Kanian Pookundranar (கணியன் பூங்குன்றனார்). He exemplified this selfless devotion and service to humanity by the simile of a raft put into a ferry "...நீர்வழிப் படுஉம்புணை போல் ஆருயிர் முறைவழிப்படும்..." புணை= raft; நீர்வழி = waterway. (புறம் – 192).

The raft is of no use to itself. It has lost its self and is there only to serve humanity without any discrimination of caste, creed, colour or country. The raft cannot escape, from the responsibility into which it has been pushed into. Similarly man cannot escape from the responsibility into which he has been ushered into this world and should serve the humanity even as the raft does. The ancient Tamilians explored the value and meaning of human existence. They found that active universal compassion and active help for all the creatures of the world in distress had the greatest ethical and spiritual value.

Their compassion did not stop with selfless devotion to humanity and active help to men, beasts and birds but extended even to the vegetable kingdom.

Nearly two thousand years ago long before Jagadish Chandra Bose the great son of Bengal demonstrated the unseen agonies of the vegetable kingdom which thrilled the European world, Chieftain Pary of the Tamil land felt the agonies of the Mullai Creeper *Jasminum indicum* tossed about by untruly wind and tortured by careless passers by for want of a prop to lean on and entwine to ascend and spread over so as to withstand the ravages of nature and the plunder of thoughtless men. Pary had the culture to visualize its distress which the creeper could not speak out. He was deeply moved by its wretched condition, left the chariot in which he rode, to the creeper to spread on and walked home. This is no mythology or poetic exaggeration but a plain historical fact. Authors after authors have spoken and praised the tenderness and nobility of Pary's heart. It was a glorious day in the human thought to be recorded in golden letters that for the first time in the history of the world a human being notorious for his selfishness, rose to the level of being disturbed in heart by the distress of a mute plant and went to the

length of sacrificing his own comfort and convenience for the sake of a trivial plant life.

The Swami was the inheritor of this noble heritage of boundless compassion and active help. How much of this unique culture was in the blood of the Swami! Let the Swami himself speak out:

எவ்வுயிர்த் திரளும் என்னுயி ரெனவே
எண்ணிநல் லின்புறச் செயவும்
அவ்வுயிர் களுக்கு வருமிடை யூற்றை
அகற்றியே அச்சநீக் கிடவும்
செவ்வையுற் றுனது திருப்பதம் பாடிச்
சிவசிவ என்று கூத் தாடி
ஒவ்வுறு களிப்பால் அழிவுறா திங்கே
ஓங்கவும் இச்சைக்காண் எந்தாய்

திரு. 6: 20: 18

வாடிய பயிரைக் கண்டபோதெல்லாம் வாடினேன் பசியினால் இளைத்தே
வீடுதோ றிரந்தும் பசியறா தயர்ந்த வெற்றரைக் கண்டுளம் பதைத்தேன்
நீடிய பிணியால் வருந்துகின் றேரென் நேருறக் கண்டுளந் துடித்தேன்
ஈடினமா னிகளா யேழைக ளாய்நெஞ்சிளைத்தவர் தமைக்கண்டே யிளைத்தேன்

திரு. 6: 21: 58

The Swami knew the spiritual value of this unbounded compassion and insisted on it as the first step to be taken even before the love of God and placed his Jeevakarunya Olukkam (ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கம்) i.e., Compassion towards all living beings as the first rung in the ladder of spirituality.

The Swami introduced a new angle of vision and a novel technique in the practical realization of Godhood not hitherto known to the philosophic or religious thought of the world. This relates to the great transformations which come over the body of the aspirant சுத்த தேகம் அல்லது பொன்னுருவம் அல்லது அன்புருவம்; அருளுருவம் and இன்புருவம்.

These transformations occur in the body of the aspirant according to the intensity of spiritual warmth produced in him. The Swami by a process of alchemy perfected a marvelous ball called Kuligai to test the spiritual heat in the human body. If a person who had generated no spiritual heat holds the ball in his hands he will feel an unbearable intense heat but if a real spiritualist holds it he can keep it and that too for such a time as the spiritual elevation will permit. This marvelous test ball had

been in the possession of one of his disciples and had been tested by many an aspirant. It is always kept immersed in the holy ashes.

I should like to point out that even these transformations have been alluded to by the Saint Poet Nakirar. His Tirumurukatrupadai of Sangam fame is well known in Tamil Nadu. Commentaries, criticisms and research have not yet explored the rich store of philosophic wisdom imbedded therein. Let me draw the attention of the readers to the very first simile of the poem.

உலகம் உவப்ப வலனேர்பு திருதரு
பலர் புகழ் ஞாயிறு கடற் கண்டாஅங்கு
ஓவற இமைக்கும் சேண்விளங்கு அவிர் ஒளி

— திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை

Nakirar was the first author to describe the divine rays of the Almighty and call them the light which unfolds His Grace. அவிர் ஒளி (Avir Oli) The light that unfolds the divine grace. Compare the அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி (Arutperum jothi) of the Swami. When I pointed this out to the author of this book he told me that Arunachalam Pillai a great savant who came in the line of the disciples of the Swami had also held his view and his manuscript remains unpublished. The interpretation given above thus gets confirmation from a valid source.

Let us now look into the simile. The unfolding rays of the Absolute are compared to the rays of the sun which fall on the sea (ஞாயிறு கடற்கண்டாங்கு). The rays of the sun undoubtedly drive away the darkness but that happens whether the sun rises on the earth, hill or dale or sea. The simile is only for the sun on the sea. We may note when the sun shines on the sea, the sea water is purified (உவர் கெடுத்து உண்ணுநீர் ஆக்கியது). The salt or the impurity is dropped down. The water becomes purified and fit for human consumption. Does this not resemble the சுத்த தேகம் of the Swami? The body is deprived of all its dross or impurities and made pure, fit for divine absorption. The sun's rays pierce into the seawater, which glitters and bestows a golden hue and radiates a mellowed glow of light. Does this not correspond to the பொன்னுருவாகிய ஒளி உடம்பு of the Swami and the அருளுருவம் which radiates the mellowed light of divinity? It is this divine light which the Swami hid from the gaze of the curious by always covering his entire body even body his head except his face with long piece of cloth wound around.

Another great transformation is yet to happen in the seawater, the seawater is transformed; the very material structure of the liquid is altered. From the state of liquidity it passes into a gaseous state and is lifted to heavens as vapour. The water is not dead or buried. It has been lifted to heaven in another form which the sun's rays had bestowed upon it. Does this not correspond to the இன்புருவம் with which the Swami melted into the hands of the Lord in Heaven? These transformations are no speculative factors or inferential deductions. These are the practical transformations which came over the body of the Swami stage by stage on the way to union with the Absolute. This is borne out by the statements of the Swami and by the evidence of the disciples who had seen the transformations occurring in the body of the Swami.

The author refers to three kinds of rays such as கதிர்நலம், பரையொளி, அருள் ஒளி as explained by the Swami as activating the transformations. It is astounding to note that these three kinds of divine rays respectively correspond to the three attributes of light referred to by Nackeerar. They are இமைக்கும் ஒளி, விளங்கும் ஒளி, அவிரும் ஒளி. Of these அவிர் ஒளி may mean the light that unfolded in all distant ages, அவிர்ந்த ஒளி that unfolds at the present moment and அவிற்கின்ற ஒளி that will unfold for all eternity to come (அவிரும் ஒளி - அவிர் - வினைத் தொகை). Therefore this light corresponds to the eternal light (அருள் ஒளி) that unfolds the divine Grace to all humanity of all ages and all climes.

These philosophic thoughts are met within no philosophy of the world east or west. It is a novel approach to philosophy and divinity peculiar to Tamil Nadu and a unique achievement of the Tamil genius. No better analogy is more than the "divine photosynthesis" of the author. The simile applies on all forms to the body transformations which occur in the aspirant and are referred to by the Swami.

There have also been other saints in the Tamil Nadu who underwent these transformations whose bodies could not be photographed as they became translucent with the divine light of his grace but they never recorded these happenings. This remained a spiritual secret until the Swami came into the field. It was he who declared that these spiritual benefits are not meant for any one individual or saint. To make it a secret was nothing short of utter selfishness and he made known these processes by which these transformations come over and in his clarion voice invited the whole humanity to come and share the bliss.

The concluding portion of this ancient poem of Nakirar mentions the greatest blessing, which God can bestow on the aspirant and the state of his soul, so blessed. It states "இருள்நிற முந்நீர் வளைஇய உலகத்து, ஒருநீயாகித் தோன்ற, விழுமிய பெறல் அரும் பரிசில் நல்குமதி "

- திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை

The poem does not state that the greatest blessing God could bestow on the devotee is to make him one with himself i.e., to unite with the Lord in an inseparable union which almost every system of Indian Philosophy except atheistic ones aspire for. It is strange that this poem asserts the greatest and the unattainable reward, which the Lord can bestow, is to make the devotee one with the whole world. The last utterance of the Swami before he vanished was more of less to the same effect. "நாம் இப்போது இவ்வுடம்பில் இருக்கிறோம், இனி எல்லா உடம்புகளிலும் புகுந்து கொள்வோம்" I am now in this body? hereafter we will be in all the bodies (of the world).It appears to be that the final state actually disclosed by the Swami is the same as that described in the poem.

ஒரு நீ means to become one. The Swami himself uses this word in the same sense in describing the union of God with souls.

உயிரெலாம் ஒரு நீதிருநடம் புரியும்
ஒரு திருப்பொதுவென அறிந்தேன்

VI: 132: 75

Another great contribution of the Swami to world thought is that it is possible to attain a state of deathlessness and attain a perpetual life - Not only did he preached this சுத்த சன்மார்க்கம் the science of deathlessness but actually attained this deathless state. Is it possible to become deathless and live forever? It has been a puzzling problem for ages. Modern Science has not advanced to that condition either to assent to or dissent from this view.

The simile in Thirumurkatrupadai has been already referred to in which the water is not dead or buried but is transformed and lifted into the ether. This corresponds to the absorption of the spiritualist bodily into divinity without death.

There are also other passages in Sangam literature the literature of the middleages, to show that there were persons who attempted to secure it and also those who actually secured the state of deathlessness.

தவம் செய்மாக்கள் தம் உடம்பு இடா அது
அதன் பயன் எய்திய அளவைமான

பொருநராற்றுப்படை – 81 – 92

மலர்தலை உலகத்து உயிர்போகு பொதுநெறி
புலவரை பிறந்தோய் போகாதல் பொறேன்

– சிலம்பு –
இளங்கோவடிகள்

இறைவன் சொல் எனும் இன்னறவு அருந்தினர்யாரும்
முறையில் நின்றிலர் முந்துறுகளியிடை மூழ்கி
நிறையும் நெஞ்சிடை உவகைபோய் மயிர்வழி நிமிர்
உறையும் விண்ணகம் உடலொடும் எய்தினர் ஒத்தார்

– கம்பர் : அயோத்தி : மந்திரப்படலம் – 74

The quotations will show that the poets of the land knew that a deathless state was possible and was also attained. Evidently the Tamilians knew the secret of this science.

To bury a saint in the earth and call it a Videhamukthi (விதேகமுக்தி) is a misnomer. When a saint dies and is buried or burnt, call it Samadhi or anything else, it is nothing but a common death. None of the four great saints of Tamil Nadu dropped their bodies on the earth nor was buried or burnt. They bodily vanished into the ether or into the Lord Divine. Thirugnanasambandar vanished into the divine light which shone forth at the time of his marriage. Appar merged bodily with the Lord absolute at Pugalur. Sundarar merged with the Lord of Mt.Kailash and Manickavasagar vanished into the ether of Siva Veli at Thillai. This secret of attaining deathlessness was evidently kept as a secret and it was left to the Swami to preach it openly to the public to invite the whole humanity to share the bliss.

நினைந்துநினைத் துணர்ந்து உணர்ந்து நெகிழ்ந்து நெகிழ்ந்து அன்பே
நிறைந்துநிறைந்து ஊற்றெழும்பு கண் ணீர் அதனால் உடம்பு
நனைந்துநனைந்து அருளமுதே நன்நிதியே ஞான
நடத்தரசே என்னுரிமை நாயகனே என்று
வனைந்து வனைந்து ஏத்துதும்நாம் வம்மின்உல கியலீர்
மரணமிலாப் பெருவாழ்வில் வாழ்ந்திடலாங் கண்டீர்
புனைந்துரையேன் பொய்புகலேன் சந்தியஞ்சொல் கின்றேன்
பொற்சபையிற் சிற்சபையிற் புகுந்தருண மிதுவே.

திரு. 6: 110: 1

We are traditionally accustomed to view the mental consciousness into four different states as சாக்கிரம், சொர்ப்பனம், சுழுத்தி, துரியம். They are waking, dreaming, sleeping and intuitional consciousness. The Manduka

Upanishad also divides these mental states in the same way. But the Swami divides each of these states into further subdivisions as சுத்த, பர, குரு அல்லது சிவ. This is indeed a novel classification not dreamt of before. The spiritual experiences of the Swami are unique, not met with in any spiritual or philosophic literature. We are accustomed to gauge everything according to our pet standards. Anything that does not measure up to that standard is condemned as fantastic or impossible. Unless one attains that state of perfection and elevation of spiritual experience, which the Swami attained, one is not competent to comment on these supra-mental mystic heights. We may however be rest assured that the Swami indulges in no inferences of hypothetical statements. He would have made no subdivisions of these states unless he was sure they were each separate states and had special characteristics to be treated as separate and distinct.

There has been a lot of literature about the Swami and his works. So far there has been no work presenting a coherent view of his philosophy and spiritual experience in their order of sequence. The Swami did not write out a thesis of his philosophy. The philosophic thoughts and spiritual experiences are scattered all over his 6000 verses (40000 lines) and his discourses with his disciples and comments. It is no easy task to collect them into a cogent system. The author should be congratulated for his labour in presenting in English the philosophy of the Swami as a coherent whole in the order of sequence and his book fulfils a long-felt need.

May the Lord Supreme bless his work to spread all over the world to share the bliss, which the Swami eagerly longed for and ardently prayed for!

Thirucheraï
March 20, 1969

K.KOTHANDAPANI

Publisher's Foreword

The simultaneous progress of the modern world in all spheres of knowledge is remarkable. The seeds for this progress in the field of philosophy were sown by Sri Ramalinga Swamikal by the end of the nineteenth century. By judging and verifying earlier philosophic thoughts on the basis of his own personal experience of *Arul Anubavam*, he presented the Doctrine of *Samarasa Sudda Sanmargam* to the world. *Sanmargam* means the right path, the path, which leads to the Ultimate Reality. With astonishing precision, the Swami has laid down the course and destination of this path and the various transformations and experiences of body and soul during the journey. The soul which successfully completes this journey becomes one with Almighty God, capable of performing all His actions and becomes immanent in all things.

Hence Sanmarga is a faith and a way of life. The Swami's description of it, however, is not to be found in any compact form in his works. It is found scattered through the length and breath of thousands of his Divine songs called *Arutpa* or songs of grace. It requires a great deal of patience and minute study, an analytical brain and critical acumen, to discover the key and put together the scattered hints and evolve out of them a carefully built-up system of philosophy on the most scientific lines. And that is what the present author has achieved. By virtue of his association with scholars and philosophical experts and his scientific outlook, Dr.Srinivasan has rightly interpreted the Swami's doctrines in a Tamil book entitled *Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam*, published about five years ago.

As the *Sanmarga Neri* is not the prerogative of the Tamil-speaking world alone and as it is bound to benefit mankind in its entirety, a condensed version of that book in English is now published under the present caption.

The publishers whose motto has always been the encouragement and production of outstanding and useful books, take legitimate pride in commending this volume to the reading public.

April 10, 1969

C. THIRUMENI,
Ilakkiya Nilayam,
Tiruchirapalli.

திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

அன்பெனும் பிடியு ளகப்படு மலையே
அன்பெனுங் குடில்புகு மரசே
அன்பெனும் வலைக்குட் படுபரம் பொருளே
அன்பெனும் கரத்தம ரமுதே
அன்பெனுங் கடத்து ளடங்கிடும் கடலே
அன்பெனு முயிரொளி ரறிவே
அன்பெனு மணுவு ளமைந்தபே ரொளியே
அன்புரு வாம்பர சிவமே!

This Humble Work

Is

Most Affectionately

Dedicated

TO

Arulthiruvalar **M. Shanmugam**

Arulthiruvalar **M. P. Sellaswamy and**

Arulthiruvalar **M. P. Govindaswamy**

(of Thiru Arul Thava Neri Manram, Kuala Lumpur)

For Their Devoted

Sanmarga Services.

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சுமந்திரம்

Introduction

The philosophy of Ramalinga Swami is known as SAMARASA SUDDHA SANMARGAM. He lived to the very letter of his philosophy in the 19th century near Chidambaram in South India. The Saint of eternity with his rapturous lyrics takes after none of the saints of his age in his pursuit of Godhead and reverence for Life. His poetry is that of a mystic who cannot be easily understood but at once moves all with his melting strain. It is one of real experience, sung in ecstasy, of his exalted melting mood. The whole collection of his work, the sacred **THIRUARUTPA** - Divine song of Grace - consists of about 6000 devotional verses and some random religious discourses in prose. His God is **ARUTPERUMJOTHI** - the Supreme Grace Light; his faith is SANMARGAM. His preceptor is God Himself. His Sanctum Sanctorum is at Vadalur. His chosen **MANTRAM** - the divine words - is **ARUTPERUMJOTHI THANIPERUMKARUNAI** - Supreme Grace-Light, Supreme Universal Compassion. His society is Sanmarga Society which has no distinction of caste, creed, colour or country. His watchword is **JEEVAKARUNYAM** - absolute compassion towards all living things. His mission seems to have been to bring down Supreme Grace on earth and to see that his society consists of human angels enjoying the bliss of immortality. His message is SANMARGAM wherein love, affection and compassion for one's fellow-beings and perfection in every thing reign supreme. These human feelings unadulterated and absolute pervade through all his works. His definition of SANMARGAM is that it is the path which leads to the realization of The One The Supreme Reality and merging with Him. He has explained his philosophy as that which exists as the ultimate end of the six paths for the attainment of Godhead - such as VEDANTHAM, SIDDANTHAM, NADANTHAM, BHODANTHAM, KALANTHAM and YOGANTHAM. Conquest of death by imbibing Supreme Grace is the quintessence of his philosophy. Transformation of mortal human body into the perfect divine body or the body of the Divine is the basis of his spiritual discovery. The incessant love for the Supreme Lord, the ardent panting for the descent of Divinity in him, the fretting and funning desire and the spontaneous devotion for the God Supreme and the unsaturated satiety in the attainment of Godhead breath through all his rapturous lyrics.

1. The Life-History of Ramalinga Swami

CHIDAMBARAM is a very holy town in South India. It is said that the perpetual cosmic dance of Siva, the God Supreme, was for the first time visible to the great Saints Pathanchali and Viyagrabadha through their meditation at this place. The earlier name of the town is Thillai, the Tamil name of the plant, *Excoecaria agalocha* which probably abounded in the place. At the temple of worship in this town there is a delightful image of the all-pervading Absolute by whose will every atom moves in space and who is commanding every minute detail of the world-play through His conscious force. The sacred image according to the Swami is the symbolic representation of that which is realized within and worshipped as the space less, timeless and unconditioned beatific Splendor at his Heaven of wisdom. Such invisible form of God is conceived of and named here as Nataraja.

It was in the vicinity of the temple of Nataraja, in the village of Marudur about ten miles north of Chidambaram that our seer Ramalinga Swami was born on Sunday the fifth of October 1823. The parentage of the Swami is interesting. The father Ramiah Pillai was known for his piety. He belonged to an orthodox vegetarian family. He had to marry half a dozen times when one after another his first five wives passed away soon after the marriage. The sixth wife was called Chinnammai from whose sacred womb our Swami saw the light of day as the fifth child.

Consecration

There is an autobiographical note in the divine song of Grace, the ThiruArutpa which the Swami has sung, about his sanctification even when he was a babe in the arms of his mother. When the child was five months old, the parents made a pilgrimage to the temple of Nataraja at Chidambaram. It is said that when the curtain was lifted and the camphor flame incensed before the idol of Nataraja, the heavenly child burst into laughter and an unusual feeling of reverence and sanctity prevailed. The devoted priest Appaiya Deekshithar noticed the secret communion of the sacred child with the God Supreme and at once ran towards the parents. Embracing the child with all humility and respects the priest announced that it was the child of God. The Swami later in one of his verses refers to the happy incident that the God was so benevolent

as to disclose to him everything without any reservation even in his childhood.

தாய்முதலோ ரோடுசிறு பருவத்தில் தில்லைத்
தலத்திடையே திரைதூக்கத் தரிசித்த போது
வேய்வகைமேற் காட்டாதே யென்றனக்கே எல்லாம்
வெளியாகக் காட்டியவென் மெய்யுருவாம் பொருளே.

(ThiruArutpa: Canto 6: Ch. 38: Verse 44)

Ramiah Pillai passed away about a month later and the family moved to Madras. Responsibility fell on the shoulders of the elder brother of the Swami, Sabapathi Pillai to look after the family. He used to earn a little by giving religious discourses to the public. When the young Swami was five years of age Sabapathi Pillai admitted the young prodigy to learn the letters under the ferule of his own teacher, the famous Mahavidwan Sabapathi Mudaliar of Kancheepuram. Just after a few days of his schooling the young Swami was found reciting rapturous lyrics of his own at the temple of Kanthakottam in Madras. This had become a regular and usual feature of the young Swami. He says in one of his early verses:

"What a wonder it is, O 'God' you have educated me in all knowledge; you have inculcated in me an ardent love for you; you have persuasively taught me that the whole world is nothing but a mirage; O My benevolent Being! You are in me and are showering your Grace; you have condescended to be my spiritual master and blessed me, the insignificant creature with a status above wants without being driven to the necessity of begging others."

கல்வியெலாங் கற்பித்தாய் நிற்பால் நேயம்
காணவைத்தா யிவ்வுலகம் காண லென்றே
ஒல்லும்வகை அறிவித்தாய் உள்ளே நின்றென்
உடையானே நின்னருளும் உதவு கின்றாய்.

V: 40: 4

Observing the extra-ordinary spiritual development and hearing the spontaneous and ecstatic verses of the Swami, the schoolmaster whiled away the time, not daring to give him any tuition. Sabapathi Pillai was very much vexed to see his brother wasting his time without going to the school. When all remonstrations failed, the angry brother severely ordered his wife, the virtuous Pappammal not to feed his brother in the house and expelled him. The young Swami used to go to the house

stealthily whenever he felt hungry and the sympathetic lady used to feed her brother-in-law. The annual ceremony of their father came off. Sabapathi Pillai grandly feasted a number of friends and relatives. He felt the absence of his shy brother. The hospitable housewife was waiting for the young Swami by the back door. Late in the evening stole in our Ramalingam, the lady kindly treated him with the cold remnant of the feast. As he was gulping the stale food at that late hour the motherly sister-in-law of the Swami burst into tears. He asked her why she was weeping. The kind lady entreated him to take to his studies earnestly as demanded by his brother so that he need not be driven to the necessity of eating the cold dishes and that too stealthily. Young Ramalingam was moved by her words of love, sympathy, affection and compassion. These stirring words roused a feeling of resolve in the mind of the Swami. The moment for his consecration was, perhaps, approaching fast. He said " Mother, kindly vacate a room in the upstairs and give me a mirror and a lamp. I will study." Whatever the promising prodigy asked for was granted at once and he shut himself into the room. It is said that he was melting into psalms and hymns. The Supreme Grace-Light dawned through the mirror and poured the abundance of His Grace into the golden vessel of spiritual aspiration. Thus untaught by man, he got omniscience from the Omniscient. This happened at No. 39 Veeraswami Pillai Street, Madras.

This is the turning point in the life of Ramalinga Swami. Every drop to tear shed by the sacred Pappammal out of unstinted love and motherly affection for her brother-in-law, was returned several thousand times by the Swami for the achievement of his unique Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Monism. The Swami himself has given vent to his sanctification in his ninth year itself.

ஆண்டாறு மூன்றாண்டில் ஆண்டுகொண்ட அருட்கடலே

II : 87 : 3

... ஆறொடு --- மூன் றாண்டா வதிலே
முன்னென்னை ஆண்டாய்

VI: 25: 7

Further, he explains how the God Supreme was pleased to inscribe in his mind all unwritten wisdom:

ஏடகத்தே எழுதாத மறைகளெல்லாம் கனித்தே

என்னுளத்தே எழுதுவித்த என்னுரிமைப் பதியே

VI: 53: 8

You have infused all knowledge in me without my undergoing the ordeal of learning to such an extent that the most learned come to me to learn more. O God! My stabilizer! You have endowed that light with which I could realize all knowledge and all wisdom and everything else without being taught.

ஓதி உணர்ந்தவ ரெல்லாம் எனைக்கேட்க
எனைத்தான் ஓதாமே உணர்ந்து
உணர்வாமுரு வுறச்செய் யுறவே

ஓதா துணர்ந்திட ஒளியளித் தெனக்கே
ஆதார மாகிய அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி.

VI: 1: 23-24

The Swami has expatiated categorically how by His Grace he was educated. "I have learnt only from you; I have heard only from you; I have seen all in you; I have been infused all only from you; I have obtained all only from you; I have enjoyed all only in you; O my Lord dancing in the effulgent arena decked with millions of Suns! Great are my penances, wonderful is my fortune."

.....என்னுடைய துரையேநான் நின்னுடைய அருளால்
கற்றதுநின் னிடத்தேபின் கேட்டதுநின் னிடத்தே
கண்டதுநின் னிடத்தேஉட் கொண்டதுநின் னிடத்தே
பெற்றது நின் னிடத்தேயின் புற்றதுநின் னிடத்தே
பெரியதவம் புரிந்தேனென் பெற்றியதி சயமே.

IV: 1: 16

During the later days his disciplined disciple Thozhuvoor Velayudha Mudaliar, while singing in praise of his master's education says:

மீதானத் துயர்பள்ளி மேவவெமை வைக்கும் எங்கள்
மேதாவைப் பள்ளிவிழைந் தருளிற்பென் றுரைப்பதெவன்
ஓதாமே எமையெல்லாம் உணர்த்தும் உருவெளியையச்சோ
ஓதாமே உணர்ந்ததென்பார் உணர்கிலார் ஒருவியப்போ

— திருவருட்பா வரலாறு — 20

It is no wonder that the Swami learnt everything though he was not subjected to schooling. He is the virtual and visible form of the

space in the universe. He can, not only disclose and infuse into all of us all knowledge in a moment, but can lift us to the sublime and inconceivable higher spiritual plane of Meethanam (மீதானம்). There is no gain say in the fact that he learnt everything by intuition.

Just after this happy incident, the Swami was seen regularly going to the temple at Thiruvotriur in Madras, pouring forth-spontaneous hymns before the deity. His teacher himself heard the verses and was wonder-struck at the gift of his disciple. He felt too small to give any tuition to this self-taught prodigy and informed his elder brother about his wisdom.

The Brother Sabapathi Pillai used to give religious discourses to the devoted at the house of one philanthropist Somu Chettiar and earn his livelihood in those days. When he found that his assistant in reading the script from the palm leaves was not doing the job satisfactorily, he consulted his wife whether it would be feasible to take the help of his brother. The lady asked her brother-in-law to take up the job. The young Swami yielded to the desire of his brother and used to read the script. The meaningful reading of the younger brother touched the people. One day Sabapathi Pillai was indisposed and requested his brother to go to the congregation and to explain to the people after prayer how his brother was disabled to lecture on that day. The Swami went alone, prayed to God and when he told the people that the lecture was postponed, all of them requested the young Swami to take the place of his brother and explain as much as he could. The Swami felt that it was the will of the Supreme God to initiate his mission in the world at this gathering. It was his lot on that day to comment on the life of Thirugnanasambandar, one of the four great saints of the Tamil Country. He went on explaining the different aspects of philosophy as the underlying meaning of the verse in continuation. It was very late in the night. But still he had not explained even that single verse fully. The devotees were simply amazed at the miraculous pouring of the younger brother and expressed their desire that he should complete those series of lectures. He agreed to do so. Gradually many people even the much learned, thronged to hear him. This was sometime in 1835. One of the devotees asked the elder brother to hear the Swami and then assess his intellectual and spiritual capacities. Without being seen by his brother, Sabapathi Pillai himself heard him and felt that his brother was an incarnation of sheer Wisdom. From that day onwards the young Swami was treated with awe and reverence for his inner awakening which the

young Swami desisted. But their discovery paved the way to the Swami for the gradual loosening of the intimacy and the worldly bondage of the household.

From the ninth year till he was about twenty-one there seems to be no evidence of his history. Where he was, what he was doing, who were his associates and how he spent these twelve years are not known. However, it appears that he was panting and pining for the flow of Grace and that he was mad after the descent of Divinity in him. The Swami shudders to recollect the ordeal that he underwent in those twelve years. "Why should I narrate the painful yearnings when You are the witness of all my sufferings all along and when You are pervading within and outside my mind both internally and externally?"

பன்னிரண்டாண்டு தொடங்கி யிறறைப் பகலின் வரையுமே
படியிற்பட்ட பாட்டை நினைக்கின் மலையுங் கரையுமே

VI: 139: 78

ஈராறாண்டு தொடங்கி யிறறைப் பகலின் வரையுமே
எளியேன் பட்ட பாட்டை நினைக்கின் இரும்புங் கரையுமே

VI: 139: 79

பன்னிரண் டாண்டு தொடங்கிநா னிறறைப்
பகல்வரை அடைந்தவை எல்லாம்
உன்னிநின் றுரைத்தால் உலப்புறா ததனால்
ஒருசில உரைத்தன னென்னும்
என்னுளத் தகத்தும் புறத்துமுட் புறத்தும்
இயற்புறப் புறத்தினும் விளங்கி
மன்னிய ஜோதி யாவுநீ யறிந்த
வண்ணமே வகுப்பதென் நினக்கே

VI: 21: 122

The Swami recalls that in his young days when he was inarticulate, the Grace of God turned him poetic and he was able to adore the God Supreme by profuse lyrics and hymns. The Swami mentions that in those days of childhood, when he used to play freely in the streets without any care, the formless God shaped in the void taught him to sing His glory.

உருவத்தி லேசிறி யேனாகி யூகத்தி லொன்றுமின்றித்
தெருவத்தி லேசிறு கால்வீசி யாடிடச் சென்றவந்தப்
பருவத்தி லேநல் லறிவளித் தேஉனைப் பாடச்செய்தாய்
அருவத்தி லேயுரு வானோய் நின் தண்ணளி யார்க்குளதே.

I: 6: 49

பாடும்வகை யணுத்துணையும் பரித்தறியாச் சிறிய
பருவத்தே அணிந்தணிந்து பாடும்வகை புரிந்து

IV: 1: 41

It is not known what the period of twelve years, which the Swami has mentioned actually refers to. Is it after his initiation at his ninth year? Or did he recollect all his miseries after his twelfth year?

His disciple

The next historical date in the life of the Swami is 1849. One day a youth of seventeen by name Velayutham of Thozhuvoor approached the Swami and showed him a few of his own verse saying that they were from the ancient classical Tamil literature, rarely obtained. The Swami after a perusal smilingly said that the Sangam verses would not contain so many mistakes and that they were evidently of upstart origin. Velayutham surrendered himself to him and tendered his apology for his falsehood. The Swami took him from that day as his disciple saying, "My son has come to me."

Thozhuvoor Velayutha Mudaliar was a great scholar and poet of repute. He was proficient in Sanskrit also. He learnt a lot of religious and spiritual philosophy at the feet of his chosen master. He is the author of ten books in Tamil prose including Sankara Vijayam, Peria Puranam and even a drama on the life of Mahaveera. His poetical contribution exceeds thirty five booklets mostly religious. His excellent treatises on Ramalinga Swami especially the Method of worship of Ramalinga Swami (திருவருட் பிரகாசனார் சந்நிதிமுறை) and the History of the Song of Grace (திருவருட்பா வரலாறு) are worth mentioning. The former book contains several kinds of traditional versification. His prayers invoking the grace of the Saint, adoring the greatness of his unique cult and philosophy and extolling his supreme love, affection and compassion for all live creatures are enrapturing. The latter booklet of 63 verses, it is said, was perused by the Swami himself and he exclaimed that each verse contained sixty three verses. The Swami had a very high opinion of his disciple and one day even styled him as the great master of the twain languages (Tamil and Sanskrit) (உபய கலாநிதிப் பெரும்புலவர்) in the presence of many great savants and scholarly disciples. He was with his master for about twenty-five years almost till the disappearance of the Swami. I was informed by Sengalvaraya Mudaliar the second son of

Velayutha Mudaliar that one year prior to his disappearance the Swami asked his disciple to return to Madras as fame and name were likely to spoil his spiritual career. Accordingly Velayutha Mudaliar went away to Madras. He was employed as the Second Tamil Pandit in the Presidency College, Madras, had his second marriage and begot Sengalvaraya Mudaliar as his second son. Later on the 22nd February 1889 he passed away as painfully narrated by his first son Thirunageswara Mudaliar who has edited his father's book on "the Method of Worship of Ramalinga Swami" in 1912. Many of the followers of Ramalinga Swami criticize rather vehemently why the Swami did not infuse his tremendous spiritual power even in this most disciplined disciple. It is said that he felt diffident to follow his master in practice and the Swami having known his bent of mind painfully prayed it away. His son told me that the Swami felt very much for the strength of fate and conviction of his disciple. Was his fate so powerful as not to fade away even in the immediate presence of such a divine personality as the Swami? How is it that the disciple having lived with the Swami for twenty-five full years, could hold such a strong conviction that his body could not be transformed as that of his master? Then how is it that he speaks so highly of the achievements of his master? Is it that his mind was only after material life and not after spiritual bliss? If so, why did not the Swami persuade at least the one who was dear and near to him, while he was praying all along for the eternal happiness and ecstatic delight of his fellowmen? In his history of the Song of Grace (திருவருட்பா வரலாறு) however, he describes the Swami as the alchemist who could transform our body into the divine golden body though he modestly points out that some sinners like him passed the Swami for an ordinary man. Therefore, he was not unconscious of his master's capacity to be raised to the supreme transcendent stage if only he had asked for it.

The Mother Feeds

Now the Swami was pouring forth fervent appeals and poems to the God Supreme. He used to frequent the temple at Thiruvotriyur. Blazing fire of spiritual yearning caught hold of him. The verses are awe-inspiring, heart melting and soul thrilling; they are exhilarating and illuminating in their influence upon the mental and moral feelings. They pave the way for the communion of the human soul with God Supreme. Like a bereaved calf he cries out "Canst thou not deign to annihilate the miserable obstacles in the way of my life and lead me on to the province of Bliss? I take refuge in thee. This is the occasion to show thy mercy."

While thus praying at the temple late in the evening, he forgot to go home in time. When he went there he found the doors closed. The Swami did not want to disturb his sister at that midnight although he was feeling hungry very much. He laid himself outside and was fast asleep. The Supreme Mother the Goddess or according to the Swami, the sublime incarnation of the Supreme power of God Supreme, appeared in the form of his own sister, offered delicious rice (வெண் பொங்கல்) in a lotus leaf and disappeared. The Swami ate it fully and threw the leaf outside and entered into his usual trance. His own sister woke up suddenly and came out with anxiety. When she saw him lying in the verandah she woke him up and asked him why he should sleep without food and why he did not awake her. Saying thus, she called him inside to have his food. The Swami was perplexed and told her "Just now you have given me (rice) food. I have eaten. Look, there the leaf is also lying yonder." Surprisingly the sister exclaimed, "No! I have opened the door only just now and am coming out to call you in. I have not given you any food." The Swami understood the miracle of the Supreme Mother. This happy incident is referred to by the Swami thus:

அன்றொருநாள் நம்பசிகண்டு அந்தோ! தரியாது
நன்றிரவிற சோறளித்த நற்றாய்காண்

I: 3: 176

தெற்றியிலே நான்பசித்துப் படுத்திளைத்த தருணம்
திருவமுதோர் திருக்கரத்தே திகழ்வளளத் தெடுத்தே
ஒற்றியிற்போய்ப் பசித்தனையோ வென்றெனை யங்கெழுப்பி
உவந்துகொடுத்த தருளியவென் னுயிர்க்கினிதாந் தாயே
பற்றியவென் பற்றனைத்தும் தன்னடிப்பற் றாகப்
பரிந்தருளி யெனையீன்ற பண்புடையெந் தாயே
பெற்றியுளார் சுற்றிநின்று போற்றமணிப் பொதுவில்
பெருநடஞ்செய் யரசேயென் பிதற்றுமுவந் தருளே

VI: 38: 43

It was about this time that the Swami was compelled to marry though he detested the very idea and resisted to his utmost. His mother, brothers and sisters pulled him to the yoke of wedlock. They caught hold of an old ascetic who as an intimate friend of the Swami. He persuaded the young Swami to marry and this has been referred to in the Song of Grace.

முன்மணத்திற் சுந்தரரை முன்வலுவிற கொண்டதுபோல்
என்மணத்தில் நீவந் திடாவிடினும் - நின்கணத்தில்
ஒன்று மொருகணம்வந் துற்றழைக்கிற் செய்ததன்றி

So he was forced to marry Thanammal, daughter of one of his sisters. It is said that he was completely engrossed in reading the sacred hymns of Thiruvachagam in the nuptial room. The bride was paralyzed by his powerful aura. All the attempts of his kith and kin persuading him to the worldly life were in vain. Hence his wife remained a virgin throughout her life and she passed away before the disappearance of the Swami.

In 1855 he visited Chidambaram and all along he had been pouring forth spontaneously hundred of verses.

He condescended to the affectionate request of one pious Venkada Reddiar to be his guest of honour at his residence at Karunkuzhi, a hamlet about three miles southeast of Vadalur. Here the Swami was living for a considerable time composing and reading verses even during the whole night.

The Water Lamp

The hostess Muthial Ammal used to keep in his room a wide oil lamp and an earthen vessel full of lamp oil. One day as the vessel was broken, the pious lady got one brand new mud vessel and had it filled with water for rendering it fit for future use. That same day she had to attend a social call of her relative. She in her hurry inadvertently kept the vessel of water and forgot to keep oil for the lamp.

The Swami, who as usual was absorbed in his search for the Supreme Light, without examining the contents of the new vessel, was making use of it to keep the light burning throughout the night without experiencing the least hindrance to his work. The next morning the lady of the house returned and realized her folly but was wonder-struck at the miracle. To this incident the Swami has drawn pointed attention in one of his verses.

செய்விளக்கும் புகழுடைய சென்னநகர்
நண்பர்களே செப்பக் கேளீர்
நெய்விளக்கே போன்றொருதண் ணீர்விளக்கும்
எரிந்தது சந்நிதியின் முன்னே

A contemporary celebrity Sri Chidambaraswamy in his eulogy has also referred to the same miraculous event for the sacred Song of Grace of the Swami, Thiruarutpa.

" தண்ணீர் விளக்கெரித்த தன்மைபோல் மாந்தர்கள்தம்
உண்ணீர் சிவம்விளங்க ஓங்குவிக்கும் - கண்மணியாம்
நங்கள் இராமலிங்க னல்லஅருட்பா முறையைத்
துங்கமுற மாணா தொழு"

Day in and day out he was praying in frantic ecstasy. The perennial stream of inspiring verses kept on flowing towards the ocean of Supreme Grace.

O Ocean of Compassion, nectar of my soul, cure of my ills, how shall I mouth Thy glory; Thy grace readily showers upon true and loving devotees. My supreme master, at Thy feet do I take refuge. I fully surrender unto Thee. O Father, Mother, my All, O Vastness of mercy, All-knowing, accept me and save me. Could I forget Thee? If it so happens, I will die instantaneously. I adjure. Would you forget me? Then, O Father what shall I do? Where shall I go? To Whom shall I speak? Lord, Kinder to me than a mother, I am rejoicing in the thought that Thy benevolent Grace that sustains the whole universe shall not forget me if you wouldst. Forget me not my Lord but favour me with Thy gracious Light expeditiously.

உன்னைமறந் திடுவேனோ மறப்பறியேன் மறந்தால்
உயிர்விடுவேன் கணந்தரியேன் உன்னாணை யிதுநீ
என்னைமறந் திடுவாயோ மறந்திடுவாய் எனில்யான்
என்னசெய்வேன் எங்குறுவேன் எவர்க்குரைப்பேன் எந்நாய்
அன்னையினுந் தயவுடையாய் நீமறந்தாய் எனினும்
அகிலமெலாம் அளித்திடுநின் அருள்மறவா தென்றே
இன்னுமிகக் களித்திங்கே இருக்கின்றேன் மறவேல்
இதுதருணம் அருட்ஜோதி எனக்குவிரைந் தருளே.

VI: 31: 7

The Swami betook himself to Vadalur to perpetuate his spiritual mission. He was inspired to choose this obscure little village. It is almost at the centre of an equilateral triangle of three great temples of Chidambaram in the south and Vridhachalam in the west and Thiruppathirupuliyur in the northeast. The passion of his devotion went on yearning day and night with a flood of emotional songs.

O God! Shall I, the meek self be able to get the acquaintance of your loving sages and saints who being free from egoism remain replete

with the nectar of your Grace? Shall I be able to dispense with the paining heat of the worldly life and to get my mind cooled by feasting on their words? Shall I be able to get into the abode of Absolute Knowledge where I may rest for all times without any feeling of day or night on the bed of silence and peace that gives me all the best? Shall I be able to enjoy that state of transcendent divine bliss in this very life itself?

தம்மைமறந் தருளமுத முண்டு தேக்குந்
 தகையுடையார் திருக்கூட்டஞ் சார்ந்து நாயேன்
 வெம்மையெலாந் தவிர்ந்துமனங் குளிரக் கேள்வி
 விருந்தருந்தி மெய்யறிவாம் வீட்டி லென்றுஞ்
 செம்மையெலாந் தருமெளன அணைமேற் கொண்டு
 செறியிரவு பகலொன்றுந் தெரியா வண்ணம்
 இம்மையிலே யெம்மையினுங் காணாச் சுத்த
 இன்பநிலை யடைவேனோ! ஏழை யேனே.

I: 5: 93

Athmic Benefit

The Swami repeatedly preached that the aim of human life on earth is to hasten to acquire the Supreme Grace for the attainment of the benediction of the soul (Anmalabam). The achievement will lead one to the ultimate realization of God Supreme. He was explaining that the atoms of the human body of impure element will be converted into pure atoms of pure elements. It will be a body of light with a golden hue and it will never perish. This is possible by the true identification of his doctrine Suddha Sanmargam with the Grace of God.

The pre-requisite for this identification is devotion to God. The Swami appealed to the masses that the real form of worship of God is to be kind and compassionate towards all living creatures (i.e.) the manifestations of God and thereby develop the love of God. The Swami explained that God Almighty is in the form of supreme Truth called Arutperumjothi - The Supreme Grace Light. He is the universal Dancer. The purpose of his cosmic dance is to redeem the souls from bondage and to shower His Grace for their eternal Bliss. The place of his dance is the heart of those who regard without any kind of refraction of mind, all living beings as equal to them and who feel that it is their foremost duty to see them all live in happiness.

எத்துணையும் பேதமுறாது எவ்வுயிருந்
 தம்முயிர்போல் எண்ணி யுள்ளே
 ஒத்துரிமை உடையவராய் உவக்கின்றார்

யாவர் அவர் உளந்தான் சுத்த
சித்துருவாய் எம்பெருமான் நடம்புரியும்
இடமெனநான் தெரிந்தேன் அந்த
வித்தகர்தம் அடிக்கவேல் புரிந்திடஎன்
சிந்தைமிக விழைந்த தாலோ.

VI: 121: 2

As He is dancing in all live creatures in the miniature form of Grace-Light, Love and Compassion shown towards them become well nigh recoiled as love of God. In showing love to fellow-beings there should be no discrimination of caste, colour, creed, custom, country and even of sex. He condemned the orthodox system of caste and community. He denounced the superstitious faith and false notions of the people.

The saint pointed out that the souls of all the human beings are equal. One should realize that the God who is manifest in one's own soul and spirit is equally manifest in others also. When the universality of all the fellow-beings is clearly understood, love and affection for others and the feelings of reverence for life in general, will develop spontaneously. This will result in *the universal spiritual communion* (ஆன்மநேய ஒருமைப்பாடு). By this unique but natural principle, the saint contemplated at the integration of the entire human society. He aimed at a world union. In other words he visualized one God and one world in the universal communion of souls. Many a hundred joined the saint as followers.

The Charity House

On the 23rd May 1867 he founded The Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Dharmasalai to extend hospitality with unstinted hand to many a weary traveler and indigent old persons. The inauguration ceremony was celebrated with due pomp and solemnity and it is said that about 10,000 people were fed on a lavish scale for three consecutive days. Under the aegis of this poor-feeding centre and within its own precincts, the Swami got out the first part of his venerable and impressive treatise on compassion towards all living beings. (Jeevakarunya Ozhukkam) - (ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கம்)

Birth in this world as human beings is ordained only to earn the Grace of God. By all efforts we must strive to attain His Grace. It is obtained by the exercise of kindness to all live creatures and incessant love of God. His Grace shall surely flow in such souls. By His Grace we can attain Eternal Bliss even in this birth. For attaining this Bliss the

Swami ordained his Sanmargam or path of righteousness. He preached that in his path no one shall taste of death. (என் மார்க்கம் இறப்பொழிக்கும் சன்மார்க்கம் தானே). It can be called the true path common to all religions and is true for all times. Immortality will lead to Supreme Bliss which is styled as the benefit of the soul. (ஆன்மலாபம்)

The life breath of Sanmargam is compassion to all living things. Kindness to living things is inherent in every human being. This feeling must grow more and more to elicit the Grace of God. As God is manifest in all living beings, kindness and compassion shown to the living things is kindness and love shown to God. Hence the love of God or God's Grace shall flow into the very form of the compassionate being. The aim of this compassionate life is to transform and embody oneself as kindness itself and receive the Grace of God. To be the recipient of the Grace of God one should become kindness incarnate. The feelings of fellowship and unity among all beings should be firmly established. What is this compassion about? The best form of compassion is giving food to persons who are unable to work and earn their food and to those who are deaf, blind and infirm without questioning as to their caste, community, creed, colour, conduct or country. It is also to relieve the hunger of beasts, birds, insects and plants realizing that God is present in every being.

The Swami was residing here at Vadalur and used to give elaborate discourses to his disciples. Many visitors thronged to Vadalur not to hear and follow him but to witness his miracles. The hungry people were fed and the sickly cured of their diseases. Great scholars of different philosophic and religious schools visited him. Many got their doubts clarified and a few got snubbed when they tried to show off their skill.

The Swami detested the very thought of non-vegetarianism. It is said that the soothing and kind look of the Swami itself was enough for several hundreds of non-vegetarians to undergo immediate conversion to vegetarianism. He vehemently condemned killing of animals of all kinds and eating them. He swears that one even capable of transforming the male into female and vice versa in moment, and of providing life to the dead, cannot be called a saint, if he is bent upon killing and eating the live creatures.

மருவாணைப் பெண்ணாக்கி ஒருகணத்திற்
கண்விழித்து வயங்கு மப்பெண்
உருவாணை உருவாக்கி இறந்தவரை
எழுப்புகின்ற உறுவ னேனும்

கருவாணை யுறஇரங்காது உயிருடம்பைக்
கடிந்துண்ணுங் கருத்த னேல்எங்
குருவாணை யெமதுசிவக் கொழுந்தாணை
ஞானியெனக் கூறொ ணாதே.

II: 100: 1

While preaching his philosophic doctrine of Sanmargam the Swami was verily the incarnation of compassion. He declared most emphatically in one of his verses that there was no difference between compassion and himself and that if he had to part with compassion he would be no more. His reverence for life cannot be better stated than in the following verse. It is a unique song of life.

My Lord, whenever I saw crops withering for want of water my heart too did wither. When I happened to see the poor exhausted due to starvation even after begging at every door with their hunger never quenched, my heart throbbed. When I came across people suffering from chronic diseases I was overwhelmed with grief. When I met spotlessly honourable men but totally depressed on account of poverty, I too got depressed.

வாடிய பயிரைக் கண்டபோ தெல்லாம்
வாடினேன் பசியினால் இளைத்தே
வீடுதோ றிரந்தும் பசியறா தயர்ந்த
வெற்றரைக் கண்டுளம் பதைத்தேன்
நீடிய பிணியால் வருந்துகின் றோரென்
நேருறக் கண்டுளந் துடித்தேன்
ஈடினமா னிகளாய் ஏழைகளாய்நெஞ்
சிலைத்தவர் தமைக்கண்டே யிலைத்தேன்

VI: 21: 58

It looks as though a society under the name of Samarasa Veda Sanmarga Sangam was founded at about this time. Later the Swami re-named it as Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Sangam. The accomplishment of the members of this society seems to have been very high and supernatural. The Swami sings that no one except the divine members of this society (VI: 110: 24) can prevent the inevitable death of mortals. He has proclaimed that he was ordained by the will of God to be born in this world in the present era just to correct the society which is darkened and to enlist all human beings in the society of universal spiritual communion (VI:93:9) in order to enjoy eternal Bliss in this world itself.

"Members of the spiritual commune. I bow to Thy feet. Enlist me as one among you. Worship only our Almighty, the Divine Lord."

சன்மார்க்க சங்கத்தீர் சிற்றடியேன் உமது
தாள்வணங்கிச் சாற்றுகின்றேன் தயவினொடுங் கேட்பீர்
என்மார்க்கத் தெனைநுமக்குள் ஒருவனெனக் கொள்வீர்
எல்லாஞ்செய் வல்லநம திறைவனையே தொழுவீர்

VI: 132: 58

Thus pouring forth profusely in ecstatic delight, the Swami was preaching universal love. While singing His Glory the Swami gradually imbibed His Grace. The Supreme Grace, the Mother descended on him. The more he ascended in his holy pursuit the more was the descent of Divinity in him. But he was not tired of acquiring the Supreme Grace. He used to divulge his sacred path, the path of light, the unique Sanmargam for attaining immortality. This righteous path will ultimately lead to enjoyment of eternal bliss in God even in this birth.

God Supreme is the fountain-head of true happiness. He penetrates every part of the minds of those who have no malice. He occupies their intelligence in full. He fills His Grace in every pore of their bones, in their flesh, in their senses and the sense organs, in the five element that constitute their human body, in the soul and its innate love. He is the Divine River of compassion that springs within them, becomes brimful and overflows with Grace and Bliss.

While propounding his philosophy, the Swami was not unmindful of the worldly people who could never be levered up. Though at one time he advises his mind to leave them out if they are adamant not to follow his path, he is so kind as to entreat them pursue at least a better and God-conscious way of life. The happiness resulting in his path of Sanmargam has been divided into three kinds enjoyable in three ways of life. The first kind of life consists in enjoying all the worldly benefits. Such persons will be endowed with all the humane characteristics and live well in this birth. The second is similar to the first but enjoyable for a longer period in the next birth.

The third kind is life in this world enjoying eternal happiness. It is one of self-realisation and realization of God. This is a unique life of immortality to enjoy the benefit of the soul. (ஆன்மலாபம் - Athmic benefit) To lead this life of deathlessness Vallalar entreated the whole

world. His thundering call to life divine and his pathetic appeals to follow his revelations were not heard in his days. But he marched on to enjoy the beatific splendour in his path of light. (ஒளிநெறி - Olineri) However he taught his disciples to realize in themselves the supreme spiritual light by absolute surrender, prayer and meditation.

The Publication of the Divine Song of Grace

During the nights the saint used to pray and pour out hymns and psalms. Evidences show that in 1867, the first disciple of the Swami, Velayutha Mudaliar after a good deal of persuasion got the permission of his master, collected the verses, compiled them into four cantos and published them with the title *Thiru Arutpa* (Divine Song of Grace) sung by the benevolent giver of the spiritual light - Ramalinga Swami. The disciple sang the history of the compendium in 63 verses and appended it.

Soon after this publication a dissident group of people headed by a Jaffna Scholar of fame, Arumuga Navalar by name, wrote a rejoinder (போலி அருட்பா மறுப்பு). It appeared with the authorship of Thiagesa Mudaliar of Mavandoor but it did not escape severe criticism by the Swami's party. Pamphlets on either side accumulated. Arumuga Navalar sought the aid of the court of law to put down the title of the book. His contention was that the verses of the Swami should not be called the song of Grace as the attributes assigned here would be applicable only to the verses of the four great earlier saints of the Tamil country and not to the verses of this up-start.

It is said that summons were issued by the then High Court of Manjakuppam (Cuddalore N.T.). It seems that the swami appeared at the threshold of the court hall only at the strike of the hour eleven, when all the persons of both the parties including Arumuga Navalar had already assembled. The judge was keenly watching the reverential feelings of all those assembled for the hearing and especially of Arumuga Navalar when he too rose up from his seat as a token of respect for the Swami. It is said that the Swami went straight to his seat, paid his respects to the court and walked out. All except the English judge stood up in reverence for the Swami. When the plaintiff was questioned as to the propriety of his showing respect even to his respondent, the scholarly Navalar explained that it was a custom of the country to show respect to a Saint. The judge immediately attributed that saintliness which demanded

involuntary reverence by the opponent to the greatness and sanctity of his hymns and set aside the suit in question.

Thus the slings of calumny and condemnation were ably met. However, the orthodox revolt is still clinging in certain corners where wanton ignorance and traditional superstition prevail. The religious fanatics feel even in 1968 that their traditional convention of castes and their communal supremacy have been shattered by the revolutionary doctrine of Sanmargam.

The sacred Thiru Arutpa (Divine song of Grace) is one of the greatest master-pieces in Tamil. In expounding Spiritual Bliss it is next to none. T.V.G.Chetty says that in its elegance of expression and chaste poetic diction, melodious and mellifluous composition it may be said to be as good as the great Thiruvachangam of Saint Manickavasagar and even greater than it. The distinguishing feature lies in the wonderful display of lofty and noble ideals and erudite exposition of the greatest Truths and the hidden mysteries of Nature. The saint has actually unfolded the heavenly secrets of God-hood in his verses for the benefit of all the souls in the universe. The profundity of thought, the cogency of narration and simple and outstanding principles of the philosophy such as the nature and attributes of the soul, the nature and attributes of God, the symphony of human life with the divine life are worthy of note. The tremendous transformations of the mortal human frame into the body of Love, into the body of Grace and ultimately into the body of Bliss (Suddhadeham, Pranava deham and Gnana deham அன்புரு, அருளுரு, இன்புரு) and the great experiences in these respective bodies (உயிரனுபவம், அருளனுபவம், சிவானுபவம்) have been marvelously treated perhaps for the first time in the Swami's verses.

A Miracle

While he was thus preaching and practicing his philosophy at Vadalur, there was a devoted disciple Vedanayagam Pillai of Cuddalore. His son Ayyaswamy was very seriously laid up at his house and he was actually struggling for life. The father weeping and brooding mentally, prayed ardently to his master to save his son. The saint was at Vadalur preaching to his devotees. But, anon, he appeared at the threshold of the house of his disciple and tapped at the door. Vedanayagam Pillai was surprised. He led him to his dying son. The Swami smeared sacred ash all over the body of Ayyaswamy. In a moment he was completely cured and

he rose up. Advising the wonder-struck household to pray to God, the Swamy started out at that dead of night. Subsequently Vedanayagam Pillai set out to Vadalur with his son in a country cart. The Swami came out of his dwelling, offered sacred ash and requested them not to reveal his trip to Cuddalore. Both of them were stunned to hear that the Swami had been preaching throughout that whole night at Vadalur! Thus he wrought many miracles not for the pleasure of it but out of necessity. But at every time he hushed them up.

It is written that he was a straight slender figure of moderate height. He had a long sharp nose and broad soothing eyes sparkling with spiritual fire. He looked emaciated by hard fasting. He took food once in two or three days and that too in a very limited quantity. He always put up a countenance of sorrow. He never liked people to hail him as Swami. He could very easily read the mind of others. He used to disappear for many days and none could guess his whereabouts. He was in short, meek and humble, loving and gentle, simple and plain. His disciple Velayuda Mudaliar later sang his glory as the God Himself:-

காணுவாரிரு கண்களும் மனமும்
கரைந்து தங்களைக் காணிலராக
மாணுலாந் திருவருளினால் விழுங்கி
வைத்து மாசறக் கழுவியின் பூட்டும்
தாணுவாகிய சரணவாரிச மென்
தலைக்கு மாமுடியாக்கிய வமல
வேணினோஞ் சிவஷண்முக சிவவோம்
இராமலிங்கவோம் சிவாய சற்குருவோம்.

-அருள்நாம மந்திராயிர்தம்

He has exclaimed that his mortal body became resplendent with a golden hue (பொன்னுருவம்) and transformed into a body of love (அன்புருவம்). The changes that take place during this transformation have been exquisitely narrated by the Swami. There is no myth nor concoction. Everything is stated with scientific accuracy.

The saint was not satisfied with this divine stage. He has sung in his ecstatic delight for the flow of Grace more and more. His body of love has been further transformed into an effulgent body known as the body of Grace (அருளுருவம்). Unlike the previous one this body cannot be perceived by the sense of touch. It is the Grace that is experienced in this body. This is known as the body of light and also Pranava deham. It will never perish and will not be susceptible to the great elements of

Nature. The aspiration of the saint to embrace and merge with the God Supreme was fulfilled at this stage.

"My entire body sends forth an aroma of camphor which is *ipso facto* a proof of my being at-One-with my Lover, the Almighty."

கற்பூர மணக்கின்ற தென்னுடம்பு முழுதும்
கணவர்திரு மேனியிலே கலந்தமண மதுதான்

VI: 82: 10

This is the actual acid test of those who have really enjoyed the Supreme God in themselves. It was perhaps at this time that his disciples tried to photograph the Swamy. The famous photographer of the day, one Masilamany Mudaliar of Madras was brought. He tried eight times but all the plates showed only his clothing and no part of his body was photographed. An explanation is offered by one of his disciples Kandaswamy Pillai who has sung the life of the saint verbatim. The body of the saint had been already converted into a body of light and hence no shadow of his frame was cast on the plate.

செப்பும் பிரணவ தேக இலக்கணம்
தெரிந்திட வருவருவத்
தேகத்தைக் காட்டிட வடிச்சுவடது
தெரிந்திடா வகை மருவ
சென்னை மாசிலாமணி படங் கொள்ளத்
தேராமல் எண்தரம் ஏமாறச் செய்துள்ள

-இராமலிங்க சுவாமிகள் சரித்திரக் கீர்த்தனை

However much the Swami was kind and loving, many did not pay heed to his words. But look at the magnanimous disposition of his heart! "O ye, My people, you make bundles of bad acts. What are you going to tell before the judgement of Death? O worldly mad ones, you do evils horrible to do. You speak hard words horrible to utter. You adhere to bad things horrible to approach. You lead a conduct horrible to lead. Alas! You know not how to think with raining eyes upon the Master who guards you even like the eyes. Fie upon your pretensions." (VI: 107: 10)

He used to advise the people not to burn but to bury the dead. He pointed out that burning the dead is tantamount to killing. His contention is that some at any rate will come to life if only they are buried. Those few who had gone ahead in the pursuit of the Divine and had attained a

fairly higher stage of spiritual experience and yet died would come to life again.

"Ye, my people, you do not know who has evolved spiritually and who has not. Alas! Really enlightened persons will tremble to take shelter and sleep under your care lest you should burn them alive." (VI: 111: 5: 7) Thus he sounds a note of caution and adds, "O people of the world, ye simply give yourselves up to wild expressions of grief at the time of removal of your own dear and near ones who have become dead. Where is the obstacle for you to attain the great boon of Immortality? Perhaps it never struck you. Are you prepared to undergo sickness and old age? Even the good and the holy when they recall these, quake with fear. It is the splendid Sanmarga path only that can conquer sickness, old age and death; wherefore, hearken up to this and come hither; ye can in this very birth enter into the true everlasting life and enjoy eternal happiness at once".

இறந்தவரை எடுத்திடும்போ தரற்றுகின்நீ ருலகீர்
இறவாத பெருவரநீ ரேனடைய மாட்டீர்
மறந்திருந்தீர் பிணிமூப்பில் சம்மதமோ நுமக்கு
மறந்துமிதை நினைக்கினல்லோர் மனநடுங்குங் கண்டீர்
சிறந்திடுசன் மார்க்கமொன்றே பிணிமூப்பு மரணம்
சேராமல் தவிர்த்திடுங்காண் தெரிந்துவம்மின் இங்கே
பிறந்தபிறப் பிதிற்றானே நித்தியமெய் வாழவு
பெற்றிடலாம் பேரின்ப முற்றிடலாம் விரைந்தே

VI: 110: 25

I prayed for an effulgent body that body that endures for ever against wind, earth, sky, fire, water, sun, moon, death, disease, weapons of killing, planets, injuries of evil deeds or anything else. He granted me anon and I have such a body. Think it not a mean gift. O people, seek refuge in my Father who is the lord of the Beatific Splendour that immortalizes even the material body.

காற்றாலேசார்வீரே!

VI: 132: 59

"O, ye people of the world! It is true and absolutely true indeed that this transient nest of worms engulfed by shackles (human body) shall be transformed into an eternal entity of effulgence by the acquisition and identification of Suddha Sanmargam."

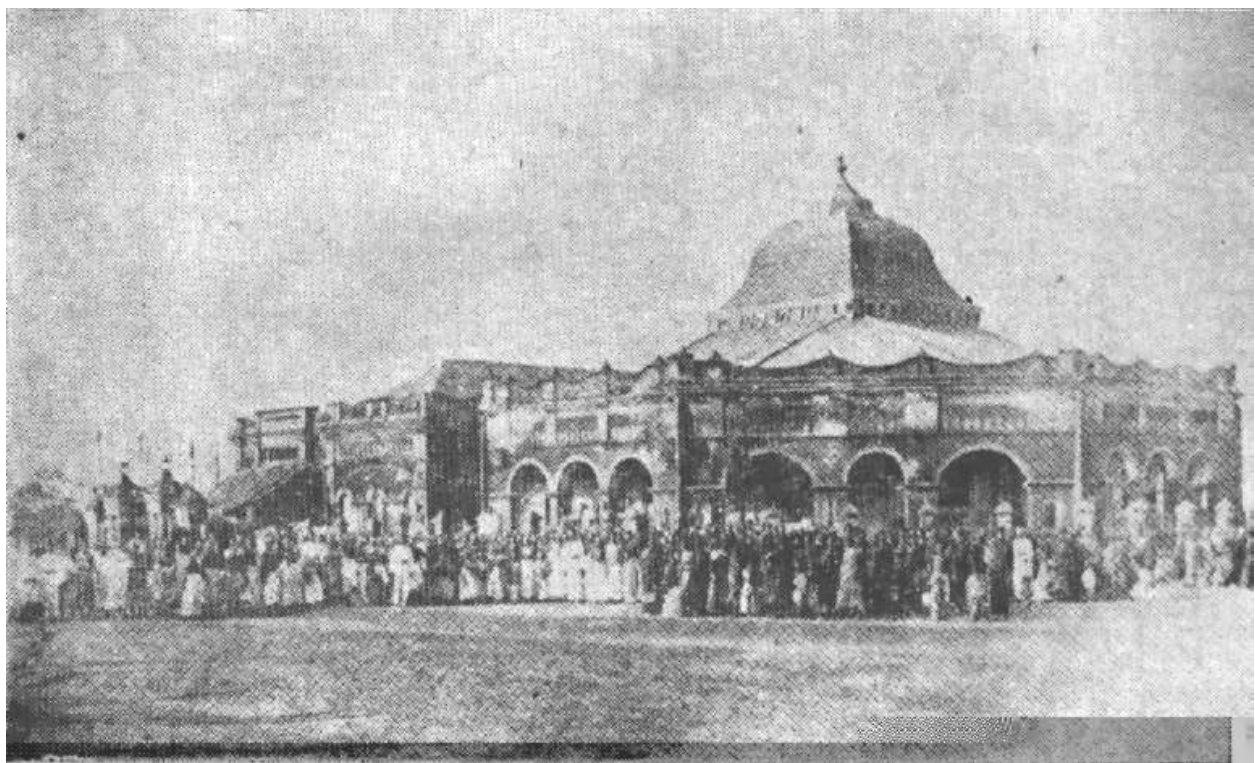
பொத்திய மலப்பிணிப் புழுக்கு ரம்பைதான்
சித்தியற் சுத்தசன் மார்க்கச் சேர்ப்பினால்
நித்திய மாகியே நிகழு மென்பது
சத்தியஞ் சத்தியஞ் சகத்து ளீர்களே

VI: 132: 54

The Temple of Wisdom

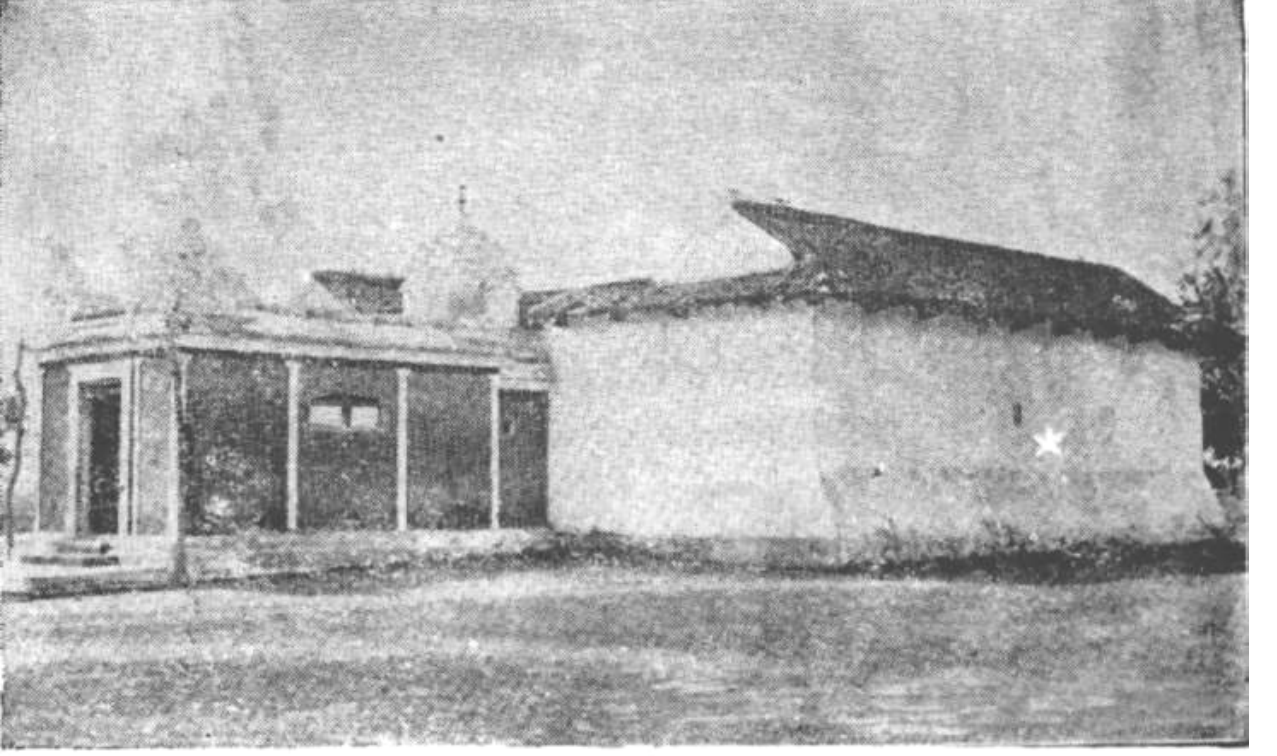
In 1870 the Swami retreated to a hamlet, Mettukuppam about three miles south of Vadalur and lived there in a hut. This is now known as (Siddhi Valaga Thirumaligai; சித்திவளாகத் திருமாளிகை) the sacred mansion of miracle. He used to frequent Vadalur and meet his disciples. One day he disclosed to them that he desired to construct a temple of wisdom (ஞானசபை) or a temple of humanity as T.V.G.Chetty would put it. The Swami had visualized this temple within himself and he requested his disciples to have it built in six months as he designed. By about the middle of 1871 the foundation was laid and the construction was over within the stipulated time in 1872. The Swami called it Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Gnana Sabai (சமரச சுத்த சன்மார்க்க சத்திய ஞானசபை). This temple which stands on an octagonal masonry cellar-terrace resembling a full-blown lotus flower, is surmounted by a lofty cone-shaped roofing overlaid with thick plates of brass more or less after the Gothic fashion and crowned with a stupi at the top. The whole structure exhibiting as it does, a conception and style quite of his own is a peculiar and quaint specimen of architectural beauty. It looks much like a chariot when seen at a distance, impresses the mind of the beholder in a manner never to be forgotten and commands reverence and devotion from him. Detailed description of this Sabai and its significance may be found later in the chapter, Space and Light.

The Inauguration was held on 25-01-1872. The curtains were removed one by one and the glowing lamp within signifying the light of Grace was worshipped by thousands of devotees. The spiritual light of human beings is hidden from view until the seven curtains (the Devil Power) that hang flat and intercept it are removed one after another. That is to say one cannot identify one-self and realize his own spiritual light unless all the shackles and lust of the individual which conceal the light are thoroughly purged of. How rational and universally acceptable is his exposition of the spiritual laws in relation to the individual soul. Hence this



சத்திய ஞானசபை
The Temple of Wisdom

GNANA SABAI



சீத்திவளாகத் திருமானிகை

* சுவாமிகள் மறைந்த திருஅறை.

**SIDDHI VALAGA THIRUMALIGAI (SACRED MANSION OF
MIRACLE)**

* SACRED PLACE WHERE SWAMI HAD MERGED WITH GOD

temple of wisdom graphically explains the momentous facts of life. The Swami has pointed out that the Gnana Sabai has been founded only at His will and He-The Universal Grace Light-has enshrined in it in the form of light. Therefore when the human beings strive hard to remove the first three thick veils of lust which hide their souls, the rest of the four curtains of shackles will be automatically removed by the Grace of God. Then the spiritual light or the light of the soul will be visible or the real self-realisation will result. When one is able to see his own spiritual light he is sure by his penance and meditation, by his reverence for His creations and by ardent prayer and introspection to merge in the universal Grace Light - the Supreme God or to evolve into Immanence.

The Swami wrote out on 18-07-1872 how the Gnana Sabai should be maintained and how the worship should be conducted. He has stipulated that there should be no ritual except the burning of camphor. People should silently pray with love of God and enter into ecstasy.

The Marvel of the Age

Ever since the foundation stone was laid for the Gnana Sabai, the Swami was in the habit of shutting himself up in his hermitage for a few days and then emerging from his self-imposed privacy to engage himself in his lecturing campaign. This went on for some time. About the later half of 1873 the Swami, for the first time at his residence, hoisted his Sanmarga flag as a token of achievement of Supreme Grace Light. It appears that he explained the significance of the flag and preached to them to pray to God for eternal happiness. He gave thrilling lectures on universal spiritual communion.

"O my people! Waste not your precious life in falsehood and vain gossip. The light is in you. Would you fall into the dark well even when your own light in hand is burning bright? Meditate upon the Lord of Light seated in your heart." The Swami entreated the entire humanity to pray to the Supreme Grace Light so that they may also achieve the Athmic benefit. Towards the end of 1873 he kept out his oil lamp which he had been using and asked his disciples to worship the light of the lamp and keep it burning for ever. He explained that they should imagine that the Supreme Grace Light is manifested in it and pray to Him for Grace.

The Saint was a bit vexed when his spiritual mission did not take as deep a root as it should. He said "We disclosed the treasure but no one

was willing to have it. We close down." (கடையை விரித்தோம் கொள்வாரில்லை; கடையைக் கட்டிக்கொண்டோம்). It appears that he remarked at an earlier date "You my dear ones! You seem to have decided not to hear me. You may not hear me now. There are some enlightened persons in the far north. They will be going over here. They will learn this philosophy and preach unto you. Then perhaps, you may listen."

When he found that his direct appeal to the masses fell on deaf ears, he resorted to appealing to God. Most painfully he asks. "O Lord of Light. What is the use of repeating my humble desires when you know my mind? When will all the world realizing the universal spiritual communion enjoy eternal happiness devoid of miseries and death? When shall I, on seeing their joy, be happy?"

கள்ளவா தனையைக் களைத்தருள் நெறியைக்
காதலித் தொருமையிற் கலந்தே
உள்ளவா றிந்த வலகெலாங் களிப்புற்
றோங்குத லென்றுவந் துறுமோ
வள்ளலே அதுகண் டடியனே னுள்ள
மகிழ்தலென் றோவெனத் துயர்த்தேன்
ஓள்ளியோய் நினது திருவுள மறிந்த
துரைப்பதென் னடிக்கடி உனக்கே.

VI: 23: 10

The Disappearance

Friday the Thirtieth January, 1874 was an auspicious day. The star Punarpoosam was in ascendancy before the middle of night. The star Poosam was approaching. He wrote out and released a bulletin of wonder (அற்புதப் பத்திரிக்கை) in which he has drawn the attention of human society to his sublime realization, his greatest achievements and his eternal happiness in the kingdom of God Supreme.

After a lapse of 50 years, 3 months and 24 days of humane life, the Swami laid himself on a wooden plank in his hut and spoke out "My beloved ones! I have to be out of your sight for a time. Don't Worry. Keep the light of the lamp (Gnana Deepam - ஞான தீபம்) burning forever. Imagine that God is there and worship the light. You will be amply rewarded. I am in this body now and after a while I shall enter into all the bodies of His creation. Close the door and lock it outside. The room if ordered to be opened will only be void." Trembling disciples could not

bear the parting and thrilling message of their loving master. Nor did they dare to lock the room outside. They simply closed the door for the moment although they locked the door on the third day out of sheer fear of disobedience of the order. Wondering mystery still hangs upon this marvel of the age.

The Sequel

The disappearance of the Swami did cast a gloom all over the place. It is said that after a few days of the occurrence and on receipt of the police report, the Collector of South Arcot Mr.J.H.Garstin, I.C.S., and Mr.George Banbury, I.C.S., the then member of the Board of Revenue (Some say that the officer who came with the Collector was the then District Medical Officer) with the then Tahsildar Mr.Venkatarama Iyer hastened on horses to Mettukuppam. They launched an elaborate enquiry. The people of the village along with the disciples of the Swami were unable to express or suppress their painful feelings. The officers went round and round the hut into which the Swami had vanished. Finding nothing to lend the least support for any sort of suspicion, they concluded that he must be a Great Soul. The Collector asked the throbbing disciples what the Swami had asked them to do. They said that they were to feed the poor. Both the officials contributed twenty rupees and rode their way back!

Later in 1878 the Manual of South Arcot was published. There are references in it to the Swami and his disappearance written by the then Collector Mr.J.H.Garstin. He has stated that in 1874 Ramalinga Swami entered into a room at Mettukuppam and asked his devotees to lock it outside. He did not come out at all. His disciples believe that he has merged with God.

It is said that for one full year that is, till the next Posam day of January 1875 the door was not opened and that when it was opened it was only void. The oil lamp which the Swami wished to be kept burning for ever is still burning. This light of wisdom (Gnana Deepam) is looked after with fostering care at the Divine Mansion of Miracles (சித்தி வளாகத் திருமாளிகை).

Thus we find that the Swami, while spreading and perpetuating his path of light (ஒளி நெறி) started with the light of Love (அன்பு விளக்கு) at the charity house (தருமச்சாலை).The second was the light of Grace

(அருள்விளக்கு) which he installed at the temple of Wisdom (ஞானசபை). The third and the unique one was the light of Wisdom (ஞானவிளக்கு) which would ultimately shape the devour aspirant to merge in the light of Bliss (இன்பவிளக்கு) (i.e.) The Supreme Grace-Light (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி).

2. The Great Achievements

Abstract

Ramalinga Swami is a saint of God. According to him the aim of life is to attain eternal Bliss in this world by rigorously following four different disciplines pertaining to the senses, the mind, the life and the soul. Just like Saint Manickavasagar, one should convert one's mortal body into the body of love, the body of Grace and finally into the body of Bliss. The experience in these divine bodies are the greatest achievements of human life. The happiness experienced in the body of love is known as the achievement of the soul. The enjoyment in the body of Grace is the experience of the Supreme Grace of God. The realization of the Supreme God is possible only in the ultimately evolved body of Bliss. The experience at this transcendent stage is described as the benediction of the human soul, which the Swami achieved and evolved into Immanence. That is called the experience of the Supreme Auspicious Being - Siva. The Swami explains that the secret of the divine experiences and achievements has been disclosed to him by the Saint Thirugnanansambandar.

The Objectives

India is famous for the richness of her philosophic thought. It is a matter of common belief, at any rate, in this country, that the will of the Supreme Lord Almighty is carried out at all times and at every moment. The greatest thinkers of the world have come to realize that it is only at the will of God, that saints and philosophers appear on the soil here and there in human form as divine messengers to redeem the distress and monotony of the material life of the mortals. Ramalinga Swami is one such saint of God. He has evolved a unique philosophy of his own and he lived up to its maxims.

Apart from his eclectic poems of about 6000 verses, the Swami, by way of oral religious discourses to his disciples, has passed down to posterity, his prose works some of which explain the intricacies of spiritual experiences and the ultimate goal. The ultimate aim of man in the material world within the short span of his life should be, according to the Swami, the happy attainment of ANMALABAM (ஆன்மலாபம்) which he defines as the divine life which one leads, uninterrupted by space and

time, and undisturbed by any force or anything even to the minutest extent, after attaining eternal bliss of that Being which is manifested in itself by absolute reality and truth, by complete radiance and light and by abounding perfection and sweetness. This benediction of soul (Anmalabam) has four different phases such as (ஏமசித்தி, சாகாக்கல்வி, தத்துவ நிக்கிரகம், கடவுள் நிலையறிந்து அம்மயமாதல்) perfection in the art of converting base metal into gold, education in immortality, control of the senses and their accessories, the realization of God head and merging with the God Supreme.

Four different disciplines help one to attain the above mentioned four phases and they are described in detail by the Swami. The first of the four disciplines is itself a prelude to the other three disciplines and is called the discipline of the five sense (இந்திரிய ஒழுக்கம்). The Swami gives a code of twenty-one rules of spiritual discipline to be rigorously observed by the thirsting aspirants. The second is (கரண ஒழுக்கம்) the discipline of the four aspects of the mind (viz. Manam, Buddhi, Siddham, Ahangaram). In this, the aspirant should concentrate on the centre of the forehead (புருவமத்தி)(a little above the joint of the nasal bone and the frontal bone (i.e.) in between the eyebrows). He should not feel inquisitive about the failings of others. The third is the discipline of the life (ஜீவ ஒழுக்கம்) in which the aspirant should break the shackles of caste, creed, community, colour, faith, religion or country and should conduct himself so nobly as to be one with all human beings irrespective of sex. The fourth is the morale of the soul (ஆன்ம ஒழுக்கம்) in which the aspirant should discern the divinity in all living things from the elephant down to the smallest fly. The spiritual aspirant following these four codes of conduct steadily and ardently must necessarily gain and attain the four great objectives of human life on earth such as (1) Emasiddhi (ஏமசித்தி) (2) Sahakalvi (சாகாக்கல்வி) (3) Thatvanikragam (தத்துவ நிக்கிரகம்) and (4) Realization of the Supreme God by becoming one with Him (கடவுள் நிலையறிந்து அம்மயமாதல்).

The realization of the four objectives is accomplished in three successive achievements at three different stages of evolution of the soul. It is gratifying to note that all these three stages which have been perfectly enjoyed by the Swami himself (which will be dealt with elaborately later) had been fully realized by one of the four great saints of the Tamil country namely, Saint Manickavasagar. While singing in praise of the four saints and invoking their blessings according to the

tradition the Swami makes a happy reference to the attainment of Godhead by Manickavasagar (மாணிக்கவாசகர்).

மன்புருவ நடுமுதலா மனம்புதைத்து நெடுங்காலம்
என்புருவாய்த் தவஞ்செய்வா ரெல்லாரும் ஏமாக்க
அன்புருவம் பெற்றதன்பின் அருளுருவம் அடைந்துபின்னர்
இன்புருவம் ஆயினைநீ எழில்வாத லூரிறையே

IV: 12: 3

The substance of the verse is as follows:-

"While disappointed are those who have been meditating for ages by fixing their mind at the centre of the forehead and who thereby have become apparently skeletal beings, you, the Lord of Vadavur have attained the three successive stages of (Anburuvam, Aruluruvam and Inburuvam) body of Love, body of Grace, body of Bliss, one by one". The experiences that are enjoyed and realized in the three supreme stages of attainment of Godhead are respectively known as (உயிரனுபவம்) experience or realization of divine Life, (அருளுபவம்) experience or realization of divine Grace and (சிவானுபவம்) experience or realization of God Supreme.

The actual technique of the Sanmarga Philosophy has been dealt with by the Swami only in the invocations of Saint Thirugnanasambandar, another of the four great saints of Tamil land. These verses may be said to be the key to this philosophic doctrine. In one of them Ramalinga swami indicates that the only power which can dispense with the inseparable illusion and lust which have fastened themselves to the soul from its inception, is the realization and experience of the Supreme Grace. The prerequisite of this realization is the state of achievement of the divine life (உயிரனுபவம்).

பொத்திய மூலமலப்பிணி தவிர்க்கும்
பொருள்அரு ளனுபவம் அதற்குப்
பத்தியம் உயிரனுபவம் இதனைப்
பற்றறப் பற்றுதி யிதுவே
சத்தியமெனவென் றனக்கருள் புரிந்த
தனிப்பெருங் கருணையென் புகல்வேன்
முத்தியற் சிவிகை இவ்நந்தருள் நெறியின்
முதலர சியற்றிய துரையே.

IV: 9: 6

In another verse the Swami says as explained to him by this saint, Thirugnanasambandar, that in the event of one attaining the state of achievement of the divine Life (உயிரனுபவம்) the state of experience of the Grace Supreme (அருளுபவம்) will dawn upon one, and in this superfine state of transcendency the most superior and sublime state of experience and realization of God Supreme (சிவானுபவம்) will blossom.

உயிரனு பவமுற் றிடில்அத னிடத்தே
 ஓங்கரு ளனுபவ முறுமச்
 செயிரினல் லனுப வத்திலே சுத்த
 சிவவநு பவமுறு மென்றாய்
 பயிலும வானடிற் சிவைதரு ஞானப்
 பால்மகிழ்ந் துண்டுமெய்ந் நெறியாம்
 பயிர்தழைந் துறவைத் தருளிய ஞான
 பந்தனென் றோங்குசற் குருவே.

IV: 9: 2

In the subsequent verses while paying homage to this Saint, the Swami defines in detail the three great achievements such as (1) the achievement of the divine Life (2) the experience of the Supreme Grace and (3) the complete realization of and merging with the God Supreme in his Divine path of Samarasa Monism (சுத்தந்தோய்ந்த சமரசாத்துவிதம் - 1: 5: 5.)

The Achievement of the Divine Life (உயிரனுபவம்)

This is the preliminary state in which the soul is to enjoy in full the real and natural happiness it is entitled to without any restraint. A human being of this world from the moment of successful fertilization in his mother's womb suffers from some thing or other. In fact the sufferings which he has to undergo are also born along with him. The Swami has narrated the miseries of the foetus before birth and those of the child after birth in one of his great petitions to God. For those who take the sufferings of life seriously, life is monotonous. All seers of knowledge, ascetics of various ages and saints of different creeds and countries have been worrying about the miseries of life in this world. No living organism on earth or elsewhere will be happy to part with its own life. Life is sweet to all living things and death is always painful even to the highly enlightened souls. All the great saints and sages who have discovered solutions, ways and means to avoid the miseries of life, death, rebirth and so on preached only devotion to God. The Swami also, like

others before him in the line of descent of saints, stated that one should get out of the bondage for being bound to the boundless God Supreme.

பற்றற்றான் பற்றினையே பற்றியிடல் வேண்டுமது
பற்றற்றால் அன்றிப் பலியாதால் - பற்றற்றல்

I: 3: 624

The bondages of human beings are according to the Swami, with regard to the body, to the soul and to the enjoyment which one expects in these (தேகப்பற்று, ஜீவப்பற்று, போகப்பற்று). These bondages are thirty six in number. The moment the bondages and shackles are removed, there is the dawn of Grace of God in the individual, which alone can put down once and for all the miseries of life.

தத்துவ மனைத்தும் தவிர்த்து நான் தனித்த
தருணத்திற் கிடைத்த தொன் றென்கோ

VI: 51: 8

The achievement of the soul therefore rests upon the conquest of the shackles one by one. There are three steps to reach this state. The first step is to remove the bonds one by one. They are estimated to be ninety six although they are generally known to be briefly thrity six. It is said that the Lord Supreme brought down all the bonds under the control of the Swami and consoled him by granting the boon of deathlessness.

தத்துவ மெல்லாம்என் தன்வச மாக்கிச்
சாகாவ ரத்தையுந் தந்தெனைத் தேற்றி

VI: 33: 5

The Swami has indicated that as the Supreme Love infused itself in him all the bonds disintegrated once and for all and quietism (சத்துவம்) alone manifested itself in him.

தத்துவ மனைத்துந் தாம்ஒருங் கொழிந்திடச்
சத்துவ மொன்றே தனித்துநின் றோங்கிட

VI: 1: 1471

Now what are these shackles? According to the Swamy they are:

தஞ்சந் தருமலரோன் தத்துவமாம் பூதங்கள்
 அஞ்சம் பொறியஞ்சம் அஞ்சறிவும் அஞ்செனுமோர்
 வாக்குமுத லஞ்சமுற்று மாலோன்றன் தத்துவமாம்
 ஊக்குங் கலைமுதலா மோரேழும் - நீக்கியப்பால்
 மேவி விளங்குசுத்த வித்தைமுதல் நாதமட்டும்
 தாவி வயங்குசுத்த தத்துவத்தின் - மேவியகன்று
 அப்பால் அருள்கண் டருளால் தமைத்தாம் கண்டு

I: 3: 680 - 683

Brahma Thatvam (மலரோன் தத்துவம்)

1. Space	}	5 Elements
2. Air		
3. Fire		
4. Water		
5. Earth		
6. Body	}	5 Organs
7. Tongue		
8. Eyes		
9. Nose		
10. Ears		
11. Sensitivity	}	5 Senses
12. Taste		
13. Sight		
14. Smell		
15. Hearing		
16. Mouth	}	5 Different aspects of mind
17. Feet		
18. Hands		
19. Anus		
20. Sex organ		
21. Manam (மனம்)	}	*
22. Buddhi (புத்தி)		
23. Sitham (சித்தம்)		
24. Ahangaram (அகங்காரம்)		

* It appears that the Thatvas 21 to 24 have not been included by the Swami in the verses quoted above.

Vishnu Thatvam (மாலோன் தத்துவம்)

25. Kalai (கலை)
26. Viddhai (வித்தை)
27. Aragam (அராகம்)
28. Niyathi (நியதி)
29. Time (காலம்)
30. Mohini (மோகினி)
31. Purusha (புருஷன்)

Suddha Thatvam (சுத்த தத்துவம்)

32. Suddha Viddhai (சுத்த வித்தை)
33. Eswaram (ஈசுரம்)
34. Sadakkiyam (சதாக்கியம்)
35. Vindu (விந்து)
36. Nadam (நாதம்)

All these steps have to be trodden one by one and conquered with the help of Grace. After passing all these steps the Soul is said to reach the stage of Paranatham (பரநாதம்) where it realizes the Supreme Grace. At this very high spiritual plane, the soul is freed from the shackles and no longer are they able to bind and stupefy the soul. Now the soul losing the self and individuality, imbibes the Divine Grace. In other words the soul has become divine and dwells in the Grace of the Supreme God at this state of spiritual experience called (உயிரனுபவம்) the achievement of the soul.

தத்துவ நிலைகள் தனித்தனிஏறித் தனிப்பர நாதமாந் தலத்தே
ஒத்துஅதன் மயமாய் நின்னைநீ யின்றிஉற்றிடல் உயிரனுபவம்

IV: 9: 3

By now the human body of the five elements has transformed itself into Suddha deham (சுத்ததேகம்) or purified body or golden body composed of pure atoms of purified elements. The change over has been dealt with more briefly under the heading "Transformation" where the body of the aspirant is an incarnation of all compassion, all mercy and all love (அன்புருவம்).

The Experience of the Supreme Grace (அருளனுபவம்)

The Swami explains that if one attains this plane, the accomplishment of the next higher state of Divine experience is fructified.

உயிரநு பவமுற் றிடில்அத னிடத்தே
ஓங்கருள் அநுபவ முறும்அச்
செயிரினல் லநுப வத்திலே சுத்த
சிவவநு பவமுறும் என்றாய்

IV: 9: 2

Now what is this state of divine experience? This is called (அருளனுபவம்) the experience of the Supreme Grace. The soul of this plane of Paranatham dwelling in the Supreme Light of Grace in a blissful state and enjoying the sublime achievement and experience of the soul (உயிரநுபவம்) - Uiranubavam - and having been endowed with the sanctified golden body, is subjected further more to the hold of the Supreme Grace fully and completely for the evolution of the next higher plane. This transcendent plane of experience of the Grace (அருளனுபவம்) is achieved by divine pursuit. The soul is to enjoy the Supreme Grace.

தனிப்பர நாத வெளியின்மேல் நினது
தன்மயம் தன் மய மாக்கிப்
பனிப்பிலா தென்று முள்ளதாய் விளங்கிப்
பரம் பரத்து உட்புற மாகி
இனிப்புற வொன்றும் இயம்புறா வியல்பாய்
இருந்ததே அருளனு பவம்

IV: 9: 4

The divine soul is entertained bodily as a part and parcel of the Supreme Grace and is permeated through and through. It is enshrined in the divine Grace as an ever-existing and omnipresent object. It is to be found within the plane of Parambaram (பரம்பரம்). The profundity of the Grace Supreme is inconceivably pleasant. It exists pervading the universe as an inexplicable entity. This experience of the divine aspirant is known as the experience of the Supreme Grace (அருளனுபவம்). Words fail to explain the different aspects of this blissful stage. The body of the divine aspirant transforms itself into an incarnation of Grace.

Experience of the God Supreme (சிவானுபவம்)

The third and the ultimate state of the aspirant is the complete realization of the God Supreme (சிவானுபவம்). This state is explained by the Swami in the following lines.

உள்ளதாய் விளங்கும் ஒருபெரு வெளிமேல்
உள்ளதாய் முற்றுமுள் ளதுவாய்
நல்லதாய் எனதாய் நானதாய்த் தனதாய்
நவிறிறுந் தானதாய் இன்ன
விள் ளொணா அப்பால் அப்படிக்கு அப்பால்
வெறு வெளி சிவ-அனு பவம்என்று

IV: 9: 5

This is the most sublime and the highest plane of the most auspicious Godhead (சுத்தசிவம்). This is the all-pervading, all-knowing, all-embracing Super-Being. It is only at this plane that complete realization and complete merging with God is accomplished.

நானானான் தானானான் நானுந்நா னுமானான்

VI: 124: 1

Here and here alone the great realization "He thou art, thou art He, Ye enjoy in Him" is achieved. The Supreme combustion results in the inseparable monism of the highest order. This plane of transcendency soars higher and higher into the most superior Godhead. It is inconceivable, uninferable and unimaginable even by the heavenly powers and divine beings and deities of high order.

வான்காணா மறைகாணா மலரோன் காணான்
மால்காணான் உருத்திரன் மதித்துக் காணான்

I: 5: 49

This sublime achievement of the aspirant culminates in the complete union with the Lord Supreme for the eternal enjoyment of Supreme Bliss for ever and ever after. The experience of the Swami at this plane have spontaneously and profusely overflowed into many of his melting verses sung in ecstasy.

மாமாயை நீங்கினள்பொன் வண்ணவடி வற்றதென்றுஞ்
சாமா றிலையெனக்குத்தான்

VI: 109: 11

மன்னுகின்ற பொன்வடிவு மந்திரமாம் வடிவும்
வான்வடிவும் கொடுத்தெனக்கு மணிமுடியுஞ் சூட்டி

VI: 38: 61

சுத்த வடிவுஞ் சுகவடிவாம் ஓங்கார
நித்த வடிவு நிறைந்தோங்கு - சித்தெனுமோர்
ஞான வடிவுமிங்கே நான்பெற்றே நென்கெங்கும்
தானவிளை யாட்டியற்றத் தான்

VI: 109: 17

கண்டேன் சிற்றம்பலத் தானந்த நாடகங் கண்டுகளி
கொண்டேன் எல்லாம் வல்லசித்தனைக் கூடிக் குலவியமு
துண்டேன் மெய்ஞ்ஞான வருவடைந்தேன்

VI: 132: 74

பொன்னுரு தந்தானென் றூதூது சங்கே

VI: 166: 5

சிவமாக்கிக் கொண்டானென் றூதூது சங்கே

VI : 166 : 6

On the day of this unique realization of the God Supreme the Swami has left the following words:

"I am going to close this door from to-day onwards. I am now in this body. I shall be in all the bodies in a few moments hence, Open not this door. If you do so, it will be only void". The disappearance of the Swami from human vision on the 30th of January 1874 at his residence at Mettukuppam will explain the truth and splendour of his wonderful philosophy. Thus the Swami achieved the greatest perfection of the soul in the mortal body under the Sun and on this Earth. This is the Supreme aim and blissful benefit (ஆன்மலாபம்) contemplated in his Sanmarga philosophy. He is, in his own words of song divine, in the body of the Supreme Wisdom (ஞானதேகம்) the body of the Supreme Auspicious Being (சிவ வடிவம்) enjoying the perpetual and eternal and most sublime and most Supreme Bliss.

3. The Transformations

Abstract

Ramalinga Swami explains that the mortal human body must be transformed first into Suddha deham - perfect body. He has described in detail the transmutation of his body by the Grace of God, which can be achieved by the universal spiritual communion and devotion to God. Three kinds of rays of light fall on the body of the devout aspirant during his melting mood. The atoms of the impure elements which constitute the body are alchemised into pure and perfect atoms resulting in a body of love. In short matter is converted into energy. Then the Suddha deham will again be transformed into Pranava deham or body of Grace and Light. By further concentration this body of Grace and Light will be transformed into the body of Wisdom (i.e.) evolve into the body of the God Supreme or Immanence.

Suddha Deham

This topic is of great significance in the philosophy of our Swami. It requires a very strong conviction for understanding this change-over. The material body the human frame of the aspiring individual undergoes a wonderful transformation into an imperishable and immortal body. It is not any other body such as the **Devadeha** or **Sukshmadeha** referred to in some other philosophic doctrines, that undergoes this metamorphosis. This human body of normal but perfect existence and perseverance can be - or will be - nay - must be converted into Suddha deham - purified body.

The feasibility of the first stage of transformation as contemplated in this philosophy is evident from the body change of the Swami himself. He has narrated in a picturesque manner the transformation of the body of Saint Manickavasagar who bodily disappeared at the Sanctum Sanctorum of Chidambaram Temple beyond human vision in the 7th century A.D. Though this historical event has been already alluded to, it has to be stressed that the Swami says that Saint Manickavasagar had achieved the transformation in the human frame first into Anburuvam (அன்புருவம்) body of love, then into Aruluruvam (அருள் உருவம்) body of grace and then finally into Inburuvam (இன்புருவம்) body of ecstasy, that is, the body of the God Supreme. All the three

states of the body are also referred to as (சுவர்ணதேகம் ; பொன்னுருவம்) golden body.

This is evident from the words of the Swami when he declares that he was transformed into all the three forms one after another by the Grace of the God Supreme.

தூக்கம் கெடுத்துச் சுகங்கொடுத்தான் என்றனக்கே
ஆக்கம்என ஓங்கும்பொன் அம்பலத்தான் - ஏக்கமெலாம்
நீங்கினேன் எண்ண நிரம்பினேன் **பொன்வடிவம்**
தாங்கினேன் சத்தியமாத் தான்

VI: 99: 15

பார்த்தேன் பணிந்தேன் பழிச்சினேன் மெய்ப்புளகம்
போர்த்தேன் என் உள்ளமெலாம் பூரித்தேன் - ஆர்த்தேநின்று
ஆடுகின்றேன் பாடுகின்றேன் **அன்புருவானேன்** அருளை
நாடுகின்றேன் சிற்சபையை நான்

VI: 71: 6

ஐயன் எனக்கு ஈந்த அதிசயத்தை என்புகல்வேன்
பொய்யடியேன் குற்றம் பொறுத்தருளி - வையத்து
அழியாமல் ஓங்கும் **அருள்வடிவம்** நான்ஓர்
மொழிஆடு தற்கு முனம்.

VI: 99: 9

துன்பங் கெடுத்துச் சுகங்கொடுத்தான் என்றனக்கே
அன்பகத்தில் வாழும்சிற் றம்பலத்தான் - **இன்புருவம்**
தாங்கினேன் சாகாத் தனிவடிவம் பெற்றுஒளியால்
ஓங்கினேன் உண்மை உரை

VI: 99: 16

Now the explanation of the Swami with regard to the transformation is very clear. The human body is made up of the five elements. There is no doubt about this. In the clear cut words of the Swami the body is composed of several millions of minute particles, the atoms of unpurified elements (அசுத்த பூதகாரிய அணுக்களும், அவற்றின் காரணங்களாகிய அசுத்த பிரகிருதி அணுக்களும் ஆகிய அசுத்ததேகம்.) This impure body of impure elements can be and will be converted into a pure body of pure elements. The impure elements of the impure body are merely the means of composition amalgamated with the causative and impure particles of primordial matter (Prakrithi). This will be converted into pure body of pure elements (சுத்த பூதகாரிய அணுக்களாலாகிய

சுத்ததேகம்). This body is also called (Swarna deham) golden body (சுவர்ணதேகம்) of immeasurable carats. The Swami perceives the descent of Divinity in him for this transformation in these lines:

என்புருப்பொன் உருவாக்க எண்ணிவரு கின்றார்
என்றுதிரு நாதலி இசைக்கின்ற தம்மா

VI: 82: 48

He swears that by the observance of this Divine Path of Suddha Sanmargam (சுத்த சன்மார்க்கம்) the most impure body susceptible to the natural bonds and to putrefaction shall become an everlasting and imperishable body.

பொத்திய மலப்பிணிப் புழுக்கு ரம்பைதான்
சித்தியற் சுத்தசன் மார்க்க சேர்ப்பினால்
நித்திய மாகியே நிகழும் என்பது
சத்தியம் சத்தியம் சகத்து வீர்களே.

VI: 132: 54

It is a well-known fact that the human body as any other body of a living organism, is made up of innumerable cells and that each cell includes depending upon the tissues which they constitute, the cytoplasm, the nucleus and the other substances. The protoplasm includes the nucleus, the vital part of the cell. It is composed of highly complicated substances such as the phosphoproteins and nucleoproteins. There are many minute substances in the form of amino acids, D.N.A., R.N.A., enzymes and catalysts for doing certain functions. These will ultimately be resolved into certain chemical elements such as oxygen 65 parts, carbon 18 parts, hydrogen 10 parts, nitrogen 3 parts, calcium 2 parts, phosphorus 1.1 parts and others in small proportions. They are again in the form of molecular particles. These particles form the fundamental basic substances of the human body matter and life. The metabolic activity of the cell releases the required energy for the various physiological functions of the body. Modern science tells us that the same matter and energy synthesised in the same proportions fail to become a living cell. Probably the (Prakrithi) particles of primordial matter, those which are responsible for bringing in the life of the cell, are lacking in the artificial assemblage of matter and energy. Now, supposing that these particles of the elements and those of the primordial matter which are causative for the synthesis of the human body are by a sudden and miraculous power metamorphosed into the so

called perfected and pure particles, the transformation is quite possible. The power that is involved in this is the power which the aspirant has gradually attained by the descent of Divinity in him. I mean that the Supreme Grace of the Lord has manifested itself in him for this transformation. There is an oft-quoted verse among hundreds of similar others, which explains pointedly and clearly about the special body which the Swami desired and got by the Grace of the Lord Supreme.

He desired to be blessed with a body which should not be destroyed by the five great elements of Nature such as wind, earth, space, fire and water, the firmament headed by the sun, the god of death, the diseases, the murdering weapons, the planets, the evil deeds resorted to for killing, or by any other means and it was at once sanctioned to him. Having been endowed with this divine body, the Swami proclaims that his begging the Lord for such a body is not mean and entreats the whole world to go to the Lord Supreme.

காற்றாலே புவியாலே ககனமத னாலே
கனலாலே புனலாலே கதிராதி யாலே
கூற்றாலே பிணியாலே கொலைக்கருவி யாலே
கோளாலே பிறவியற்றும் கொடுஞ்செயல்க ளாலே
வேற்றாலே எஞ்ஞான்றும் அழியாதே விளங்கும்
மெய்யளிக்க வேண்டுமென்றேன் விரைந்து அளித்தான் எனக்கே
ஏற்றாலே இழிவெனநீர் நினையாதீர் உலகீர்
எந்தையருட் பெருஞ்ஜோதி இறைவனைச்சார் வீரே.

VI: 132: 59

This is the body, which the Swami contemplated and achieved. Now let us consider the explanation offered by the Swami for this transformation. In a word it could be stated that it was the Grace of Love Supreme which alchemised him.

பொன்னுடம்பு எனக்குப் பொருத்திடும் பொருட்டா
என்னுளங் கலந்த என்தனி அன்பே

VI: 1: 1490

தன்னையே எனக்குத் தந்தருள் ஒளியால்
என்னைவே தித்த என்தனி அன்பே!

VI: 1: 1480

To translate these lines (in not so perfect a manner) the Swami says: "O God - the Eternal Love, just to bestow upon me the golden body, you, the Universal Love have merged with my heart. Allowing Yourself to be infused in me, O Supreme Love, You with the light of Grace have alchemised my body."

What is this light which converts this mortal body into a body of light? It is only the Light of Grace Supreme which can transform this human body into the purified body of light.

Here the Swami establishes the fundamental principle of his philosophy. He says that God Supreme granted him an elixir of wisdom to convert the mortal body into a body of light.

ஊன உடம்பே ஒளிஉடம்பாய் ஒங்கிநிற்க
ஞான அமுதெனக்கு நல்குதியே

VI: 99: 6

This is called the principle of Light (ஒளிநெறி) which alone can save this body from decay. There are two important aspects of this principle: One is universal reverence for life - PAROPAKARAM (பரோபகாரம்) and the other is devotional meditation - SATVICHARAM (சத்விசாரம்). The Swami repeatedly points out that if one is able to get at the more important first aspect of the principle of Light, Grace will be immanent in him easily.

All living things are the manifestations of God. He is present in the form of life in them. In other words the life in the animate is a fraction of the light of Grace Supreme.

உலகநிலை முழுதாகி ஆங்காங்கு உள்ள
உயிராகி உயிர்க்குயிராம் ஒளிதான் ஆகி

I: 5: 1

உயிரெலாம் ஒருநீ திருநடம் புரியும்
ஒருதிருப் பொதுவென அறிந்தேன்

VI: 132: 75

உயிருள்யாம் எம்முளாயிர் இவை உணர்ந்தே
உயிர்நலம் பரவுக என்று உரைத்தமெய்ச் சிவமே

VI : 1 : 973

உலகுயிர்த் திரளெலாம் ஒளிநெறி பெற்றிட
இலகும்ஐந் தொழிலையும் யான்செயத் தந்தனை

VI : 1 : 1577

God is present in all living things and they are all in God. Understanding this one should do good to all living beings. This will lead one to the discipline of the soul (ஆன்ம ஒழுக்கம்), where life of all creatures from the huge elephant down to a small fly is the temple of God. The Divine is the inner light or life in them. By developing love, compassion and mercy for all these live creatures, a universal spiritual communion can be obtained. In this privilege of universal love and universal spiritual communion (ஆன்ம நேய ஒருமைப்பாட்டு உரிமை) the Grace of the God Supreme will dawn in the form of the light of Grace (அருளொளி). The saturation of this universal love and the manifestation of universal spiritual communion are, according to the Swami the real form of worship (ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கம்). Grace is the mercy of God. It is manifested in God. Compassion is the mercy of the soul which is found in the human beings. By developing the mercy of the soul in which God is present, the mercy of God can be realized. By extending the simile it may be inferred that from a spark of light a greater radiant light can be obtained.

The other aspect of the principle of light is the ardent devotion to God. Here again love of God should enhance and enlarge. The perpetual thinking of God and praying for his Grace, gradually enriches the aspirant with the sparks of Grace Supreme.

VI: 21: 90

There is a delightful verse sung in ecstasy calling the fellow-beings to enter into immortality. This is one of the sweetest songs of the Swami to illustrate the concatenation of spiritual development.

நினைந்து நினைந்து உணர்ந்து உணர்ந்து நெகிழ்ந்து நெகிழ்ந்து அன்பே
நிறைந்து நிறைந்து ஊற்றெழுங் கண்ணீரதனால் உடம்பு
நனைந்து நனைந்து அருளமுதே நன்னிதியே ஞான
நடந்தரசே என்உரிமை நாயகனே என்று
வனைந்துவனைந்து ஏத்துதுநாம் வம்மினுல கியலீர்
மரணமிலாப் பெருவாழ்வில் வாழ்ந்திடலாம் கண்டீர்
புனைந்துரையேன் பொய்புகலேன் சத்தியம்சொல் கின்றேன்
பொற்சபையில் சிற்சபையில் புகுந்தருணம் இதுவே

VI: 110: 1

One has to think and think incessantly, till he feels and feels, till he melts and melts, till love for God fills in him. As love fills and fills, the aspirant of the melting mood bursts into tears. As the tear glands pour out profusely the body becomes wet by the overflow. When this is uninterruptedly repeated and repeated, the heart throbs and the mouth sobs the praise of the God Supreme. This is the type of emotional spiritualism which is needed for the prayer at the moment. When this is achieved the Grace of God is sure to descend. Not only does the Light of Grace dawn on the aspirant but sets aside the inevitable death. In other words conquest of death is realized (as the mortal body will be converted into immortal body). Hence the Swami proclaims to all mankind that this is the most propitious moment to enter into the life Divine. He adds that he is neither exaggerating nor uttering falsehood and swears that this is true and cent percent true.

The aspirant thinks of the greatness of God and the smallness of his being. He thinks of the transient nature of the world and worldly objects and of the truth of God and the Soul. He is aware of the bounteous Grace and its benevolent flow in the loving individual. The pangs of hunger, disease and poverty of the majority of mankind and fear of death harrow out his very life. He trembles at the forces of lust and the shackles which not only cover and conceal the greatness of the soul but impel him into the ocean of desires. The sufferings of the poor and the horror of the mighty touch his very nerves. Therefore, he thinks of God Supreme to redeem the miseries of life and in his prayers he finds solace and solution. Hence universal compassion and spontaneous service to fellow-beings and intuitive love for God are the best methods to imbibe the mercy of God who is nothing but love.

The secret satisfaction of serving God by serving the multitude of living organisms in which God is manifested and ardent prayers for the mercy of God lead the aspirant into universal spiritual communion. This practice of thinking of God always and incessantly and praying for His Grace assiduously and affectionately kindles soothing warmth in the body of the aspirant. Without knowing this secret, sages and seers of lore underwent severe penance and meditated for hundreds of years just to gain this warmth (உபதேசம்). This pure warmth (சுத்த உஷ்ணம்) which is not yet measured by the clinical thermometer, gradually develops. Now when the universal spiritual communion and the sacred warmth grow more and more, the body and the soul of the aspirant are well nigh prepared to receive the Grace of God. In the melting mood and in the emotional

feeling of love for God, the grace of God Supreme descends in the form of light.

உள்ளம் கரைந்துகரைந்து உருகஅவர் கருத்தி னூடே
உய்யுநெறி ஒளிகாட்டி வெளியும் உள்ளும் ஓங்குநின்ற சுயஞ்சுடரே

I: 5: 52

உருக்கியழு தூற்றெடுத்தென் உடம்புயிரோடு உளமும்
ஒளிமயமே யாக்குறமெய் யுணர்ச்சியரு ளாயோ

VI: 19: 1

ஒளிவளர் உயிரே உயிர்வளர் ஒளியே
ஒளிஉயிர் வளர்தரும் உணர்வே

VI: 5: 2

உயிராய் உயிர்க்குளறும் உயிராகி உணர்வாகி
உணர்வுளுணர் வாகி உணர்வுள்
பற்றிஇயலும் ஒளியாகி ஒளியின்ஒளி யாகி

VI: 100: 15

Grace in Melting-mood

There are three different forms of descent of Divine light in the aspirant (dealt with in detail in the Chapter on Spiritual Experience).

கண்ணிற் கலந்தான் கருத்திற் கலந்தான் என்
எண்ணிற் கலந்தே யிருக்கின்றான் – பண்ணிற்
கலந்தான்என் பாட்டிற் கலந்தான் உயிரில்
கலந்தான் கருணை கலந்து

VI: 109: 1

The Divine rays of Grace penetrate into the eyes, the mind and the intellect of the lovable individual and ignite not only with his melting compassionate feeling which has reached the saturation point but with the tremendous warmth developed out of his love for God. As a result of this combination evidently chemical change does take place. The material body of impure atoms is transformed into a body of pure light atoms emitting a golden hue. This converted body is known as purified body or body of love (சுத்ததேகம், அன்புருவம்). Great savants of this philosophy like Sri Chidambaraswami of Porayar and Sri Arunachalam of Nagapattinam at whose exalted feet, I learnt a little of this doctrine, hold that there is an

intermediate stage before this transformation. They are of the opinion that there is a preparatory body known as a sanctified body (திருஉடம்பு) before the attainment of the purified body (சுத்ததேகம்). In support of this view there is a reference in the divine Song of Grace.

திரைந்தஎன் உடம்பைத் திருவுடம் பாக்கித்
திகழ்வித்த சித்தனே சிவனே.

VI: 14: 16

Notwithstanding this deviation the purified body is imperishable. It has become immortal and it is a body of light (ஒளிஉடம்பு) having been converted by the light of Grace emitting a golden hue.

ஊன உடம்பே ஒளிஉடம்பாய் ஓங்கிநிற்க

VI: 99: 6

சாகாத் தனிவடிவம் பெற்றொளியால்
ஓங்கினேன் உண்மை உரை

VI: 99: 16

ஊன்செய்த தேகம் ஒளிவடி வாகநின்று ஓங்குகின்றேன்

VI: 132: 98

பொன்னுடம் பெனக்குப் பொருந்திடும் பொருட்டா
என்னுளங் கலந்த என்தனி அன்பே

VI : 1 : 1490

The properties of this pure and perfected body are depicted very clearly. As the name indicates this golden body of perfected elements appears to be of about 12 years of age. The feelings are with regard to the Divine and Divinity. No more are there the physiological activities of the body. There is no question of food, digestion, excretion, growth and ageing. The external symptom of this transformed human frame is that it appears gracefully beautiful without casting a shadow. This is an important aspect which we might explain in the light of the historical event in the life of the Swami.

In about 1867 some of the disciplined disciples of the Swami wished to photograph him. The best professional photographer Mr.Masilamony Mudaliar of Madras was requested on special invitation to

Photograph the Swami. According to the reference (சரித்திரக் கீர்த்தனை) available, the body of the Swami could not be photographed. It is also stated that the photographer tried again and again eight times with the best plates and obtained negatives which showed only the clothing of the Swami. Neither the face nor any part of his body which was exposed could be photographed. The fact that the clothing of the Swami was photographed explains that there was nothing wrong with the plates. Evidently light passed through the exposed part of his body without casting any shadow. Hence the body of the Swami could not be photographed. There are other evidences for this fact also. The Swami was completely clad in pure white cloth. He in one of the verses speaks out that he felt so much awkward to expose his body that he was constrained to cover it fully. The fact is that he did not wish any pomp and publicity about his transparent body lest he should be overcome by ego. There are several instances in which the Swami hushed up some miraculous events and pointedly requested his disciples who could not help knowing them, not to disclose those secrets and he never hesitated to say that it was the Will of the Lord Supreme.

The transformation of the material body of impure elements into the perfected body of perfect elements has several stages. They are categorically narrated by the Swami in the following lines:

தோலெலாங் குழைந்திடச் சூழ்நரம்பு அனைத்தும்
மேலெலாங் கட்டவை விட்டுவிட்டு இயங்கிட
என்பெலா நெக்குநெக் கியலிடை நெகிழ்ந்திட
மென்புடைத் தசையெலாம் மெய்யுறத் தளர்ந்திட
இரத்த மனைத்துமுள் இறுகிடச் சுக்கிலம்
உரத்திடை பந்தித்து ஒருதிரள் ஆயிட
மடலெலாம் முளை மலர்ந்திட அமுதம்
உடலெலாம் ஊற்றெடுத்து ஓடி நிரம்பிட
ஒண்ணுதல் வியர்த்திட ஒளிமுகம் மலர்ந்திடத்
தண்ணிய உயிர்ப்பினிற் சாந்தம் ததும்பிட
உண்ணகை தோற்றிட உரோமம் பொடித்திடக்
கண்ணினீர் பெருகிக் கால்வழிந்து ஓடிட
வாய்துடித்து அலறிட வளர்செவித் துணைகளிற்
கூயிசைப் பொறியெலாங் கும்எனக் கொட்டிட
மெய்யெலாங் குளிர்ந்திட மென்மார்பு அசைந்திடக்
கையெலாங் குவிந்திடக் கால்எலாம் சுலவிட
மனங்கனிந்து உருகிட மதிநிறைந்து ஒளிர்ந்திட
இனம்பெறு சித்தம் இயைந்து களித்திட
அகங்காரம் ஆங்காங்கு அதிகரிப் பமைந்திடச்
சுகங்காண உள்ளம் தழைத்து மலர்ந்திட
அறிவுருவு அனைத்தும் ஆனந்தம் ஆயிடப்
பொறியுறு மான்மதற் போதமும் போயிடப்
தத்துவம் அனைத்தும் தாம்ஒருங்கு ஒழிந்திடச்
சத்துவம் ஒன்றே தனித்துநின்று ஓங்கிட

உலகெலாம் விடயம் உளவெலாம் மறைந்திட
அலகிலா அருளின் ஆசைமேற் பொங்கிட
என்னுளத்து எழுந்துஉயிர் எல்லாம் மலர்ந்திட
என்னுளத்து ஓங்கிய என்தனி அன்பே!

VI: 1: 1449-1476

The changes that take place in the human body externally and internally illustrate the gradual conversion. They indicate the symptoms on the human body at every stage. There is no myth, nor concoction. Every thing is stated with scientific accuracy though it is a puzzle and a problem even to the highly advanced scientific mind of the present day. The Swami says that the skin-the dermis and the epidermis-has become extremely soft. All the nerves and the tendons have become gradually loosened. All the bones membranous and cartilaginous have become automatically pliable. All the muscles and the muscular tissues have become loosened. All the blood has become internally coagulated. The semen has become not only hardened but concentrated in a unit. The brain and all its parts the cerebrum, the cerebellum and the medulla oblongata have loosened as an opening blossom. Throughout the body an elixir oozes out and flows and fills up all the parts.

Externally the forehead perspires. The face becomes brilliant. There is delicacy, soft and mild, sweet and harmonious in the tender and cool breathing. The internal beauty is evident outside. The hair splits. The tear glands are so profusely pouring in the eyes that it flows through the feet. The mouth gasps with a trembling note. The ears and their delicate parts are filled with melody. The entire body has become cool. The chest and the heart are throbbing. The palms are folded. The legs are staggering. The four different aspects of the mind have respectively attained a melting mood, have the sparkling filled, have harmoniously heartened and have then and there, the repurcussions put down. The heart swells with anxiety to see the whole world (of love). All the visible parts of the body are blooming with ecstasy. The life-bound ego which spurts out through the senses has vanished. All the blemishes that surround the heart and the mind have extinguished. The tender and soft loving and affectionate, mercy and compassionate quietism stands out. All the world and the worldly affairs are hidden. The ardent desire for receiving the Supreme Grace is increasing and overflowing. Now the God Supreme in the form of Supreme love fills up the body fully enshrining divine life.

All these characteristics of the transforming body are exquisitely narrated. These are the personal experiences of the Swami during the attainment of this pure or perfect body.

Apart from his own experience of the transformation the Swami has given a detailed account of the properties and capacities of the divine individuals who are blessed with this (Suddha Deham) perfected body. They will not be affected either directly or indirectly, internally or externally by the five great elements. Hence the Swami says that earth or stone in any form afflicted against them will not strike on them. The coolness of water will not affect them nor can they be subjected to immerse in water. The heat of the fire both internally and externally will not affect them. Not even a scar will be formed on their body. Air in any form will not impinge on them. Space will not have any effect on them. They may move about in space without any base of support or even a sputnick.

Similarly all their senses can perceive of the respective feelings without being barred by distance and obstruction. Hence their eyes can see anything of the universe though generally they are not bent upon seeing things of the world. They can hear any sound produced anywhere in the universe. They can smell anything from being in their own place and their body can feel anything of the universe at will. Their limbs can give anything to anybody irrespective of distance. They may walk anywhere with out any regard for space. They may speak to anybody at any place in the universe and beyond. Their knowledge is universal and omniscient. All the bonds of nature such as space, time and the like and even the natural order and regularity of the universe will not bind them. As already pointed out, food, sleep, and sex are no longer necessary for them. There would not be any perspiration, shadow, ageing or death for their body (ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கம்). It is not necessary to point out repeatedly as the Swamidoes, that their body cannot be disturbed by the great elements, devils, weapons of any kind, animals including human and superhuman beings in any place at any time. With regard to their power, it is said that they are capable of any creation or destruction at will. They can bring the dead of life; they can change or convert the old into young. In short, their knowledge, their action and their experience and every thing about them will be Godly, They are all-powerful, eternal and omni-potent.

Pranava Deham or Body of Grace

The purified and perfected body may undergo a metamorphosis further into the body of Grace known as Pranavadeham (பிரணவதேகம் - அருளுருவம்). This Divine body can be seen but cannot be felt. It has an appearance of a heavenly child of about 5 to 8 years of age. The capacities are inassessable. He can command all the **Siddhis** at will. The Swami says that he was blessed enough to accomplish this transmutation and evolve still further.

சுத்த வடிவம் சுகவடிவம் ஓங்கார
நித்த வடிவு நிறைந்தோங்கு-சித்தெனும்ஓர்
ஞான வடிவம் இங்கே நான் பெற்றேன் எங்கெங்கும்
தானவினை யாட்டியற்றத் தான்.

VI: 109: 17

The Grace Supreme is fully manifested in this divine body. The godly aspirant enjoys the most celestial Bliss. He imbibes the real ambrosia in his body. The Swami says that God Supreme declared that he had reached the transcendent state of the Grace Supreme and that he had gained the body of Grace. Further He blessed him to reign the divine kingdom of Grace Supreme.

அருள்நிலை பெற்றனை அருள்வடிவு உற்றனை
அருள்அரசு இயற்றுகஎன்று அருளிய சிவமே.

VI: 1: 107

Gnana Deham or Body of Bliss

The Swami was not satisfied with this sublime state of Pranavadeham (பிரணவதேகம்) though he was wedded to the Supreme Grace.

அருளொளித் திருவைக் களிப்பொடு மணம்புரி விப்பாம்

VI: 103: 7

The next higher transformation is the greatest and the ultimate evolution of the human body ever contemplated. The Swami realized this transformation also. This is the highest transmutation into Godhead. It is known as merging with the body of Supreme Wisdom-Gnanadeham (ஞான தேகம் - இன்புருவம்). It is the body of God Supreme.

மெய்ஞான உரு அடைந்தேன்

VI: 132: 74

நானே தவம்புரிந்தேன் நம்பெருமாள் நல்லரு ளால்
நானே அருட்சக்தி நாடடைந்தேன்-நானே
அழியா வடிவ மவைமூன்றும் பெற்றேன்
இழியாம லாடுகின்றே னிங்கு.

VI: 109: 27

This supremely high state is inconceivable. The body is omnipresent but is neither perceived nor felt nor even seen. It is all-powerful and all-graceful. God Supreme has actually exchanged His body for the body of the supremely Divine Aspirant namely, the Swami.

தன்னுரு என்னுரு தன்னுரை என்னுரை
என்ன இயற்றிய என்தனித் தந்தையே.

VI: 1: 1149

தன்வடிவு அனைத்தையும் தன்சமு கத்தினில்
என்வடிவு ஆக்கிய என்தனித் தந்தையே.

VI: 1: 1137

The God Supreme was gracious enough not only to merge in the divine and sublime body of the Swami at this plane but equated him with the most Supreme Grace and Godhead namely Suddhasivam (சுத்தசிவம்).

தன்னையும் தன்னருள் சத்தியின் வடிவையும்
என்னையும் ஒன்றென இயற்றிய தந்தையே.

VI: 1: 1145

All these three transformations of the human body into Suddhadeham, Pranavadeham, and Gnanadeham have been respectively achieved, accomplished and realized by the Swami in this world.

4. The Spiritual Experiences

Abstract

The Soul of the aspiring individual undergoes different stages of experiences. The waking, dreaming, sleeping and intuitional consciousness are gradually becoming more and more perfect. The lust and the shackles, which fasten the soul are loosened and lost sight of in the higher stages of experience. At Parathuriyam-Supra-Mental consciousness or perfection, self-realization is achieved. At the stage of Sivasakram the aspirant visualizes the Supreme Grace. He becomes eligible to enter Sanmargam. His body of love becomes converted into the body of Grace. He enjoys God Supreme now and then and signs His glory in ecstatic delight for eternal Bliss.

The Spiritual Experience

For the proper understanding of UIRANUBAVAM (உயிரனுபவம்) the achievement of the soul in the human body, one has to know the various stages of spiritual experiences. Human beings leading a mundane life, without even a thought of its transient nature, are said to be in the normal wakefulness JEEVASAKRAM (ஜீவசாக்கிரம்). They are alert only for trivial things; they are cautious for the acquisition of wealth, gold or land, of women and wine and of name and fame by all means indiscriminate. There are two more stages in this kind of imperfect indulgence such as JEEVASORPANAM (ஜீவசொர்ப்பணம்) normal dreaming and JEEVA SUZHUTHI (ஜீவ சுழுத்தி) normal ignorance at sleep. I am afraid that most of the people of the present day world do not cross this border.

The domain of the spiritualist is SUDDHASAKRAM (சுத்த சாக்கிரம்) perfect wakefulness. He is conscious of the real and the unreal and the transitory nature of the world. The worldly things, be it the kingdom of the world at his feet, be it the most beautiful 'Miss World' at his beck and call or be it even the most precious diamond of the purest ray serene at his disposal, are nothing to him. He is really aware of the momentary nature of life and of the ever existing supreme deity. When this perfect wakefulness is saturated in him he is able to visualize the existence of the Lord Supreme. The next stage in the perfected line of ascent is SUDDHASORPANAM (சுத்த சொர்ப்பணம்) perfect dream. The aspirant of this experience will be in his dreamland of God and Godly things. No

longer has he an iota of sexual desire in his dream. He will be dreaming to see the lotus feet of the Lord and feeling an inseparable union with His feet in his untiring search for him. Gradually he enters into the stage of SUDDHASUZHUTHI (சுத்த சுழுத்தி) perfect and conscious ignorance. At this stage the aspirant is not aware of anything except God. The Swami explains that at this stage the irresistible lust-love of gold-does not cling to his heart. The next stage is SUDDHATHURIAM (சுத்ததுரியம்) perfect experience of dawn of sparks. The lust and the veil which have been covering the soul hitherto for generations by the influence of the impure devil power, ASUDDHAMAYA (அசுத்தமாயை) are shed one after another and the soul is gradually cleansed by the sparks emanating from the Supreme Light of Grace. The soul is bound by the shackles of Purusha. However, the melting mood and the spontaneous impulse of love for God, overwhelm the aspirant.

பரிக்கிரகநிலை முழுதும் தொடர்ந்தோம்

I: 5: 64

The next stage of higher wakefulness, PARASAKARAM (பரசாக்கிரம்) is supposed to pave the way for the sphere of heavenly experiences always, in the ladder of ascent in the pursuit of the Divine. It has been clearly depicted by the Swami that the authors of the great Upanishads, the cultural heritage of India, have trodden this path. They convey the message that they have been successful in attaining this stage, the next stage of higher dream, PARASORPANAM (பரசொர்ப்பணம்), the next further stage of higher ignorance, PARASUZHUTHI (பரசுழுத்தி), the still higher consciousness and further higher stages.

தோன்றுபர சாக்கிரமும் கண்டோம் அந்தச்
 சொப்பனமும் கண்டோ மேற் சுழுத்தி கண்டோம்
 ஆன்றபர துரியநிலை கண்டோம் அப்பால்
 அதுகண்டோம் அப்பாலாம் அதுவும் கண்டோம்
 ஏன்றஉப சாந்தநிலை கண்டோம் அப்பால்
 இருந்தநினைக் காண்கிலோம் என்னே என்று
 சான்றஉப நிதங்கலொலாம் வழுத்த நின்ற
 தன்மயமே சின்மயமே சகசத் தேவே

I: 5: 63

It is also said that they, the Upanishads, were wonder-struck when they were not able to see Him who is manifested beyond these supra-mental stages.

Mandukya Upanishad analyses the various spiritual stages of experience of the soul*. "They are waking, dreaming, sleeping and intuitional consciousness. The first condition is that of wakefulness where the self is conscious of the common world of external objects. It enjoys the gross things. Here the dependence on the body is predominant. The second condition is that of dreaming where the self enjoys subtle things and fashions for itself a new world of forms with the materials of its waking experience. The spirit is said to roam freely unfettered by the bonds of the body. The third is the condition of sound sleep where we have neither dreams nor desires. It is called SUZHUTI. The soul is said to become temporarily one with BRAHMAN and enjoys bliss. In deep sleep we are lifted above all desires and freed from the vexations of the spirit. The oppositions are so to say lost in this pure objectless knowing subject condition. But there is the likelihood of its being confused with sheer unconsciousness. So the Mandukya Upanishad points out that the highest is now this dreamless sleep but another, a fourth state of the soul, a pure intuitional consciousness where there is no knowledge of objects internal or external. In deep sleep the spirit dwells in a region far above the changeful life of sense in absolute union with BRAHMAN. The THURIYA condition brings out the positive aspect of the negative emphasised in the condition of deep sleep. This is not that which is conscious of the subjective nor that which is conscious of the objective, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is an all sentient mass, nor that which is all darkness. It is unseen, transcendent, inapprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable the sole essence of the consciousness of self, the completion of the world, the ever peaceful, all blissful, the one unit. This indeed is the Atman."

* Indian Philosophy - Volume II

The mind and its four different aspects at the stage of PARASAKRAM (பரசாக்கிரம்) supra-mental awareness are alert and conscious of only the Supreme God and His Grace. At this moment the aspirant does not know whether he is conscious of anything other than his Divine pursuit. The next stage PARASORPANAM (பரசொர்ப்பனம்) supra-mental dream, places the aspirant in the dream of enjoying the Grace of the Lord. This feeling of ecstasy leads him to the next stage of PARASUZHUTI (பரசுமுத்தி) supramental unknowing where the majority of the shackles are removed by the Grace of the Lord.

This stage may either lead him to the next higher stage of PARATHURIYAM (பரதுரியம்) supra-mental perfection where he visualizes the sparks of the Divine Grace or as in certain cases may revert him back to PARASAKRAM (பரசாக்கிரம்) where he will be searching for something which he has tentatively lost. The experience of Parathuriyam is by itself the tasting of God albeit it is not ultimate.

பரதுரிய அனுபவம் குருதுரிய பதம்

I: 1: 17

The entelechy of the soul at this stage depends not only upon the extent of penance, devotion, and incessant love for the Lord but also upon the level of compassion, sacrifice and scrupulous service to all the living organisms indiscriminately, human or non-human.

The soul is charged with Divine Grace and it is conscious of nothing but the glory of the Supreme Grace. God is so merciful as to remove the shackles of the aspirant in order to exhibit the real nature of His Sublime Grace. When the aspirant is able to visualize the inestimable magnitude of His Grace, he is naturally able to realize his smallness. The Swami explains that whenever he is able to perceive of, he is conscious of the Divine and whenever he is unable to perceive of, he becomes one with the Divine extricating the egoistic self.

நினைத்தபோ தெல்லாம் நின்னையே நினைத்தேன்
நினைப்பற நின்றபோ தெல்லாம்
எனைத்தனி ஆக்கி நின்கணே நின்றேன்.....

VI: 23: 2

Since the veil of the diabolic power which has so far concealed the virtual greatness of the soul, has begun to disintegrate, the soul is able to see for itself its own true colour and lustre. This is spoken of as self-realization (ஆன்ம தரிசனம்). Now the soul besides being immersed in an unprecedented ecstatic delight, realizes its own true nature. In the words of the Swami the soul is in the form of an atomic particle several million times brilliant as the Sun.

The next higher stage of SIVASAKRAM (சிவசாக்கிரம்) or GURUSAKRAM (குருசாக்கிரம்) and subsequent stages are governed by the Grace of the Lord Supreme. The possibility of enjoying these divine stages depends upon the extent of the descent of Grace in the soul.

Although everything big or small, trivial or indispensable concerning the matter of mind is by and due to the Supreme Grace of the Lord Almighty, it is more so at this stage.

அருளலாத அணுவும் அசைந்திடா ததனால்
அருள்நலம் பரவுக என்று அறைந்தமெய்ச் சிவமே

VI: 1: 977

There are thousands of verses yearning for the Grace to pervade in him. The sanction is not so simple as it appears. It was perhaps miraculously easy for the Swami to be blessed with all these experiences. Many souls of this world have attained this stage and only a few could ascend further. Most of them were either overpowered by the extraordinary brilliance of the soul and mistook it for the brilliance of the Supreme Grace or were disappointed by their inability to proceed further. At this stage of SIVASAKRAM also known as GURUSAKRAM - the aspirant is able to perceive the Supreme Grace in the form of light. This is the secret of this philosophy. The descent of divinity in the individual is gradually profuse. There are three forms of Supreme Light which will beneficially act upon the human body of the purified soul for the infusion of Grace. The tremendous power of the Sun is offered to fill in through the eyes of the enabling aspirant to do all wonders at will. The Supreme Light of Grace dawns in the sanctified intellect of the aspirant empowering him to disseminate the soothing principles of Grace. The illumination of a higher power called PARAI (பரை) is disbursed in the mind of the aspirant enriching him to gain supremacy in the domain of the Supreme Grace.

கதிர்நல மென்னிரு கண்களிற் கொடுத்தே
அதிசயம் இயற்றெனும் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
அருளொளி யென்றனிஅறிவினில் விரித்தே
அருள்நெறி விளக்கெனும் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பரையொளி என்மனப் பதியினில் விரித்தே
அரசது வியற்றெனும் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி

VI: 1: 273-278

These three different kinds of rays supply the necessary energy for a divine photosynthesis in alchemizing the fundamental elements of the human frame in which the perfected soul is enshrined. The actual experiences of the soul as evidenced on the body have been elaborately dealt with under another heading. The soul is saturated with compassion and the body appears to be an incarnation of immeasurable love for the

living-not to speak of human beings. This transcendent body of the aspirant is supposed to experience real divine life UIRANUBAVAM (உயிரனுபவம்) and it is called SUDDHADEHAM (சுத்ததேகம்) purified body or golden body or body of love. It may be clearly understood that the experience of divine life in the purified body (சுத்ததேகம்) is known as UIRANUBAVAM (உயிரனுபவம்). This experience is realized in the highly elevated sphere of the soul at this esteemed stage of SIVASAKRAM, in the supernatural purified body. The achievements of the soul at this stage are many. The foremost is the transformation of the impure body, into a pure body. The experience of the soul in this body makes the aspirant love incarnate. In other words the aspirant visualizes the universality of love in all fellow beings. He realizes the oneness of life in all living organisms; he is able to see a fraction of Divinity in all live creatures in the form of a spark of light, that is life in them.

உயிரெலாம் ஒருநீ திருநடம் புரியும்
ஒருதிருப் பொதுவென அறிந்தேன்.

VI: 132: 75

A little harm done to any living organism of the universe wounds him very much. He is pained to see even the withering of a plant for want of water. As by now, all his senses are capable of perceiving every thing regardless of space and time he is worried all the more. Since he is realizing his own self, he becomes eligible to visualize his smallness and the greatness of the Lord Supreme. Unless one sees within himself his true nature, he cannot-nay-will not understand the reality and greatness of the omnipotent and omnipresent God. As he has by now conquered all the elements and their influences, his own mind, space, time and the like, he is above all the thatvas and sees the reality of his soul.

நின்மலராகி தத்துவாந்தத்தில் நின்று தம்உண்மை உணர்ந்து

- சத்திய ஞான விண்ணப்பம்

The more he realizes his smallness the more he sees the greatness of God in him as a result of which he is delighted. The aspirant is able to feel the inestimable love of God, the spotaneous flow of Grace for him, if only he prepares the ground for Him to descend. The love of the individual for God and the manifestation of God in all living things, is automatically reciprocated and sublimated as Supreme Grace of Mercy, as God Himself is absolute love.

In fact the Swami goes a step further to point out that it is only the love of God that has alchemised his body and brought him all bliss and eternal happiness. Love of God is not only the means for the realization of God but is an end in itself as God is love. Above all, at this stage of SIVASAKRAM the aspirant is able to see with his own eyes the Lord Supreme in such a form for which he has become eligible to receive and bear. The brilliance of the Lord is so inexplicably intense and powerful that the aspirant should have made his body and senses so perfect as to receive Him. Unless there is such a divine perfection of the individual there cannot be the seeing or descent of God in him. The argument is very simple for those who wish to see God. Unless one has seen one's self one can never see God and unless one has become perfect in every thing one is ineligible even to bear the presence of God. What will happen to the sensual body and the vicious eye even before an incandescent arc lamp of several million watts power? To move in such a tremendous speed in a sputnick, man has to put on protective armour lest he should be blown to pieces. In the words of Swami, the brightness of God Supreme is measured in terms of several million times and more the brilliance of the sun, the moon and the universal fire put together.

.....அவர்மேனி விளக்கமதுஎண் கடந்த
மதிகதிர்செங் கனல்விரவி என்னினுஞ் சாலவே.

VI: 82: 24

We are concerned with the experiences of the Swami at this level and he says that he was tempted to embrace the Supreme God and such a stage is SIVASAKRAM. He proclaims that this stage need not be confused with PARASAKRAM. The external embrace is possible only at this stage. It is only here that the aspirant is enjoying Supreme Grace (அருளுபவம்).

என்னுடைய தனித்தோழி இதுகேள்நீ மயங்கேல்
எல்லாம்செய் வல்லவாஎன் இன்னுயிர் நாயகனார்
தன்னுடைய திருத்தோளை நான்தழுவும் தருணம்
தனித்தசிவ சாக்கிரமென்று இனித்தநிலை கண்டாய்
பன்னுமிந்த நிலைபரசாக் கிராமக உணரேல்
பகர்பரசாக் கிரமடங்கும் பதியாகும் புணர்ந்து
மன்னுநிலை மற்றிரண்டும் கடந்தகுரு துரிய
மாநிலையென் றுணர்கவொளிர் மேனிலையில் இருந்தே.

VI: 82: 74

At this and subsequent higher stages we transcend and enter into ecstatic delight. These stages are beyond human perception as we are attempting to conceive the inconceivable, to realize the unrealizable and apprehend the inapprehensible. The aspirant is already endowed with such a purified mind and body that the Grace of the Lord Supreme is incessantly filling in his mortal frame. He, therefore, with infusing power and cosmic strength is able not only to visualize but pierce through his onward march to and into the Supreme God and Godhood.

கண்டேன் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதியைக் கண்களிற் கண்டுகளி
கொண்டேன் சிவானந்தக் கூத்தாடிக் கொண்டிக் குவலயத்தே
தொண்டே திருவம்ப லந்தனக் காற்றிச் சுகவமுதம்
உண்டேன் உயிர்தழைத்து ஒங்குகின் றேனுள் உவப்புறவே.

VI: 85: 5

Now I am afraid, that I am exceeding my limits and daring the tread on the Divine path, which can by no means be imagined. The sacred book of the divine song of Grace, Tiruarutpa and the very strong conviction that I am led by the Will of the God Supreme, strengthen my nerves to proceed in this endeavour. The stages of spiritual experiences enlisted so far are of one kind. Still higher stages are heavenly. Here the mind fails to conceive and all the senses cease to function. Austerity and penance of the highest order are needed for the ascent of the soul not only to get at the descent of the Divine Grace but for its accumulation further and further in the gnostic pursuit.

At the next stage of SIVASORPANAM (சிவசொர்ப்பனம்) or GURUSORPANAM -Supreme dream-the aspirant dreams of the divine embrace if at all he poses to sleep.

கண்ணுறங்கேன் உறங்கினுமென் கணவரொடு கலக்குங்
கனவேகண்டு உளமகிழ்வேன்.....

VI: 82: 2

The next is SIVASUZHUTHI (சிவசுழுத்தி) supreme tranquillity where the soul is neither conscious of its own self nor ignorant of it. Here the Supreme Grace flows into the body of the aspirant more and more and the enlightened body prepares itself for the next higher sublime stage of SIVATHURIAM (சிவதுரியம்).

5. The Divine Experiences

Abstract

The plane of experiences becomes transcendent. The Swami discloses that his body has by then been transformed into Pranavadeham or body of Grace. The stages of experiences are divine. At the stage of SIVATHURIYAM he could visualize the God Supreme fully and merge with the Supreme-Grace-Light. He feels diffident to express his feelings of ecstatic delight of this and still higher stages. He has been benevolent enough to explain the splendour and glory of the extremely effulgent stages as SUDDHASIVASAKRAM and so on. These extraordinarily supreme stages have been explained for the first time only by the Swami. He has emphatically narrated the Supreme Bliss of his being in the kingdom of God Supreme.

The Divine Experience

The enjoyment of the Supreme Light is the experiences of this stage known as SIVATHURIAM (சிவதுரியம்). This is also known as GURUTHURIAM (குருதுரியம்). This effulgent stage is again very high. It is beyond the reach of most of the so called great saints and seers. The Swami himself points out that this stage was attained by a few great souls like Muthuthandavar (முத்துத்தாண்டவர்), Thathuvarayar (தத்துவராயர்) and the like. The irresistible bliss of this stage had engulfed the seers and they were perhaps, satisfied with the excessive happiness of this stage and even felt it to be the consummation of their goal. I am afraid that the Grace of the Lord Supreme was so sanctimonious that they could not evolve further.

ஒத்தஅந் நிலைக்கண் யாமும்எம் உணர்வும்
ஒருங்குறக் கரைந்துபோ யினம்

VI: 4: 7

But their consecration was exceedingly high and they were permitted to enjoy the ultimate and eternal happiness of all the six divine paths such as SUDDHA SIDDHANATHAM, SUDDHA VEDANTHAM, SUDDHA NADANTHAM, SUDDHA KALANTHAM and SUDDHA BHODANTHAM. It is only at this level the divine aspirant gets SAMARASA SUDDHA

SANMARGAM the divine objective of the Swami. The realization of this gnostic stage permits the aspirant into the threshold of SANMARGAM where alone the conquest of death is possible. The Swami has set forth the truth of experiencing the exuberent bliss at this stage of Sivathuriam as Sanmargam.

.... சிவ துரியஅநு பவமான
மெய்மையே சன்மார்க் கமாம்.

VI: 100: 19

The benediction of this sacred stage and the preliminary achievements which consummated in the accomplishment of the divine experience have been exquisitely narrated in one of the verses by the Swami:

சரியைநிலை நான்கும்ஒரு கிரியைநிலை நான்கும்
தனியோக நிலைநான்கும் தனித்தனிகண் டறிந்தேன்
உரியசிவ ஞானநிலை நான்கும்அரு ளொளியால்
ஒவ்வொன்றாய் அறிந்தேன்மே லுண்மை நிலைபெற்றேன்
அரியசிவ சித்தாந்த வேதாந்த முதலாம்
ஆறந்த நிலையறிந்தேன் அப்பால்நின் றோங்கும்
பெரியசிவ அநுபவத்தால் சமரசசன் மார்க்கம்
பெற்றேன்இங் கிறவாமை உற்றேன்காண் தோழி

VI: 82: 93

He says that he has tasted the bliss of all the sixteen stages contemplated by the Vedas, by the permutation and combination of the four paths, such as (1) Devotion (சரியை), (2) Action (கிரியை), (3) Meditation (யோகம்), and (4) Wisdom (ஞானம்) one after another and attained higher and truer perfection with the aid of the Supreme Grace, besides the ultimate goal of all the six heavenly avenues such as Vedantham, Siddhantham and so on, leading to Divinity. He has further given an exposition of his admittance into Sanmargam by the bounteous and boundless descent of the auspicious Supreme Being in him which has resulted in his immortality.

He has specifically defined and repeatedly sworn that his path is SANMARGAM in which the aspirant becomes immortal.

என்மார்க்கம் இறப்பொழிக்கும் சன்மார்க்கந் தானே

VI: 110: 26

பொத்திய மலப்பிணிப் புழுக்கு ரம்பைதான்
சித்தியற் சுத்தசன் மார்க்கச் சேர்ப்பினால்

நித்தியம் ஆகியே நிகழும் என்பது
சத்தியம் சத்தியம் சகத்து ளீர்களே

VI: 132: 54

In the opinion of the Swami, the Supreme Being visualized by all the Divine paths can easily be realized by getting into this route of his SANMARGAM, of course, only with the benevolent flow of the Supreme Grace.

தவறாத வேதாந்த சித்தாந்தம் முதலாச்
சாற்றுகின்ற அந்தமெலாம் தனித்துரைக்கும் பொருளை
இவறாத சுத்தசிவ சன்மார்க்க நிலையில்
இருந்தருளாம் பெருஞ்சோதி கொண்டறிதல் கூடும்

VI: 38: 90

The outwitting accomplishment of this supramental and transcendent stage, a stage which cannot be conceived of by human intellect and endeavour unless with a tinge of Divine Grace, a stage which is beyond the reach of many seekers due to either subjective or objective shortcomings, a stage which has to be attained by the devout aspirant but with the sublime sanction of the Supreme Grace, is the Divine embrace of the Lord Supreme.

குருதுரியங் காண்கின்றேன் சமரசசன் மார்க்கம்
கூடினேன் பொதுவிலருட் கூத்தாடுங் கணவர்
மருவிடப்பெற் றவர்வடிவம் நானானேன் களித்து
வாழ்கின்றேன் எதிரற்ற வாழ்க்கையிலென் தோழி

VI : 82 : 95

This holy embrace is characterised by the Swami as external merger of the Divine (புறப்புணர்ச்சி). The experience and enjoyment of this Divine embrace have been picturesquely depicted in the following lines:

புறப்புணர்ச்சி என்கணவர் புரிந்ததரு ணந்தான்
புத்தமுதம் நானுண்டு பூரித்த தருணம்
சிறப்புணர்ச்சி மயமாகி அகப்புணர்ச்சி அவர்தாம்
செய்ததரு ணச்சுகத்தைச் செப்புவதெப் படியோ
புறப்புணர்ச்சி விடயமிலை சுத்தசிவா னந்தப்
பெரும்போகப் பெருஞ்சுகந்தான் பெருகியெங்கும் நிறைந்தே
மறப்புணர்ச்சி யில்லாதே நானதுவாய் அதுவென்
மயமாய்ச்சின் மயமாய்த்தன் மயமான நிலையே

VI: 82: 98

- என்னை

அகம்புணர்ந்தார் புறம்புணர்ந்தார் புறப்புணர்ச்சித் தருணம்
தூயவொளி பெற்றழியா தோங்குவடி வானேன்

VI: 82: 99

அருட்சோதித் தலைவர்எனக் கன்புடைய கணவர்
அழகியபொன் மேனியைநான் தழுவிநின்ற தருணம்
இருட்சாதி தத்துவங்க ளெல்லாம்போ யினவால்
எங்கணும்பே ரொளிமயமாய் இருந்தனஆங் கவர்தாம்
மருட்சாதி நீக்கியெனைப் புணர்ந்தவொரு தருணம்
மன்னுசிவா னந்தமய மாகிநிறை வற்றேன்
தெருட்சார்பில் இருந்தோங்கு சமரச்சன் மார்க்கத்
திருச்சபைக்கண் ணுற்றேனென் திருக்கணவருடனே

VI: 82: 97

வான்பதிக்குங் கிடைப்பரியார் சிற்பசையில் நடிக்கும்
மணவாள ரெனைப்புணர்ந்த புறப்புணர்ச்சித் தருணம்
தான்பதித்த பொன்வடிவந் தனையடைந்து களித்தேன்.

VI: 82: 94

At this juncture I shall explain very briefly the traditional cult of classical Tamil literature especially in expounding the love of God. Unless we understand this it is not possible to follow the Swami since he has sung his philosophy in the traditional manner of Tamil poets. There is a specific treatise in the age old Tholkappiam which relates the science of Love which is called Agapporul-that which is enjoyed from within. Usually a youth of princely qualities chances to meet a young lady of equal attainments and they fall in love with each other at first sight. He is deeply desirous of meeting her as often as possible. Generally there are obstacles in their way, of several kinds. He painfully narrates his story to his chosen companion. Similarly she laments over her woeful parting from him and pants and throbs not only for her impulsive love for him but also for the unbearable torture he might undergo in not having her hand. She also secretly discloses her immense love for him to her bosom friend in an indirect manner. Permission of parents for the marriage is sought, failing which elopement may take place. The same code of conduct has been followed by several saints and seers in their pursuit of God. Generally they used to assume themselves to be the lady love and the Lord Supreme to be the consort or the lover. The Swami has followed this method to reveal his immense love of the God Supreme. His mind is often treated as the chosen companion. His soul, in the higher stages, is the maiden

seeking relentlessly the Divine embrace of the Lord. At this very high stage the Swami speaks about the merging of his divine soul (the beloved) with the Divinity (the consort), in hundreds of verses. The most exalted bliss experienced in the embrace, the transcendent happiness enjoyed at the merging of the Divine husband, the unquenchable and unsatiated desire to enjoy Him again and again and incessantly-nay, perpetually-the unbearable pain and passion even at the momentary separation, all these are explicitly expressed by way of conversation with one's bosom friend. At this external merger of the Divine, the Swami could see superfine brilliance everywhere and feel exceedingly happy with a unique thrill which he had never experienced before. He also felt that he was with the Lord Supreme in the most sacred Sanmarga Society.

In this philosophy the achievement of each and every stage can be verified by external symptoms and therefore there is absolutely no myth nor imaginative inference. We have noted already that, before entering this stage, the body of the aspirant along with his soul has been fully charged with the Grace and has become superb and perfect gradually absorbing the Divinity in him. Now at this level, the Swami sings that the merging of the Lord has permanently left in his body, an aroma of camphor. This pervasive fragrance of camphor was emanating from his body throughout his later period. It was ever-lasting and never fading. In fact even the disciplined disciples of the Swami mistook that he was always carrying camphor with him. But the Swami speaks it out very beautifully in these sweet lines:

கற்பூர மணக்கின்ற தென்னுடம்பு முழுதும்
கணவர்திரு மேணியிலே கலந்தமண மதுதான்

VI: 82: 10

The ultimate objective of this stage of Sivathuriam is the perfect realization of the Supreme Grace by the aspirant. It is known as the accomplishment of the Grace (அருளனுபவம்) to be achieved at about the level of PARANATHAM (பரநாதம்).

தனிப்பர நாத வெளியின்மேல் நினது
தன்மயம் தன்மய மாக்கிப்
பனிப்பிலா தென்றும் உள்ளதாய் விளங்கிப்
பரம்பறத் துட்புற மாகி
இனிப்புற வொன்று மியம்புறா இயல்பாய்
இருந்ததே அருளனு பவம்

IV: 9: 4

It has been repeatedly explained that the Grace of the Lord Supreme personified as His sacred feet can only be perceived at the spiritual level of PARANATHAM in the form of exceeding brilliant light.

பற்பூத நிலைகடந்து நாதநிலைக் கப்பால்
பரநாத நிலையதன்மேல் விளங்குகின்ற தறிநீ

VI: 82: 15

துரியவெளி தனிற்பரம நாதஅணை நடுவே
சுயஞ்சுடரிற் றுலங்குகின்ற துணையடிகள்

IV: 2: 19

திருச்சிற்றம் பலத்தின்பத் திருவுருக்கொண் டருளாத்
திருநடஞ்செய் தருளுகின்ற திருவடிகளிரண்டும்
அருச்சிக்கும் பேரண்பர் அறிவின்கண் அறிவாய்
அவ்வறிவில் விளைந்தசிவா னந்தவழு தாகி
உருச்சிக்கும் பரநாதத் தலங்கடந்தப் பாற்சித்
துருவுகடந் திருக்குமென வுணர்ந்தோர்சொல் வாரேல்

VI: 83: 7

பரநாத தத்துவாந்தம் சகச தரிசனம்

I: 1: 8

It has to be inferred that beyond the spiritual level of PARANATHAM where from the Supreme Grace is pervading the universe the aspirant attains the stage of SIVATHURIAM in which the Divine Godly embrace is sanctioned. It is so because MEETHANAM - higher stage is considered to be SIVATHURIAM.

மீதானத்து அருளொளியாய் விளங்கியநின் னடிகள்

IV: 2: 31

மீதானத்து ஒளிர்கின்ற விளக்க மாகி

I: 5: 2

And it is said that the Supreme Grace, the sacred feet of God is to be realized in the form of brilliance that emanates from this higher stage of MEETHANAM. It is also said that the feet of the Supreme Lord is to be perceived just above the level of PARANATHAM. Hence above the

spiritual level of PARANATHAM, the divine experience of SIVATHURIAM is held possible.

At the happy realization of this resplendent stage of SIVATHURIAM (சிவதுரியம்) in which the aspirant has been transformed into a Godly being with concentrated Divine Grace, his body is known as PRANAVADEHAM (பிரணவதேகம்) body of Grace - a stage in which the God Supreme has found a perfect place to dance or rather a body wherein the Supreme Grace has flowed. At this stage a complete union of the aspirant with the Supreme God in and out is fructified. The Swami feels diffident to express the tremendous feeling of ecstatic delight of this state.

இசைத்திடவும் நினைத்திடவும் பெரிதரிதாந்
தனித்தலைமை இறைவா உன்றன்
அசைத்திடுபே ரருட்செயலா லசைவதன்றி
யைந்தொழில்செய் நாத ராலுந்
தசைத்திடுபுன் துரும்பினையு மகங்கரித்துத்
தங்கள்சுதந் தரத்தா லிங்கே
அசைத்திடற்கு முடியாதே லந்தோவிச்
சிறியேனா லாவ தென்னே.

VI: 17: 7

But he has given expression to this stage that it is the Supreme bliss throughout and the Supreme Lord harmoniously integrates with the aspirant. Only the chosen gifted souls enter into this realm of this really eternal bliss. Many could not reach this stage and hence have become stagnant then and there at different levels of attainments. Many are lost in the Bliss. However, a few being overpowered by the Bliss imbibing the Grace remain here itself. Fewer still enjoying the Bliss more and more and being charged with saturated Supreme Grace evolve further and further. The next higher stage of this Godhood is spoken of as Suddhasivasakram - Absolute Supreme Consciousness (சுத்தசிவசாக்கிரம்).

The most celestial subsequent stages are SUDDHA SIVA SORPANAM, SUDDHA SIVA SUZHUTHI, SUDDHA SIVA THURIAM and SUDDHA SIVA THURIADEETHAM - Absolutely Supreme Brilliance and Sweetness (சுத்தசிவ சொப்பனம், சுத்தசிவ சுழுத்தி, சுத்தசிவ துரியம், சுத்தசிவ துரியாதீதம்).

All these absolutely supreme stages are explained by the Swami for the first time as enjoyed by him. In all of them the merging of the

Supreme Godhead is explicitly declared. The highest stage in this Sanmarga philosophy is the most sublime and most supreme where the Swami unites with the Supreme Godhead. The most superior Divinity merges in him fully and completely. The ecstatic bliss overwhelms him perpetually. The supreme delight has been depicted as the elixir of honey happily blended with supreme fragrance with supreme brightness of the Supreme auspicious Being.

There are several verses explaining the eternal union and communion of the Supreme God.

"The Lord Supreme who has established a fondling abode in me got Himself not only merged in me but got me merged in Him. He became one with me. He became Himself realized in me. The supremely sweet Lord dancing in the arena of pure knowledge and wisdom is in me in a state of blissful ambrosia".

நானானான் தானானான் நானுந்தா னும்மானான்
தேனானான் தெள்ளமுதாய்த் தித்தித்து நின்கின்றான்
வானானான் ஞான மணிமன்றி லாடுகின்றான்
கோனானான் என்னுட் குலவுகின்ற கோமானே.

VI: 124: 1

தானா னெனும்பேதந் தன்னைத் தவிர்த்தான் நான்
ஆனான் சிற்றம்பலவ னந்தோநான் - வானாடர்
செய்தற் கரியதவஞ் செய்தேன் மகிழ்கின்றேன்
எய்தற் கரியசுக மேய்ந்து.

VI: 109: 16

தானே அருளானான் தானே பொருளானான்
தானேயெல் லாம்வல்ல தானானான் - தானேதான்
நானானா னென்னுடைய நாயகனா னான்ஞான
வானானா னம்பலத்தெம் மான்.

VI: 86: 5

அதுநானாய் நானதுவா யத்துவித
மாகிநின்றேன் அந்தோ அந்தோ

VI: 73: 9

நான்புகலு மொழியிதுகே ளென்னுடைய தோழி
நாயகனார் தனியுருவம் நான்தழுவும் தருணம்
வான்புகழும் சுத்தசிவ சாக்கிரமென் றுணர்ந்தோர்
வழுத்துநிலை யாகுமுருச் சுவைகலந்தே யதுவாய்

தேன்கலந்த சுவையொடுதான் மணங்கலந்த வொளியாய்த்
திரிபின்றி இயற்கையின்பச் சிவங்கலந்த நிலையே
தான்புகல்மற் றையமூன்றுங் கடந்தப்பா லிருந்த
சாக்கிரா தீதமெனத் தனித்துணர்ந்து கொள்ளே

VI: 82: 75

தனிப்படுமோர் சுத்தசிவ சாக்கிரநன் னிலையில்
தனித்திருந்தேன் சுத்தசிவ சொற்பனத்தே சார்ந்தேன்
கனிப்படுமெய்ச் சுத்தசிவ சுழுத்தியிலே கனித்தேன்
கலந்துகொண்டேன் சுத்தசிவ துரியநிலை யதுவாய்
செனிப்பிலதாய் எல்லாமாய் அல்லதுவாஞ் சுத்த
சிவதுரியா தீதத்தே சிவமயமாய் நிறைந்தேன்
இனிப்புறுசிற சபையிறையைப் பெற்றபரி சதனால்
இத்தனையும் பெற்றிங்கே இருக்கின்றேன் தோழி

VI: 82: 96

It can be seen from these verses that the merging of the Swami with the Supreme Divinity in these higher and highest stages is subjective. The Swami proclaims in an ecstatic delight "Blaze with the drum that I have become one with the Supreme Blaze of Grace; Blaze that I have acquired the kingdom of Grace Supreme".

அருட்சோதி யானேனென் றறையப்பா முரசு
அருளாட்சி பெற்றேனென் றறையப்பா முரசு.

VI: 169: 1

Apart from the forgoing declarations of his accomplishment and realization of the Supreme Godhead, there are several references with regard to his achievements of the three eternal forms of SUDDHA DEHAM, PRANAVA DEHAM, and GNANADEHAM.

சுத்த வடிவும் சுகவடிவாம் ஓங்கார
நித்த வடிவு நிறைந்தோங்கு - சித்தெனுமோர்
ஞான வடிவுமிங்கே நான்பெற்றே னெங்கெங்கும்
தானவினை யாட்டியற்றத் தான்.

VI: 109: 17

மன்னுகின்ற பொன்வடிவு மந்திரமாம் வடிவும்
வான்வடிவும் கொடுத்தெனக்கு மணிமுடியுச் சூட்டி

VI: 38: 61

நானே தவம்புரிந்தே னம்பெருமா னல்லருளால்

நானே அருட்சத்தி நாடடைந்தேன் - நானே
அழியா வடிவ மவைமூன்றும் பெற்றேன்
இழியாம லாடுகின்றே னிங்கு.

VI: 109: 27

All these absolutely supreme stages of Godhead such as SUDDHA SIVA SAKRAM, SUDDHA SIVA SORPANAM, SUDDHA SIVA SUZHUTHI, SUDDHA SIVATHURIYAM and SUDDHA SIVA THURIYADEETHAM (சுத்தசிவசாக்கிரம், சுத்தசிவ சொப்பனம், சுத்தசிவ சுழுத்தி, சுத்தசிவ துரியம், சுத்தசிவ துரியாதீதம்) have been pronounced for the first time and that too only by the Swami. He proclaims that he was endowed with that eternal Bliss of the Supreme Godhead, which even those who are reputed to be the Divine and Blessed Sages of lore could not achieve. The Swami even question whether there is anybody in any world who has been blessed with immortality in the manner in which he was sanctified and to the extent to which the Grace Supreme was saturated in him.

நோவாது நோன்பெனைப்போல் நோற்றவரு மெஞ்ஞான்றும்
சாவா வரமெனைப்போற் சார்ந்தவரும் - தேவாநின்
பேரருளை என்போலப் பெற்றவரு மெவ்வுலகில்
யாருளர்நீ சற்றே யறை.

VI: 74: 11

Here the Swami expatiates on his greatest achievement so much because it is very difficult even for great seers to conceive of this extremely great state of Godhead. He says very vividly that God Supreme alone knows what he accomplished in His Divine presence.

பேராலு மறிவாலும் பெரியரெனச் சிறப்பாகப் பேச நின்றோர்
ஆராலும் பெறலரிய தியாததனைப் பெறுவித்தான்

VI: 73: 7

சந்நிதி யிற்சென்று நான்பெற்ற பேறது
சாமி யறிவாரடி

VI: 164: 32

தானே தயவாற் சிறியேற்குத் தனித்தனான அமுதளித்த
தாயே எல்லாச் சுதந்தரமுத் தந்த கருணை எந்தாயே
ஊனே விளங்க ஊனமிலா வொளிபெற் றெல்லா வுலகமுமென்
உடைமை யாக்கொண் டருணிலைமேல் உற்றேனுன்ற னருளாலே
வானே மதிக்கச் சாகாத வானாயெல்லாம் வல்லசித்தே
வயங்க வுனையுட் கலந்துகொண்டேன் வகுக்குந்தொழிலே முதலைந்தும்

நானே பரிகின் றேன்புரித னானோ நீயோ நானறியேன்
நானீ யென்னும் பேதமிலா நடஞ்செய் கருணை நாயகனே

VI: 58: 3

Further, the Swami points out very gracefully his actual state of affairs in the kingdom of God at the moment. To enable us to infer his personality and his final attainment in his pursuit of Divinity the Swami himself has clarified that the loving sages ultimately found the Swami who sought to realize God Supreme, to be the same as the Supreme Auspicious Being, ARUTPERUNJOTHI (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி).

தவநேய முஞ்சுத்த சன்மார்க்க நேயமுஞ் சத்தியமாம்
சிவநேய முத்தந்தென் னுள்ளந் தெளியத் தெளித்தனையே
நவநேய மன்றில் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதியை நாடிநின்ற
இவனே யவனெனக் கொள்வாருன் னன்ப ரிருநிலத்தே.

VI: 85: 9

6. Space and Light

Abstract

Sanmarga Philosophy may be said to be the path of Light. The soul is veiled by several kinds of lust and shackles. They have to be removed and conquered one after another. Then the brilliant light of the soul will be realized. To explain the greatness and the brilliance of the human soul and to show how God condescended in his own soul, the Swami constructed the temple of wisdom.

The Swami has very vividly explained the structural beauty of the universe. He has pointed out the dovetailed nature of the spaces of the universe. The idea is to visualize the similar spaces and light in the human body in the course of realizing the God Supreme. The nature and definition of the Supreme God as per the finding of the Swami are narrated here. He is blossoming in the form of formless Supreme Light in all embracing and supremely effulgent space at the most auspicious supreme plane.

Space and Light

The philosophy of Saint Ramalingaswami can safely be said to be that of achieving the Light of Grace. He has pointed out that it is a progressive evolution of the speck of light manifested in the human-being into the greatest light-the Supreme Grace Light (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி). The analogy of the Swami is that of developing the greatest fire from the smallest spark of a flame. In expounding this theory he has explained his own experiences, how he was picked up by God, how he was tried, how he stood the test, how the Light of Grace was infused in him and finally how he became blazed with the Supreme Grace Light. The contention of the Swami is that the spiritual light of the human beings should be gradually developed into the most effulgent light and ultimately merged with the Supreme Grace Light. The lust and the shackles of various kinds (Devil Power) not only have been preventing but have been concealing the real brilliance and the natural power of the spiritual light of the human beings. To understand that the human soul is several million times radiant as the sun and that it has been veiled for generations together, is by itself an enlightenment in this theory of light (ஒளிநெறி). This realization is achieved by constant thinking, "what we are, and what we are about".

Sincere devotion to God, persistent austerity, enduring penance, real love and affection for all the fellow beings and a kind and compassionate attitude to all live creatures, will certainly demand the flow of God's Grace in the human beings. By this descent of Divinity, the curtains veiling the greatness and power of the spiritual light in the human individual gradually begin to fall. With the aid of this universal compassion and ardent meditation, the aspirant is able to visualize the beatific brilliance of his soul.

Out of absolute mercy and sheer love for the fellow beings, the Swami wished to construct the great Temple of Wisdom (ஞானசபை) at Vadalur. It is only an external symbolic representation of what the Swami visualized within himself.

The Swami has not followed any religious appellation or cult in the construction of this gnostic auditorium. The entire superstructure was sketched out by the Swami himself. He desired that the construction should be completed in six months. His disciples undertook the task and meticulously carried it out. On the 25th January 1872 when the star, Poosam (பூசம்) was in its ascendancy, the opening ceremony was held. The curtains in the hall were unveiled one by one and the sublime light of Grace glowing therein was witnessed by several million devotees.

The date and time synchronise with those of the transmutation and disappearance of the Swami later. Every year on this day the great festival is celebrated with all grandeur and several millions of people throng to worship the glow of Light when the raising of the curtains followed by the incense of the camphor flame is ceremoniously lifted. The thundering noise of the devotees produced by the pronouncement of the sacred words, "Supreme Grace Light, Supreme Universal Compassion" (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி தனிப்பெருங்கருணை) fills the air with a sensational thrill. The greatness of this temple hall wherein the perpetual cosmic dance of the Lord Supreme is indicated by the light has been extolled in a few verses.

While describing the various curtains, the Swami points out that they have been concealing certain divine spaces in the Universe.

This is not a temple similar to those that abound in the Tamil country. It signifies the real nature of the human soul and its relative position in God. There is no sectarianism of any kind; nor has any code of

religious fanaticism crept in. This is an external symbol of what a perfected soul of a human individual actually realize within.

There is a vast space at Vadalur sanctified with an air of Grace. An iron chain runs around this majestic octagonal hall. Three pathways surround the hall that is facing south. There are three main entrances apart from two on the sides which lead into a large hall. Here there are five steps leading to the door of the temple hall. There are seven curtains which conceal the light within. The first curtain is nothing but the veil which surrounds the individual. This is not only supposed to prevent him from having the inner awakening but it drives him into the materialistic worldly affairs. When this is removed by the opening of the door, there is found a blue curtain representing the veil that hides the very life itself. When this is also removed a green curtain is seen. This is made up of two parts, the inner golden green and the outer darkish green. All these three curtains are so strong that they are directing the human beings into the worldly affairs. The next inner curtain is red which hides 'the space of miracles'. The curtain behind this is of the golden hue. This conceals the space of reality. There is another inner white curtain hiding the space of the Lord Supreme. The innermost multi-coloured curtain is preventing the experience of the desired enjoyment. The inner four when lifted will lead one to divine experiences.

கரைவின்மா மாயைக் கரும்பெருந் திரையால்
அரசது மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பேருறு நீலப் பெருந்திரை யதனால்
ஆருயிர் மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பச்சைத் திரையாற் பரவெளி யதனை
அச்சுற மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
செம்மைத் திரையாற் சித்துறு வெளியை
அம்மையின் மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பொன்மைத் திரையான் மெய்ப்பதி வெளியை
அண்மையின் மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
வெண்மைத் திரையான் மெய்ப்பதி வெளியை
அண்மையின் மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
கலப்புத் திரையாற் கருதனு பங்களை
அலப்புற மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி!

VI: 1: 813-826

Apart from these, there are also other curtains preventing the stages of spiritual experiences.

விடைய நிலைகளை வெவ்வேறு திரைகளால்
அடர்புற மறைக்கு மருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
தத்துவ நிலைகளைத் தனித்தனித் திரையால்

When all these curtains are unveiled there is found a thick glass slab of about 5 feet in height inside which there is a bright lamp. The light illustrates the human soul in its real and natural lustre. The glass slab indicates the purity of the soul. It is said that the Swami was keeping the glass slab and the lamp in his prayer room at his residence for about 48 days prior to their installation. That is the light of the soul in its true splendour. It is said to have the brilliance of several million Suns put together. The devoted aspirant who has visualized his own spiritual light as in this temple can see the Light of God and this supreme Grace Light will become manifested in the spiritual light of the perfected soul. In other words at this beautiful gnostic auditorium (Gnanasabai) God Supreme could be seen in the form of light which represents the pure spiritual light of Saint Ramalinga Swami which has been replaced by the Supreme Grace Light (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி). He was so generous, so merciful, so benevolent, so compassionate and so loving as to bring out what he realized within himself, this unique temple of wisdom for the benefit of his fellow beings. This is meant for the clear and perfect understanding of spiritual light in the human beings, for the incessant and devoted prayer for the removal of the curtains that eclipse the soul, for the true realization of the light of Grace and for the greatest attainment of Godhead. The Swami prays to God to enlighten all human beings in the manner in which he was levered up and sanctified. He appealed to the masses to follow his pure spiritual path of universal harmony (Suddhasanmargam). There are hundreds of verses entreating the whole human family to take to this spiritual life. The divine aspirant who has seen his own soul, the spiritual light, within himself, becomes eligible to visualize the Supreme Grace Light. The light in the Temple of Wisdom, (Gnanasabai) at Vadalur actually represents the Supreme Grace Light which has become merged with the light of the human soul as it has really happened to the Swami. The God Supreme is so merciful and so near to the soul of the perfected aspirant that He is delighted to make it His abode - the arena for His Cosmic Dance.

சபைஎன துளமெனத் தானமர்ந் தெனக்கே
அபய மளித்ததோர் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி

In fact this Temple of Wisdom indicates how the Supreme Grace Light can be brought nearer home so as to descend in the individual if only he becomes cleansed from all the lust and shackles of all kinds.

Apart from the few spaces and the spiritual light illustrated at this Gnanasabai, the Temple of Wisdom, the Swami has very vividly narrated the very structure of the spaces and the light of the Universe. The picture drawn in accordance with his description perhaps, may clarify the structural beauty of the firmament.

பகுதிவான் வெளியிற் படர்ந்தமா பூத
அகல்வெளி வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
உயிர்வெளி யிடையே உரைக்கரும் பகுதி
அயல்வெளி வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
உயிர்வெளி யதனை யுணர்கலை வெளியில்
அயலற வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
கலைவெளி யதனைக் கலப்பறு சுத்த
அலர்வெளி வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
சுத்தநல் வெளியைத் துரிசறு பரவெளி
அத்திடை வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பரவெளி யதனைப் பரம்பர வெளியில்
அரசுற வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பரம்பர வெளியைப் பராபர வெளியில்
அரந்தெற வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பராபர வெளியைப் பகர்பெரு வெளியில்
அராவற வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி
பெருவெளி யதனைப் பெருஞ்சுக வெளியில்
அருளுற வகுத்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி.

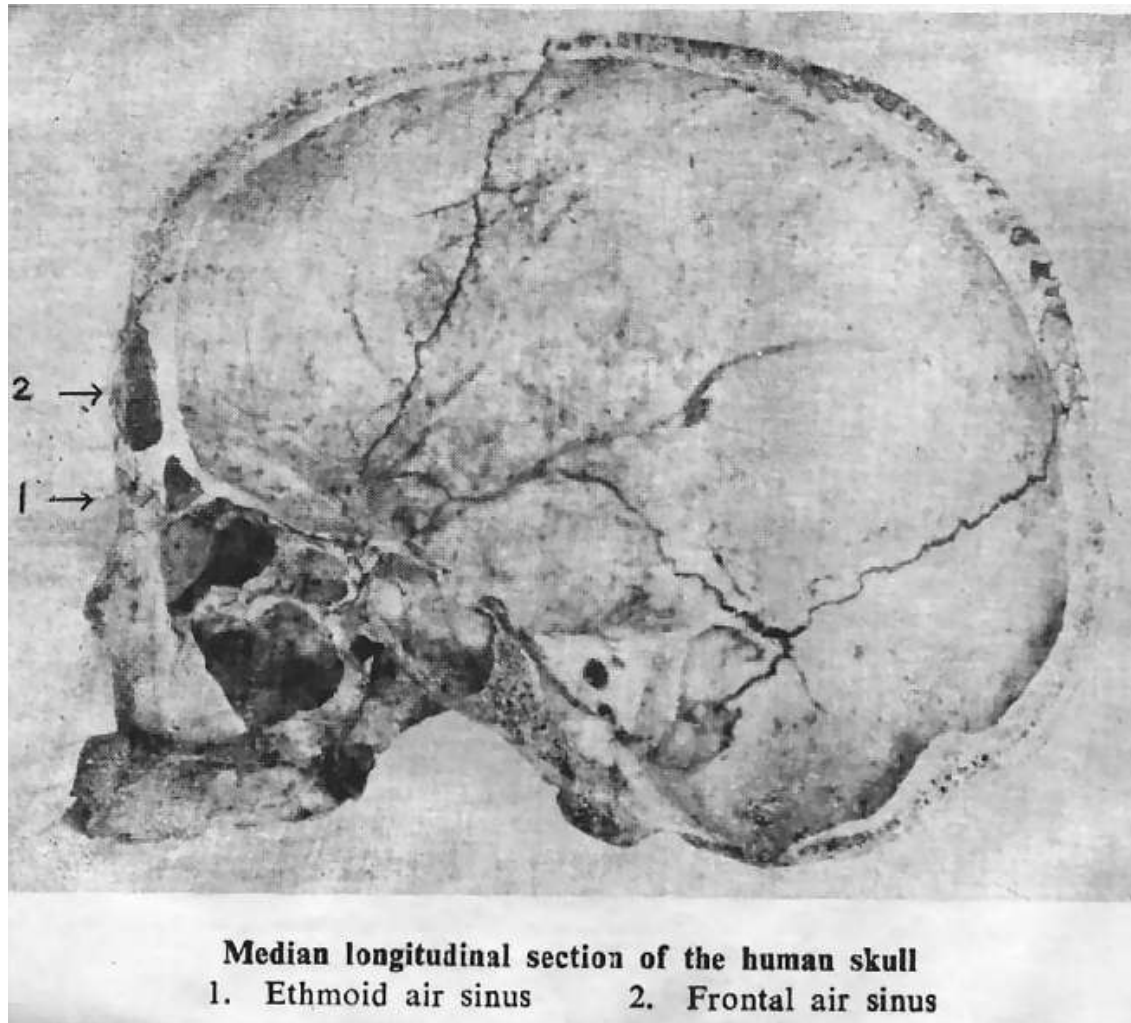
VI: 1: 553-570

The vast outer space of the universe known as *Paguthi Van Veli* (பகுதி வான் வெளி) encircles the space of the great elements known as *Booda Veli* (பூத வெளி). The former is in turn inclosed by *Uyir Veli* (உயிர் வெளி) the space of life, which is again and again inclosed by different spheres or spaces such as *Kalai Veli* (கலை வெளி), *Suddha Alar Veli* (சுத்த அலர் வெளி), *Para Veli* (பரவெளி), *Parambara Veli* (பரம்பர வெளி), *Parabara Veli* (பராபர வெளி), *Peru Veli* (பெரு வெளி), *Perum Suga Veli* (பெருஞ்சுக வெளி). The last one Space of Bliss is also known as *Siva Veli* (சிவ வெளி). Each one of them is radiant with brilliant light named after the different regions of the space. For example the outer space (பூத வெளி) of our universe is lighted by the sun, moon and the stars. Similarly the last and the outer-most Siva Veli is gracefully effulgent by the Supreme Light. Just as all the spaces are found in the universe they are also to be realize within.



According to the Sanmarga Philosophy there are nine regions in the human body, which are supposed to be the domains of nine different divine powers. The Grace of the God Supreme is manifested in them in ascending series namely.

1. the domain of Bhraman, the abdomen
2. the domain of Vishnu, the navel
3. the domain of Rudhran, the heart
4. the domain of Mahesan, the neck
5. the domain of Sadasivan, the pharynx
6. the domain of Vindu, the ethmoid air sinus
7. the domain of Nadam, the forehead
8. the domain of Paravindu, the forehead
9. the domain of Paranatham, the frontal air sinus



The soul becomes concentrated off and on in these regions according to the spiritual development of the individual. Higher experience of this philosophy are said to be realized from the fourth region onwards. The sixth is severally known by different philosophic doctrines as Laladam, Akgnapeedam, Mahameru, Chitsabai and so on. It is situated in between the eye-brows on the forehead. Anatomically in a vertical section of the human skull passing through the centre of the nasal bone there is an elongated triangular socket at the base of the frontal bone where it is articulated with the nasal bone. This is known as *ethmoid air sinus*. Perhaps this represents the divine Chitsabai and Vindu Stage of Sanmargam. A little above this socket there is a similar but more vertically elongated socket in the frontal bone known as the *frontal air sinus*. This may perhaps represent the PonSabai (பொற்சபை) and the divine Paranatham stage. It is said that the great saints visualized the most brilliant spark of the Supreme Light at this domain of Vindu and

Paranatham. The mortal body of those who have seen this effulgent light will never perish.

நெற்றிக்கு நேரே நிறைந்த ஒளிகாணின்
முற்று மழியா துடம்பு

- ஒளவை குறள்

கனகசபை நடுவே கண்டதுண்டு
சிற்சபையில் உண்டதுமுண் டடிநான்

VI: 82: 12

என்புருவ நடுவிருந்தான் பின்பு கண்டேனில்லை

II: 88: 10

சிற்சபையும் பொற்சபையுஞ் சொந்தமெனதாச்சு

VI: 168: 2

7. God in Sanmarga Philosophy

Abstract

According to the Sanmarga Philosophy only one God, the God Supreme is manifest in all things of the universe. He is present in three forms such as a formless Being, as a form without form and as a form of Light. The last state of His form has been visualized as the Supreme Grace Light (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி) which is also known as the most auspicious supreme Godhead Suddhasivam (சுத்தசிவம்). He is visualized by means of spiritual speculations though He pervades still further and beyond them. Such a God has not only been manifested fully and completely in the Swami but has granted the beatific splendour of His kingdom. The Swami therefore entreats the whole world to pray to the one God for eternal Bliss.

God in Sanmarga Philosophy

Sanmarga philosophy expatiates on the glory of the Supreme Godhead-Suddasivam. It conceives of the most superior God as Arutperumjothi (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி) the supreme Grace Light. God is in the form of the most perfected Absolute knowledge dancing eternally and perpetually the most supreme Bliss of Action-for the benefit of the universe in the divine manifestation of Nature (ஞான விண்ணப்பம்).

These words of the Swami depict his true realization of God and define His form, function and place. It looks as though it is a ready-made answer for the usual questionnaire of the commoners. God is the Absolute reality of the highest wisdom, pervading the sublime bliss of His cosmic dance in the perfected arena of divine souls. It is a supremely great being of absolute truth of Nature; it is a supremely great state of absolute grace of Nature; it is a supremely great bliss of absolute happiness of Nature.

இயற்கையுண்மைத் தனிப்பெரும் பொருளாயும், இயற்கை விளக்கத் தனிப்பெரும் பதமாயும், இயற்கை இன்பத் தனிப்பெரும் சுகமாயும், பிரிவின்றி நிறைந்த ஆண்டவர்.

In all particles of matter, in all senses, for all doings, in all fruits of actions, in all experience and in everything else, He is there in all

respects both internally and externally, both intensely and superficially but not bound by any of these. There is no bit of matter or energy in which He is not manifested nor is there any particle which alone represents Him solely. He is not an object, though all objects are for Him and in Him. He is not a thought but all thoughts are for Him. He is not a thing normally seen but is the principle of all seeing. He is in all living things and in Him all the living are found. Realizing this principle one should do good to all.

உயிருள்யாம் எம்முன் உயிர்இவை உணர்ந்தே
உயிர்நலம் பரவுகஎன்று உரைத்தமெய்ச் சிவமே

VI: 1: 973-974

He possesses nothing but all things possess Him. He is not anything but He is all in all in everything. Such a unique and only God is resplendent in the universal arena of Nature.

... ..
யாவும்இலார் யாவும்உளார் யாவும்அலார் யாவும்
ஒன்றுறுதா மாகிநின்றார் திருச்சிற்றம் பலத்தே
ஒங்குகின்ற தனிக்கடவுள் ஒருவர்உண்டே கண்டீர்

VI: 3: 13

In this philosophy the Swami has perceived of a cult of Light. From the meek and insignificant creatures to the highly evolved human beings and super-human beings, all living things are simply manifestations of the light of God. The Light of God supreme is present in everything and more so in the human beings. The human being is embellished with a higher sixth sense with which the fraction of light in him should be developed more and more for the complete realization of the God Supreme. Supreme Grace Light is referred to as (Suddhasivam-சுத்தசிவம்) the perfect auspicious Being. This is the most sublime and transcendent plane of Suddha siva thuriyaadeetham (சுத்த சிவதுரியாதீதம்) where alone the divine souls can merge with the Supreme God. The Swami has explained how he evolved into this supremely beatific plane.

சுத்த சிவதுரியா தீதத்தே சிவமயமாய் நிறைந்தேன்

VI: 83: 96

There is only one God in the philosophy of the Swami. That is the most Supreme Being and referred to as the great Godhead. The Swami

gently refutes the idea of plurality of Gods by questioning whether there can be two or three lives in the body of a living organism. He proclaims that there exists only one God Supreme. He may be in three different states. They are a form, a formless and a form without form. (The last mentioned is the form of the container of the thing contained. To be more precise, water has no form but the form of the water in a cup or a jar is the form of the cup or the jar.) When this is so, there is no need to quarrel whether there are two, three or five gods.

உருவராகியும் அருவினராகியும் உருஅரு வினராயும்
ஒருவரேயுளார் கடவுள்கண் டறிமினோ உலகுளீர் உணர்வின்றி
இருவராம் என்றும் மூவரே யாம்என்றும் இயலும் ஐவர்களென்றும்
எருவ ராயுரைந்து உழல்வதென் உடற்குயிர் இரண்டுமூன் றெனலாமே.

VI: 128: 1

The three different states of Godhood are generally referred to by the Swami and all of them are pervaded by the Supreme Grace and are visualized in the most auspicious and sublime plane of superfine space.

உருவமும் அருவமும் உபயமும் ஆகிய
அருள்நிலை தெரித்த அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி

VI: 1: 317-318

உருவமும் அருவமும் உபயமும் உளதாய்
உளதில தாய்ஒளிர் ஒருதனி முதலே.

VI: 101: 5

அருள்நிலை விளங்குசிற் றம்பலம் எனுஞ்சிவ
சுகாதீத வெளி நடுவிலே

VI: 100: 1

This space is known as that of Siva, the most auspicious Being (சிவவெளி). There are many explanations about this space that it is the place where universal Grace Light is effulgent and that it is the unique and the most superior plane where the supreme auspicious Being is ubiquitous.

திருநிலைத் தனிவெளி சிவவெளி யெனுமோர்
அருள்வெளிப் பதிவளர் அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி

VI: 1: 27-28

ஒருநிலை இதுவே உயர்நிலை எனும்ஒரு

திருநிலை மேவிய சிவமே சிவமே.

VI: 1: 949-950

He can be realized only by that divine experience stretching beyond even the supra-mental consciousness.

தனுசுர ணாதிகள் தாங்கடந் தறியுமோர்
அநுபவம் ஆகிய அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி

VI: 1: 117-118

The Swami has spared no pains in narrating the greatness of the Lord Supreme and has tried his best to describe Him as clearly, cogently and exquisitely as possible. He has left us an excellent stanza of maximum number of syllables, perhaps the only one of its kind in the whole of Tamil Literature in which the first one-fourth of the verse is composed of Sanskrit out and out. That alone consists of 32 lines of 192 syllables. The entire verse is an invocation praising the sublime features of the feet of Lord Supreme. The first quarter of the verse is fully dedicated to the unique description of the Supreme auspicious Being. The grandeur of the divine aspects of the supreme God has been majestically brought out in a thrilling strain. The melodious harmony of the verse, the choice words pregnant with meaning and the simplicity of its narration, bind now and then the prankish and peevish mind just at least for a moment.

பரசிவம் சின்மயம் பூரணம் சிவபோக பாக்கியம்
பரசுகம் தன்மயம் சச்சிதா னந்தமெய்ப் பரம ஏகாந்த நிலயம்
பரமஞானம் பரமசத்துவ மகத்துவம் பரம கைவல்ய நிமலம்
பரமதத்துவ நிரதிசய நிட்களம் பூத பௌதிகாதார நிபுணம்

பவபந்த நிக்ரக வினோதசுகளம் சிற்பரம பரானந்த சொரூபம்
பரிசாயாதீதம் சுயம் சதோயம் வரம் பரமார்த்த முக்தமௌனம்
படன வேதாந்த மாகமாந் தாந்த நிருபாதிகம் பரமசாந்தம்
பரநாத தத்துவாந்தம் சகச தரிசனம் பகிரங்கம் அந்தரங்கம்

பரவியோமம் பரமஜோதிமயம் விபுலம் பரம்பர மனந்தம் அசலம்
பரம லோகாதிக்க நித்திய சாம்பிராச்சியம் பரபதம் பரமசூக்ஷ்மம்
பராபர மநாமய நிராதர மகோசரம் பரமதந்திரம் விசித்திரம்
பராமுத நிராகரம் விகாசனம் விகோடணம் பரசுகோதயமக்ஷயம்

பரிபவ விமோசனங் குணரகிதம் விசுவம்பதித்துவ பரோபரீணம்
பஞ்சகிர்த்திய சுத்த கர்த்தத்துவம் தற்பரம் சிதம்பர விலாசம்
பகர் சுபாவம் புனிதமது லமது லிதமம் பாரம்பர நிராலம்பனம்
பரவு சாக்ஷாத்கார நிரவயம் கற்பனாதீத நிருவிகாரம்.

Apart from this verse, the Swami has been gracious enough to pass on to posterity another wonderful verse in *Agaval* metre. This is also unique and unsurpassed in Tamil Literature, running to 1596 lines, known as Arutperumjothi Agaval (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி அகவல்) - verse of the Supreme Grace Light. The Swami has genuinely attempted to define Supreme-Grace-Light since he has at his wits end equated Supreme Grace Light with Supreme Grace Light only. It is the real treasure house where many of the subtle points, abstract ideas and abstruse thoughts have been skillfully explained. It may safely be said that it is the perfect essence, the all-told gist and the pure quintessence of his song of Grace. God is manifested in, 'he', 'she', 'it', and is apart from all these three. It has to be pointed out that there is no plurality of Gods in this philosophy. In fact he has graded the various powers that are personified as different deities endowed with certain divine powers. They are known as the Heads of different stages (பதத் தலைவர்கள்). To understand these powers and to distinguish them from one another some symbolic names have been assigned in religious literature. He has made it clear that the God Supreme is Supreme-Grace-Light (அருட்பெருஞ்ஜோதி). In this philosophy Arutjothi (அருட்ஜோதி), Arulam Perumjothi (அருளாம் பெருஞ்ஜோதி) and Arum Perumjothi (அரும் பெருஞ்ஜோதி), all indicate only the Supreme Grace of the Supreme God and not the Supreme-Grace-Light. He calls him as the supreme Father who has equated him on a par with the Supreme Grace, the divine embodiment of His power (Sakti) and the Supreme God himself.

தன்னையுந் தன்னருட் சத்தியின் வடிவையும்
என்னையும் ஒன்றென இயற்றிய தந்தையே.

IV: 1: 1145-1146

Likewise he has called Him by several names such as even Buddha, Narayana, Suddha Sivam and so on. The Swami enumerates many different names as befitting the name of God and establishes the cosmopolitan outlook of his philosophy. He explains that names of all the individuals of the universe are also His name as He is manifest in all.

The Swami points out that the God Supreme who is realized beyond all human efforts and endeavour is not so easy to visualize. He is perceived in gross things not in any specific object.

பொதுவுணர் வுணரும் போதலாற் பிரித்தே
அதுவெளிற் றோன்றா அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி.

VI: 1: 121-122

He cannot be subjected to any unit of measurement unless scrupulously comprehended by spiritual means.

உளவினி லறிந்தா லொழியமற் றளக்கின்
அளவினி லளவா அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதி.

VI: 1: 123-124

The Saint has not spared even the intricate means to unfathom His reality. He exquisitely narrates the most subtle and abstract truth of his finding. Though apparently the God Supreme appears to have been bound by his skilful and spontaneous speculation. He is not at all encountered even to the smallest extent. He is virtually visualized by means of his spiritual specifications and pervades still further and beyond them.

நானளக்குந் தோறுமதற் குற்றதுபோற் காட்டி
நாட்டியபின் னொருசிறிது மளவிலுறா தாகித்
தானளக்கும் அளவிதிலே முடிவதெனத் தோற்றித்
தன்னளவுங் கடந்தப்பால் மன்னுகின்ற பொருளே

VI: 38: 58

அவ்விடத்தே உவ்விடத்தே அமாந்ததுபோற் காட்டி
அங்குமிங்கும் அப்புறமும் எங்குநிறை பொருளே

VI: 38: 86

The sage has been so kind as to unfold the real nature of the Supreme God. He is blossoming in the form of formless but all embracing and supremely effulgent space at the most auspicious supreme place.

ஆய்ந்தபர சிவவெளியில் வெளியுருவாய் எல்லாம்
ஆகியதன் னியல்விளக்கி யலர்ந்திடும்பே ரொளியே

VI: 38: 38

Such a God, the Supreme Grace Light has not only manifested fully and completely in our Swami but has granted him the beatific splendour of His Kingdom.

அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதியென் னம்மையி னோடறி வானந்தமாம்
அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதியென் னப்பனென் ஁ள்ளத் தமர்ந்தபினால்
அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதித்தெள் ளாரமு தந்தத் தழிவற்றதோர்
அருட்பெருஞ் ஜோதிச் செங்கோலுங் கொடுத்தனன் அற்புதமே

VI: 118: 4

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