

PERIYAPURANAM

(THE LIVES OF SAIVA SAINTS)

OF
ST. SEKKILAR

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

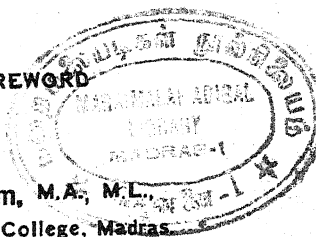
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THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED

TO

DIWAN BAHADUR S. BAVANANDAM PILLAI, I.S.O.

F.R.HIST.S. (London) & M.R.A.S. (London).

“Recipient of a **Jaghir** from Government and a special decoration from **His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor's Own Hands** for eminently distinguished and exceptionally meritorious services rendered to the State, to the Country especially during the difficult period of the Great World War and to the successive members of the Royal Family who visited India from H. R. H. The Duke of Clarence to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.”

Editor of **Tholcapayam** with commentaries of **Perasirier, Nachinarkinier**, etc., **Irayanar Agapporul** with **Nakkirar's** commentary, **Amritasakaranar's Yapparungalam** with an elaborate commentary, **Peragattiya Tiruttu** with annotations, **Pavananthi Munivar's Nannool** with a commentary following **Mailainather, Sankara Namachivaya Pularvar, Ramanuja Kavirayar** and other standard commentators, etc., Author of **Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare in Tamil Prose and Verse, Harischandra, Sita's Wedding, Rama's Exile** and other dramas, Founder '**Bavanandam Academy**,' Member of the **Tamil Board of Studies** and of the **Tamil Composition Committee, Madras University, Member of the Text Book Committee of the Madras Educational Department** and of the **Tamil Committee of the Madras School Book and Literature Society**

IN APPRECIATION

OF

HIS KEEN INTEREST AND

UNSTINTED SERVICE

TO

THE CAUSE OF TAMIL

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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MR. J. M. NALLASWAMI PILLAI, my revered and beloved father, is not merely a translator but "a thoroughly reliable interpreter of the phase of the Agamanta that is developed and perfected in the magnificent writings of the Tamil mediæval scholastics, divines and saints." * This is also well-established from the fact that eminent European Orientalists like the Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope and the Rev. G. M. Cobban did not publish their translations of the *Tiruvarutpayan*, though they had severally translated it, solely out of deference to my father's previous translation of the same. Further, though the Rev. H. R. Hoisington's translations of the *Sivajnanabodham* and the *Sivaprakasam* and Dr. Karl Graul's translation of the *Sivajnana Siddhiyar* were in existence half-a-century before my father's translations of those works, yet the former "did not seem to have attracted the attention of European and Indian Scholars." † The reason for this

* Vide Dr. V. V. Ramanan's Introduction to *the Studies in the Saiva Siddhanta*, p. i.

† My father's translation of the *Sivajnana Siddhiyar*, Introduction p. ii.

neglect is due to the absence of correct interpretations and lucid expositions of "the Saiva Siddhantam, the system of theology which expresses the religious and philosophical ideals of the great majority of the Tamils in India and Ceylon, and of a considerable number of their Dravidian neighbours" *

And another reason for this neglect is that most of the European scholars from Sir William Jones lived in Northern India and they had not the opportunity to notice and understand aright the ancient religion and philosophy treasured in the vast literature of the Tamils. Even the great talented scholar Sir W. W. Hunter in his Imperial Gazetteer has given expression to his wrong notion about Sri Sankara as being the greatest exponent of the Saiva Religion. Sankara's vedanta is represented hardly by any ancient books in Tamil, whereas almost the whole of the literature of Tamil is permeated with the

* From the address on Saiva Siddhanta delivered before the Royal Asiatic Society by Dr. L. D. Barnett, M.A., Litt. D., Professor of Sanskrit at the University College, London; Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts in the British Museum, London.

philosophy of the Saiva Siddhanta though Vaishnava philosophy which is nearly the same as the Saiva Siddhanta occupies a fairly respectable position.

So, when my father first began his serious study of the system of the Saiva Siddhanta in 1894, that is in his thirtieth year, there was hardly any bibliography on the subject in English. Next year, my father published his translation of the *Sivajnanabodham* "with valuable notes, which is a most useful compendium."* A second edition of the *Sivajnanabodham* is to be issued by me very shortly. In 1897, he published his translation of the *Tiruvārūtpayan* of Saint Umapati Sivacharya. In the same year, the monthly magazine, the *Siddhanta Dipika* † was also commenced under the sole auspices and support of my father. He then commenced in the *Dipika* his translations of *Tirumantiram* and *Saiva Samaya Neri Vilakkam* and portions from the *Pattuppattu* and *Kalittogai*. As the out-

* Pope's *Tiruvachakam*, Introduction p. xlii.

† Prof. Max Muller commended this magazine to Oriental Students in his *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*.

come of my father's labours, the literature and philosophy of the Tamils came to be widely recognized by the scholars of the East and the West. In 1900, Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope brought out his translation of the *Tiruvachakam* of Saint Manikkavachakar. At the instance of my father Sri Nilakanta Sivacharya's *Bhashya* on the *Brahma Sutras* by Mr. A. Mahadeva Sastri B.A., formerly of the Oriental Library of H. H. The Maharaja of Mysore and now Director of the Adyar Library, Theosophical Society, Madras, and several of the Saivic *Upanishads* by Mr. R. A. Sastri formerly of the Central Library of H. H. The Gaekwar of Baroda and now of the *Santiniketan*, Bholpur, Bengal were translated and they appeared in the *Siddhanta Dipika*.

In 1911 I published *the Studies in the Saiva Siddhanta* and in 1913 *the Sivajnana Siddhiyar* which are now out of print. About this time the histories of the first few saints including the life of Saint Sundaramurti were contributed to that excellent but now defunct daily *the Indian Patriot* which advocated the people's cause with fearless force and sincere honesty.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

My father has since translated the *Vina Venba*, the *Kodikkavi*, the *Unmai Neri Vilakkam* and the *Irupa-Irupahtu* of the fourteen Siddhanta Sastras which have appeared in the pages of the *Siddhanta Dipika* the publication of which had to be discontinued since 1914 but which I hope to revive soon. My father has left in manuscripts translations of the *Sivaprakasam* and *Periyapuranam*, the latter of which forms the present volume.

A sketch of my father's life may be deemed necessary here, but I shall reserve it for another volume of his writings. However, I cannot refrain from narrating the closing days of his life, which would show that his labours of twenty-five years in the field of Religion and Philosophy were not in vain, and that he attained *malaparipakam*, the stage which leads on to *advaita*. Though he ailed for a month from carbuncle, he never complained of any physical pain, nor was he mindful of the material world. He was cheerful and happy and was ever meditating on the Supreme Sivam. And finally he reached the stage aptly

depicted by St. Manikkavachakar in the *Tiruvachakam* in the following lines :—

ஊன்கெட் தியிர்கெட் துணர்வுகெட்

டென் னுள்ளமும் போய்

நான்கெட்ட வாபாடித்

தெள்ளேனம் கொட்டாமோ.

“ Let me sing, I am lost, my mind is lost,
my sense is lost, my body is lost.”

நாமொழிந்து சிவமான வாபாடித்

தெள்ளேனம் கொட்டாமோ.

“ Let me sing, I lost my ‘ I ’
and gained “ Sivam.”

So, even when my father had become dead to the things of the world, he never ceased to make signs to smear him the sacred ashes, (*vibhuti* or *tiruniru*) and light camphor. Accordingly *tiruniru* was smeared on his forehead and camphor was lit. He opened his erstwhile closed eyes, and beheld the brilliance (*jyoti*) of the lighted camphor, and then closed his eyes again, and peacefully and quietly passed away to the Feet of the Supreme Sivam at 3 P. M. on Wednesday the 11th of August, 1920, at Madura.

The mission in life of my father was one of service to the religion and literature of the

Tamil land and to all the children of God. By God's grace, I shall do my utmost to keep to his sacred mission.

The voluminous and exhaustive writings of my father form the only real library on the subject of Agamic Saivism of the Tamils as is evident from the contributions to the Saiva Siddhanta from the late Prof. R. W. Frazer, Professor of Dravidian languages at the University College, London, and Hon. Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland in the monumental volumes of *the Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.^{*} And Prof.

^{*} The following is an extract from the letter I received from the Prof. R. W. Frazer as early as 1912 :—

“DEAR SIR,

I have obtained permission to send you for review in the *Siddhanta Dipika* and for a note about the great Monumental Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics now appearing in Great Britain an advance copy of my article on the Saiva Siddhanta. I do this because of my profound regard for your *Siddhanta Dipika* and for the work it is doing in a noble spirit of self-sacrifice to bring to light some of the great literary treasures of the Tamil land. I do it further with a feeling and deep debt to the learned Editor of the *Dipika* and further with profound respect for the learning and labours of the revered scholar Srīman J. M. Nallaswami Pillai Avargal and Brahmasri V. V. Ramana Sastrin Avargal.”

Frazer's recent death is the greatest loss to Saivic scholarship. He was an open-minded student of Agamic Saivism, to the world of which he has borne such ample testimony in his "Indian Thought Past and Present" (London, Unwin, 1915.)

The Periyapuranam recounts the histories of sixty-three individual saints and nine groups. In this volume I have included the histories of forty-two individuals and three groups. The rest will be published in a separate volume.

The Appendices were not from the pen of my father and I have taken the liberty to add them on my own account and I hope they will be useful to the readers.

My ambition is to publish, uniform with the present volume all my father's available writings in English and Tamil, and also to publish various books in the two languages on South Indian History, Literature, Art, Science etc., by eminent authors, ancient and modern, suited to the requirements of the students of the new era who, it is hoped, will witness ere

long the inauguration of a Tamil University in the heart of Tamilaham.

The present political developments tend towards the consolidation on a linguistic basis of all our activities in the country. Though this task may be jeered at as impossible by pessimists and sceptics, yet my excuse is what Saint Sekkilar voices when writing his immortal *Periyapuranam*, the lives of the Saiva Saints.

“அளவுகூட வுரைப்பரி தாயினும்

அளவிலாசை துரப்ப வறகுவேன்.”

“Though impossible to reach its limits,

Insatiate love drives me to the task.”

I am also publishing simultaneously with this volume, the *Ancient Dravidians* by the erudite scholar and indefatigable researcher Mr. T. R. Sessa Iyengar, M. A., M. R. A. S., F. R. HIST. S., Asst. Professor of History, Pachaiyappa's College, Madras and I wish and hope that his labours in the field of South Indian History may soon be widely recognized and amply rewarded.

I take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all my friends who have been encouraging me in this line of work and

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

especially Dewan Bahadur S. Bavanandam Pillai, I.S.O., M.R.A.S., F.R. HIST. S., and Prof. K. Subramania Pillai, M. A., M. L., formerly Tagore Law Lecturer and now Professor at the Law College, Madras and also to tender my heartfelt thanks to Messrs. Vest & Co., Madras for their active help to me in bringing out the present and the other volumes of this series. I hope that the English-knowing readers will enable me to accomplish my task by readily purchasing them.

J. N. RAMANATHAN,

Director,

The Tamil University Publishing House,

MADRAS.

Karttigai Dipam Day, November, 1923.

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FOREWORD

THE PERIYAPURANAM is a great Tamil Literary master-piece which deals with the "Lives of Sixty-three Saivite Saints of the Tamil Land." These Saints hail from all communities high and low, and have brought into prominence the cosmopolitan aspects of Saivism. Everyone who reads their lives will be struck with the majesty, and mystery of devotion to the Almighty, which is the grand theme of the whole poem, unifying all the manifold ways of worship pursued by them. The life of every Saint herein illustrates a certain mystic stage of the evolution of the soul, in its onward march, through means however meagre to the supreme divine goal. If in the domain of secular literature of the day, Shakespeare has portrayed human nature in all its diverse subtle aspects, in the world of religious and mystic life, it is the inspired author of *the Periyapuranam*, that has given to us, unrivalled picture of the myriad sided

character of the human mind. The only difference is that Shakespeare used the medium of Drama for unfolding his ideas, while Sekkilar has chosen the narrative form of literature. This great Tamil Poet has immortalised himself, not only by the substance of his poem, but also by his inimitable style of writing which is peerless, as a combination of simplicity, force and beauty, in the whole range of Viruttam Literature in Tamil. That Sekkilar is the king of modern Tamil literature is known only to those who have made a careful study of *the Periyapuranam*, which is very rare in these days. As is the case of everything Tamilian it is an exposition of Tamil books and ideas in English that wins the attraction of the Tamil-reading Public. Most of the English educated men of this country have learnt to appreciate *the Tirukural* and *the Tiruvachakam* only in their English garb, furnished by the late Dr. G. U. Pope. In this connection, the late Mr. Nallaswami Pillai deserves our cordial thanks for having been the first brilliant exponent of the Saiva Siddhantha Philosophy in English. His name will ever be remembered

in connection with the popularisation of the Saiva Siddhanta system of religion and metaphysics, since he has taken pains to give to the world a lucid translation of almost all the fourteen standard works on the subject. He has Englished the *Sivajnana-bodham*, *Sivajnana Siddhiyar* etc. He has long been the editor of a splendid magazine called the *Siddhanta Dipika* which bore the greatest message of Eastern philosophy to distant corners of the civilised world. Finally his English rendering of the lives of the Saivite Saints brings to light the greatness and glory of the *Periyapuranam*. He has narrated the story of each Saint in simple English, and has explained points which may be difficult of comprehension to an ordinary Tamil reader of the *Periyapuranam*. His book will be more acceptable to the English-knowing Tamil student of the day, than any other work on the same subject in Tamil itself. Since the people of a country are likely to draw their inspiration from the saintly lives of their own great men, the best means of influencing the moral and religious character and furthering the aspirations of young students is to

present to them a lucid account of their great ideals in the past. And this book of Mr. Nallaswami Pillai's is one in that direction, and deserves study by the students of the English Schools throughout this country.

Great credit is due to Mr. J. N. Ramanathan who in the midst of his stormy political career, has an eye to the duty of treading faithfully in the steps of his father and carrying on the noble work of philosophic education that has immortalised his father's name. This duty he is discharging at the sacrifice of much leisure and money of his own. The English educated men of the Tamil land, I hope, will not fail to encourage him in this arduous task of his in the interests of Siddhanta Religion and Philosophy.

K. SUBRAMANIAM

•MADRAS,

5th Nov., 1923.



J. M. NALLASWAMI PILLAI

INTRODUCTION

—:0:—

THERE are various works in Tamil, Sanskrit, Canarese and Telugu in which these stories are told. The most ancient and compendious works are those in Tamil and Sanskrit. The one in Tamil is called Periyapuranam or Tiruttondar Puranam by Sekkilar. The works in Sanskrit are called Agastya Bhakta Vilasa and Upamanya Bhakta Vilasa. The first of these has been published in Benares, and an edition in Grantha characters has also been brought out in Madras. The latter work is still in manuscript and follows closely the account in Sekkilar's *Periyapuranam*.

Both these Sanskrit works profess to be part of Skanda Mahapuranam. Still the question has been raised as to which is the original the Tamil or Sanskrit. Sekkilar professes to base his account on the *Tiruttondattogai* of Saint Sundaramurti and the *Tiruthondar Tiruvandadi* of Nambiyandar Nambi (*Vide* Verses 37 to 39 of Tirumalaichirappu),

Though in the same chapter he introduces Upamanyu Maharishi as narrating the story to his disciples at the entry of Saint Sundaramurti into Sri Kailasam. The date of Saint Sundaramurti who was a contemporary of Seraman Perumal is more or less fixed as the eighth century after Christ. Anyhow the Sanskrit work could not be earlier than Saint Sundarar's time, and the dates of Nambiyandar Nambi and Sekkilar have also been fixed as the tenth and eleventh centuries respectively. Sekkilar was the prime minister in the court of Kulottungachola who reigned from 1070 -1108, and whom he refers to frequently as Anapaya Chola. We are inclined to think that the Tamil work is the original of the two, and the introduction of Upamanyu Maharishi in the chapter on Tirumalaichirappu has been availed of by the Sanskrit translator and the Sanskrit version has thus been given out as narrated by Upamanyu. There is another puzzle however. The other version in Sanskrit called Agastya Bhakta Vilasa in which the narrator is the great sage Agastya differs in some details from the *Periyapuranam*

and *Upamanyu Bhakta Vilasa* as pointed out by Dr. V. V. Ramanan in his leading introduction to the Ripon Press edition of the *Tirumantiram*. When and how this version was composed we have no means of ascertaining. But that this should have come into existence before the twelfth century and before the rise of the great Virasaiva leader Basava is equally certain. These stories are embodied in the *Chenna Basava Purana* and *Arupathu Muvar Charitram* in Canarese and they follow the version more as given in the *Agastya Bhakta Vilasa*. That these eminently South Indian stories should have spread West and North is very significant, when we know that the Cholas of the South were extending their sway up to Vatapi and Kalyan on the West up to the banks of the Ganges and Kalingam on the North and North-east, we could fancy how great must have been the interchange between the various peoples of this vast Peninsula in literary and social matters as in politics. There was much intercourse between the peoples socially and politically than we are disposed to credit them

with. And it is a matter for extreme congratulation that India under our beloved King Emperor George V is again to be reunited much more closely than hitherto. We have not come across with any ancient works in Telugu. Pammi Theagaraya Chettiar of Madras brought out an edition in 1900 called *Bhakti Lilamrutam* and I am told by my friend Jayanti Ramayya Pantulu, Presidency Magistrate, Madras, that he has with him a Telugu manuscript of the Siva Bhakta Vilasa. Besides the above Saint Umapati Sivacharya of the thirteenth century has written a brief summary of these stories in Tamil verse called the *Tiruttondar Purana Saram* on the model of Nambiyandar Nambi's *Tiruttondarandadi*. And he has also given us a history of Saint Sekkilar himself in his *Sekkilar Nayanar Puranam*. Of the works in Tamil, the *Tiruttondattogai* of Saint Sundaramurti is the first and forms part of his *Tevara Hymns*. It contains ten hymns beginning with the famous line, "I am the servant of the servants of the Brahmins of Tillai (Chidambaram), where, of course, it was composed. And so he introduces the names of all the

devotees with just a word or two to indicate their history. *The Andadi* of Nambiyandar Nambi contains eighty-nine verses with one or two verses to each saint, and more detailed information is given. *The Puranasaram* of Saint Umapati in seventy-eight verses contains a more concise statement of the leading events in the history of each saint. But of the greatest importance to us is the ground work of Saint Sekkilar in 4286 verses, and since the date of its composition, it has taken the place next to *the Tevaram* and *Tiruvachakam Hymns* themselves, and has been the greatest solace to all true devotees. Being composed at the time of the Tamil Renaissance, it superseded the old classical epics *the Silappadikaram*, *the Manimekhalai* etc., and formed the model for all future Puranam writers. Need we say much about its chaste and simple style, its rhythm and melody when the same was imitated so successfully by the great Kamban himself. Every feeling of the human heart is expressed in suitable metre, and sense and sound blend together in the most exquisite manner. And in my account of St. Appār I wrote, "And our sacred historian

is himself in raptures in describing his (Saint Appar's) first visit (to Chidambaram), and the rhythm of verses is that of a triumphal march." He is a true admirer of nature and has painted his beauties in simple and sober style, avoiding all the exaggerations and far-fetched similes of later poets. There is not one to whatever race or creed he may belong who is not charmed with the grace of Sekkilar's poetry. I have witnessed large audiences held spell bound by the recitation of Sekkilar's verses, I have seen their hearts melt with joy or sorrow and their eyes rain down tears at the exposition of his themes. And I heartily echo the words of the greatest European student of Tamil Poetry, the late Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope who observes in his delightful sketches of *the Periyapurānam* stories contributed to *the Indian Magazine and Review*, "Every Tamil student should read the truly marvellous *Periyapurānam*."

See Mr. T. Chelvakkesavaraya Mudaliyar's article on "Kamban" where he gives parallel quotations from *the Periyapurānam* and Kamban's *Ramayānam* and comes to the conclusion that the

Sekkilar's verses are the originals. (*Vide the Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol II.) Mr. S. Krishnasami Aiyangar, M. A., Bangalore,* ascribed a much earlier date namely tenth century to Kamban but has corrected this in his notes (Note 4) and has more than properly ascribed him to the thirteenth century A. D. for the reasons which he summarises in the note.

Different Ways of Reading Religious History

Before we go into these stories we should like to state the different ways in which these histories are to be looked at. If one's faith is strong in him he can read them as absolute truth and believe them as such they are sure to strengthen him in his spiritual life and helping forward. Then again, he can read them for the spiritual meaning lying imbedded in them and gather knowledge and grace and benefit by the same. Even such an accurate and renowned historian as the late J. A. Froude has some pertinent observations to offer on this subject. He writes as follows in his excellent book called *Oceania*, "A

* Now he is Dr. S. Krishnasami Aiyangar, Professor of Indian History and Archæology, Madras University.

fairy tale we should now call it, but that was no fairy tale to those who listened or to those who sang the story. When Ulysses tells Alcinous of his descent into hell, the old King does not smile over it as at a dream. "Thou resemblest not," he answers, "a cheat or a deceiver, of whom the earth contains so many, rogues who trade in lies. Thy words have forms, and thy brain sense. Thou tellest thy experience like a bard." Where were the lines which divided the truth from falsehood in the mind of Alcinous? The words of Ulysses had form. Lies of the accursed sort have no form and cannot be shaped into form. Organic form is possible only, when there is life and so the problem returns which so often haunts us. What is truth? The apple falls by gravitation. Whether Newton ever watched an apple fall and drew his inference in consequence, has nothing to do with the universal reality which remains unaltered, if the rest is alleged. The story of the apple is the shell, truth is the kernel or things signified. Sacred history in like manner busy only to convey spiritual truth is careless as Alcinous

of enquiring into fact. It takes fact or legend or whatever comes to hand and weaves into form. Beauty of the form and the spirit which animates the form are the guarantees of truth and carry their witness in themselves. Thus, we are rid for ever of critical controversies. The spirit is set free from the letter, and we can breathe and believe in peace such thoughts come like shadows upon water when it is untouched by the breeze. The air ruffles it again, and they are gone."

They are a set of very estimable people who cavil at any inner meaning being ascribed to such stories etc. and they fail not to dub us as reactionaries. While again our Christian Missionaries would call these stories as legends while their own Bible stories are real history. All these will do well to ponder over the lines we quoted above from Froude. Most of these stories carry their teachings on the surface ; while again you have got to dive deeper for picking up the rare diamonds. While we read closely, we meet here and there in the stories themselves, certain hints and keys which pursued would clearly unravel the

mysteries. These explanations have not been advanced by the reactionaries of modern times but they have been advanced in the most ancient works will also be manifest. Saint Tirumular, a great yogi, one of the Nayanars of the Siva Bhakta Vilasa who must have lived at least 2000 years ago has left us his great heritage of *Tirumantiram*; and in this precious work, he attempts to unravel the mystery of the ancient puranic stories. Take for instance, the story of Tirupura Samhara. It is not a mere puranic story. It is found in his Yajur Veda itself, and the passage we have quoted in my "Studies" and our yogi calls them fools who would understand the story as a mere fable and legend.

Here is what he says:—

Our Lord with the Braided Hair,
the Most Ancient one
Destroyed the Triple City,
say the fools.

The Triple City is the product of
the three malas

What happened next, who knows?"

Here he gives us a single, by interpreting the Triple City as the human body which

is the product of the triple malas, Anava, Karma and Maya; and he leaves us to interpret the rest of the story ourselves. I have done this elsewhere (*Vide The Siddhanta Dipika*). And I have communicated this previously to a Madras Newspaper, and one of my friends who is occupying the highest position now, under our government, wrote to say by return post that it was admirable. Of course, I do not ignore the danger in straining some of these interpretations and explanations, but there can be no doubt that our ancient writers had a double object in what they wrote. They wrote their stories or even popular hymns which could be understood by the simple child and which will carry the profoundest meaning to the philosopher. As one advances in spiritual and moral culture the meaning underlying these lines unfold themselves gradually, and everyone in all ages and in all conditions can derive spiritual sustenance. I have even shown how the simplest aphorisms of our divine poetess Auvai are capable of this expansion. Any verse of the *Tevaram* and the *Tiruvachakam* will

illustrate my position. And then all these stories are not altogether unhistorical. The greatest names that figure in the *Bhakta Vilasa* are Saints Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar. They are not mythical personages. Their writings have come down to us to-day; and Sekkilar has been careful to notice only such incidents for which there are internal evidence in the *Tevara Hymns*. There are more traditions current to-day in various places in which they lived and moved than are recorded by Sekkilar and they have left their impression in local names and in proverbs also. And sixteen other saints in this collection were contemporaries of three great ones, and are referred to by them in their *Tevara Hymns*. One other saint, the mother of Karaikal has left her inimitable and heart melting poem behind her. If out of the collection of the Sixty-three Saints, as many as twenty-five can be seen to be real historical personages, who can say the traditions connected with the rest are not real? It is not, perhaps not well-known, that images of these saints have been set up in all South Indian temples and in

the Canarese country also such as in Nanjunge. And in all the principal local festivals what is called the Aithigam (Tradition) of each day's festival is connected with illustrating the incidents connected with these Saints. No great leader among Saints are known to history who had influence and power enough to have introduced these things from one end of the country to the other. Even the influence of the great Basava was purely local. One other fact I refer to before I finish this introduction. Sri Sankaracharya in his *Sivananda Lahari* and *Soundarya Lahari* refers in fact to some of these Saints like Saint Kannappar, Siruttondar and Jnana Sambandar and others.

One Great Puzzle

I cannot omit to notice here one great controversy that has been raging among the Tamil scholars for over half-a-century viz., the omission in this collection of Saint Mannikkavachakar who according to tradition is the more ancient of the three great Acharyas. Saint Sundarar in his *Tiruttondattogai* mentions by name Sixty-three Saints including his father, mother and patron and several names of what

are called "Kutta Adiyars," (கூட்ட அடியார்கள்) such as Tillaival Andanars, Poyyadimaiyillada Pulavar, etc. and yet he does not refer to Saint Manikkavachakar. I do not propose to settle this question and I may refer curious readers to peruse No. 4 of *the Tamilian Antiquary* where the whole subject is discussed. But the last verse of Tirmalaichirappu Padalam gives, I think, a valuable clue to the solution of the puzzle and which has not been noticed by any other scholar. The verse is to this effect:—

"We proceed to describe the beauties of the Cool Punalnadu (Chola Country) in which were living the shining assembly of devotees sung by Nambi Arurar for the salvation of mankind and the glorious establishment of the Saiva Faith."

If this means that the devotees described in the collection were limited to those born in the Chola country, then Saint Manikkavachakar's exclusion, may be intelligible. But then, Ninrasir Nedumaran and Kulachchirai Nayanar at least were the natives of the Pandiya country. They were however so connected with the episode in Saint Samban-

dar's history that they could not very well be omitted. However as I said I am not theorising in the matter and I hope the day may come soon when the question may be set at rest altogether. It would not matter much to real Bhaktas whether Saint Manikkavachakar was anterior to others or not and our love and reverence to his great personality will grow none the less ; and the question will have a purely literary interest.



In the Press

THE LIFE & TEACHINGS

OF

St. Sundaramurti Nayanar

BY

Mr. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, B. A., B. L.

THE LIST OF THE FOURTEEN SAIVA SIDDHANTA SASTRAS

St. Meykanda Tevar's

1. Sivajnana Bodham

St. Arunandhi Sivacharya's

2. Sivajnana Siddhiyar
3. Irupa-Irupahtu

St. Umapati Sivacharya's

4. Sivapprakasam
5. Tiruvarutpayan
6. Porrippahrodai
7. Vina Venba
8. Kodikkavi
9. Unmai-Neri Vilakkam
10. Sankarpa Niraharanam
11. Nenju Vidu Thuthu

St. Uyyavanda Tevar's

12. Tiruvunthiyar

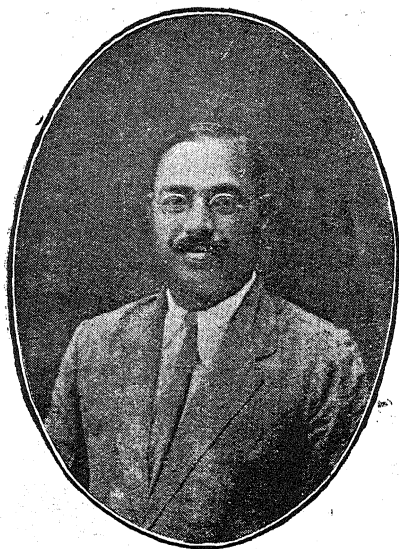
St. Tirukkadavur Uyyavanda Tevar's

13. Tirukkalirruppadiyar

St. Tiruvadhigai Manavasagam Kadanthar's

14. Unmai Vilakkam

(This list is added by the Publisher)



J. N. RAMANATHAN

THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK

FIRST KANDAM

I. Tirumalai Sarukkam

- i. Tirumalai-ch-chirappu
- ii. Tirunattu-ch-chirappu
- iii. Tiruvarur-ch-chirappu (History of Manunitikanda Cholan)
- iv. Tirukkutta-ch-chirappu
- v. The Story of the Intervention (Early life of St. Sundarar)

II. Tillai-val-Andhanar Sarukkam

- i. Tillai-val-Andhanar (Group 1)
- ii. St. Tirunilakanta Nayanar
- iii. St. Iyarpagai Nayanar
- iv. St. Ilaiyankudi Mara Nayanar
- v. St. Meypporul Nayanar
- vi. St. Viranminda Nayanar
- vii. St. Amarniti Nayanar

III. Ilaimalindha Sarukkam

- i. St. Eripatta Nayanar
- ii. St. Enadhinatha Nayanar
- iii. St. Kannappa Nayanar
- iv. St. Kunkuliyakkalaya Nayanar
- v. St. Manakkanjara Nayanar
- vi. St. Arivattaya Nayanar
- vii. St. Anaya Nayanar

IV. Mummaiylulaganda Sarukkam

- i. St. Murtti Nayanar
- ii. St. Muruga Nayanar
- iii. St. Rudrapasupati Nayanar
- iv. St. Tirunalaippovar (St. Nandanar,
- v. St. Tirukkuriipputtunda Nayanar
- vi. St. Sandesvara Nayanar

V. Tiruninra Sarukkam

- i. St. Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar (St. Appar)
- ii. St. Kulachchirai Nayanar
- iii. St. Perumilalaikkurumba Nayanar
- iv. St. Karaikkal Ammaiyar
- v. St. Appudhiyadigal Nayanar
- vi. St. Tirunilanakka Nayanar
- vii. St. Naminandhiyadigal Nayanar

SECOND KANDAM

VI. Vambaravarivandu Sarukkam

- i. St. Tirujnana Sambanda Murthi
Nayanar
- ii. St. Eyarkonkalaikkama Nayanar
- iii. St. Tirumula Nayanar
- iv. St. Tandiyadigal Nayanar
- v. St. Murkka Nayanar
- vi. St. Somasimara Nayanar

VII. Varkonda-vana-mulaiyal Sarukkam

- i. St. Sakkiya Nayanar
- ii. St. Sirappuli Nayanar
- iii. St. Siruttonda Nayanar
- iv. St. Seramanperumal Nayanar
- v. St. Gananatha Nayanar
- vi. St. Kurruva Nayanar

VIII. Poyyadimaiyillathapulavar Sarukkam

- i. St. Poyyadimaiyillathapulavar (Group 2)
- ii. St. Pugalchola Nayanar
- iii. St. Narasingamunaiyaraiya Nayanar
- iv. St. Atipatta Nayanar
- v. St. Kalikkamba Nayanar

- vi. St. Kaliya Nayanar
- vii. St. Satti Nayanar
- viii. St. Aiyadigal Kadavarkon Nayanar

IX. Karaikkandam Sarukkam

- i. St. Kanampulla Nayanar
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- iv. St. Vayilar Nayanar
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X. Kadalsulntha Sarukkam

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- v. St. Kotpuli Nayanar

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- iii. Sittattai Sivanpalevattar (Group 5)
- iv. Tiruvarurpiranthar (Group 6)
- v. Muppuluduntirumenitindubar (Group 7)
- vi. Mulunirupusiya Munivar (Group 8)
- vii. Appalumadichcharndhar (Group 9)

(The Holy Men Beyond)

XII. Manniyasir Sarukkam

- i. St. Pusalar Nayanar
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- iv. St. Kochchengatchola Nayanar
- v. St. Tirunilakanta Yalpana Nayanar
- vi. St. Sadaiya Nayanar
- vii St. Isaijnaniyar

XIII. Vellanaï Sarukkam

The Final Beatitude of St. Sundara-
murtti Nayanar

[*The divisions of the Book are given here for
the benefit of the readers—J. N. R.*]





SRI NATARAJA (*South India*)

TILLAI-VAL-ANDHANAR

(The Brahmins of Chidambaram)



The author begins the chapter with the following two verses in praise of Sri Natarajar,

"O, thou, the Beginning, the Middle, the Limitless Limit.
The Light and the Wisdom and all things manifest.
The indivisible one, the Female and the Male
Glory, glory to Thy Dance in Tillai, The intellectual Region
of Universalism."

"O, Thou, the Light from which speech and thought turn
back, The very Form of Grace,
The Wonderful Presence, the Crown resting on the rare
Vedasiras
In the beautiful Chit Sabha of Chit Parvyoma
Thou dost dance delightedly, Glory Glory to Thy tinkling
Foot."

And I have dealt with the symbolism of Sri Natarajar* in a former portion of this *Puranam* and my papers on 'the House of God' in the *Studies* pp. 13 to 20 and on Chidambaram in Vol. I of the *Siddhanta Dipika* pp. 181 to 183 should also be studied in this connection. I shall briefly summarise them.

* See also Dr. A. K. Coomaraswami's Paper on the Dance of Siva in the July number of Vol. XIII of the *Siddhanta Dipika* which was written on material furnished by me.

The place is called Tillaivanam or Forest of Tillai shrubs and Puliur (Tiger town) pointing to the original nature of this place and Koyil, the temple (literally meaning palace) and Chidambaram (jnanakas or chitakas) after the temple was founded therein. In the "Suta Samhita," the following are given as the different names of this shrine: 'Sat,' 'Param,' 'Nityam,' 'Hiranmaya,' 'Kosam,' 'Mahat,' 'Viviktam,' 'Pundarikam,' 'Guha,' 'Gaganam,' 'Parisuddham,' 'Atpudan,' 'Satyaspadam,' 'Jnana,' 'Sukam,' 'Parama Vyomam,' 'Parabrahmam,' 'Sabha,' 'Sakti,' 'Paramalaya'. All these are terms used in the different Upanishads full references to which are given in the article on 'Chidambaram' to describe certain physical and spiritual planes. These terms mean the Highest, the most Spiritual Lotus or cave of the heart, the Akas and Paramakas and Highest Temple. When further analysed they denote severally the centre of the universe the heart or centre of man, Jnanakas. These are the three centres in which the Supreme God rests and moves that is in the world, in man, and in His Siva Sakti or Chit

Sakti. And the highest worship or 'Upasana' mentioned in the Upanishads is the 'Dahara Upasana' which is set forth in several Upanishads, a verse from each of the Chandogya and in Taittiriya Upanishads, above we quote.

There is the Brahmapura (material universe and body) and in it the Dahara (palace) of the lotus (Pundarika) of the heart; and in the 'Antar Akasa.' Now what exists in this Akasa? That is to be sought after, that is to be understood.

Chandogya Upanishads VIII 1, 1. "Satyam Jnanam Anandam Brahma Yo Veda Nihitam Guhayam Paramavuyomam So' Snute Sarvan Kamanlasaha Brahmana Vipaschitetti."

He who knows Brahman as the Sat Chit and Limitless (Bliss as hidden in the cave of the heart) in the Highest Akas, he enjoys all blessings as one with the omniscient Brahman.

God dwells in universe of Nature and man and as such these are said to form his Sarira or Bodies. And these are conceived to be His temples; and the best Temple is the heart of the truly Devout worshipper. This will

explain the Biblical text, "Ye are the Temples of God." We can understand all this and what we fail to understand is the further Temple, the further Sarira that is spoken of, namely Akasa or Paramakasa and Paramavyoman. That this is not the Bhutakasa is clear, and from the fact that this Antarakasa is said to dwell in the heart of man in his soul. This therefore means the Chit Sakti of God Himself. And this will explain the various texts in the Upanishads where God is said to be this Akas and dwell in this Akas, as He is not different from his Sakti. And yet there are wise men who would identify this Sakti with Jada or Maya Sakti and Srimat Kasivasi Senthinatha Iyer of Tiruparamkunram has done yeoman service in exposing the absurdity of this view which lowers our noble faith in no small measure, in his articles contributed to the First Volume of the Tamil Siddhanta Dipika. Why, the word 'Chidambara' meaning Chitakas or the 'Subtle Intelligence' is itself a complete refutation of this Mayavada theory, and as we have elsewhere remarked, a whole philosophy is condensed in certain words,

as in naming vowels and consonants as soul and body, and in the symbolism connected with the various Temples, which furnish us with a most trustworthy documentary record as to what our most ancient philosophers meant to convey, beyond all manner of doubt and cavil.

And need we wonder therefore that this material Temple constructed on this spiritual plane is the oldest in Southern India, and to which the hearts of all, ancient and modern, have turned with true love and ardour. And we have quoted from Oriental scholars themselves to prove the antiquity of the principal structure which even now remain wooden.

And then the term Dikshitar by which appellation the Brahmin priests of this Temple are specially known carries us back to the remotest Vedic days, when anyone before he undertakes a fire sacrifice must undergo the Diksha. Even now the ordinary Brahmins after performing a fire sacrifice (Yajna) call themselves Dikshitar in Southern India and

we believe in other parts of India too. And as we have remarked in our article on the Svetasvatara Upanishad which is published in *The Studies in Saiva Siddhanta* these Temples came into existence on the model of the old *yajna sala* when the Vedic polity was changed into the Agamic and when the worship of the many Gods with Rudra-Pasupati was changed into the worship of one sole supreme God Siva. And we have pointed out also how every Brahmotsava commences with a *yajna* and every temple is provided with a *yajna sala*. † And our author also speaks of the Brahmins of Tillai as performing this fire-sacrifice every day, for do we not know that Agni is called Rudra even in the Rig Veda.

Natarajar is said to have declared that He was one of the Three Thousand and this means that all the Dikshitars are Sivayogis, and all the rituals connected with the worship are purely yoga practices, but the ceremonies represent the bare forms of yoga and not the reality.

† The only Vishnu Temple where I observed the Yajna performed is the one at Simhachalam near Vizagapatam.

I now proceed with the Purana. These Brahmins have the merit of being the servants of Sri Natarajar. Their greatness cannot be told. They are devotedly attached to the Feet of the Lord. They perform all the services connected with the Temple and praise Him with Vedic Hymns. They tend the three fires ; virtue they consider as their sole reward ; they pursue the path of righteousness and study the four Vedas and six Angas and pride themselves on their fortune of being the servants of the Lord of Dance in the Hall of Chitakas. Their descent is faultless and their conduct is right ; by the practice of six kinds of occupation they knew no poverty ; and the Holy ashes they consider as their Greatest wealth, and Love to God as their Greatest good. They excel in pursuing the four paths, and in gift and tapas. They are perfectly balanced in mind and possess no faults and bearing patience and honour, they lead the life of house-holders. Their minds having become purified, they became the Deva Brahmins, and these three thousand Brahmins had the fortune of worshipping God in this

life and so had no further salvation to seek ; and so they were only equal to themselves in their greatness. It is not in our power to describe their greatness and it will be sufficient if we mention that our Lord of Arur gave out their name first to be sung by his devoted Slave Nambi in his *Tiruttondattogai*. Glory, glory to those Brahmins of Tillai and to the Lord who dances in the Hall of Universalism.



TIRUNILAKANTA NAYANAR

—:0:—

Having described the greatness of the highest class of Brahman Sages, the author now proceeds to relate the history of a lowborn man who possessed faults of character, which he, however, rectified soon. Our Nayanar was born of the potter's caste at Chidambaram, but he possessed the merit of being a devout worshipper of Him, Who danced wonderously in Tillai and Who had neither beginning nor end. Leaving untruth, he practised virtue and worshipped God and His devotees and lived as a householder and considered the life of a Saiva as most fortunate. He carried on his family profession of potter and furnished pots free to all devotees of the Lord of Tillai. He would often repeat the name *Tirunilakantam** (The beautiful blue throat) as it was symbolic of the fact that God is ever intent on saving His creatures from sin and sorrow and He goes to their help the

* This has reference to the Puranic story of the churning of the Milky Ocean whence arose the poison which Siva swallowed and retained in His throat showing its mark of blue.

moment they cry to Him. The story is repeated by Valmiki also in his Ramayana, and repeated in Vishnu Bhagavata which particular account we would ask our readers to follow. The Devas through the curse of Durvasa lost all their wealth. They felt pained by their poverty and tried to regain wealth. They all met, Vishnu, Brahma, Indra and others, resolved on churning the milky ocean and took into partnership the Asuras also. They took the Maha Meru mountain as the churner and Vasuki (snake) as a rope and, with Devas and Asuras at each end, they churned the ocean. The countless creatures in the sea and in the mountain along with Vasuki were injured and terrible sufferings ensued, which all consolidated into the deadly poison, *Alakala Visham*. This began to spread and burn the Devas and Asuras and they began to cry and cry to the Lord. And who appeared to succour them in this their direst calamity? It will be noted in the foregoing account in the Ramayana itself, all the Gods from Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, &c., are mentioned. The only name omitted is that of Rudra. The omission could not be due to the fact that He was the

least of the least of the Devas. The omission therefore is significant. To the cry of the crying hosts, Rudra-Siva appeared and the tradition is that our Nambi who was in attendance on Him handed the poison to Him (hence called Alala Sundarar) and He drank it and retained it in His throat. The Devas offered their homage and fasted the whole day, and that is why Ekadasi is observed as a strict fast. The Lord was pleased at their worship and departed. Note again the significance of His departure. He just appears to save them and the moment this is done, He disappears. The Devas continue the churning and all kinds of wealth, Lakshmi, Sarāsvati and animals and ambrosia are obtained. God Vishnu gets the most precious of them, and the Devas cheat the Asuras in the distribution of the *Ambrosia*. This has a simple tale to tell and can be seen exemplified in every mercantile undertaking to gain wealth, and especially so in the huge commercial undertakings of the West. Poverty they hate and wealth is their sole goal and the means adopted, they do not matter. The amount of suffering endured by the toiling

and moiling millions do not count. The millions who are victimised do not matter. Might is right, and the sharper is able to cheat his partner. So long as the enterprise flourishes, he never thinks of God or His law or His creatures. But when the crash comes, as it surely must one day, the man of the West shoots himself, but the oriental turns to God and cries and his cry is heard. The most radical distinction between God and man is this. Man is governed by his likes and dislikes. He hates to do things which gives him pain though it is his plain duty to do so. He desires pleasure however gained. God, on the other hand, is defined as "He who has neither likes nor desires" by Saint Tiruvalluvar. The Devas from Vishnu downwards had been pained by their poverty. They wanted wealth. They did not require God's help, when they commenced their enterprise, as even the meanest Hindu now does by putting up a *Pillaiyar* with cow-dung or saffron and a few blades of grass. The crash came and they appealed to God, and Rudra-Siva appeared, who did not feel poverty nor desire wealth to remove the same. He did

not share in the wealth nor drink the amirta, which after all did not prevent the Devas from death. He did not hate the poison and he drank it, and lo ! it did not hurt Him. This is to show that neither the good nor the evil of this world will affect any one who has neither dislikes nor likes (*i. e.,*) taste for the fruit of action. To the Yogi, this story has even higher teachings. And that we are not romancing and guilty of the sin of the modern revivalist, we beg leave to quote St. Tirumular who is at least 2,000 years old.

“The worlds and eight-quarters are borne by the
Lower Face,
Its neck was blackened, they know not its meaning,
He drank the poison, say the fools,
He who wears the garlands and skulls and spreading
braids.”

Our Saint explains in other verses of the same chapter that this *Athomukam** is the Lord's Sakti. It is by His Sakti He unites Himself to the world of souls and matter and gives the souls the Grace wherewith they are able to conquer their passions, convert the *poison* in

* The word means a face with a downward look:

them into real ambrosia. And as the Lord's Person is further described in the same chapter as the flaming fire, all the *Andandas** hanging on Him is represented as a minute dark spot in this flaming Person of Light and Love. These worlds and all the evil though in Him do not affect Him, but they affect the souls, inasmuch as they assume they are the actors and they will and desire. But if they would, in complete surrender to God, dedicate all their acts and will and devotion to Him, then He takes upon Himself, the ills and sorrows of man, and the evil no more affects man and they gain everlasting bliss. A beautiful Hymn in the Rig Veda conveys the same meaning as in the present story. Sage Agastya wails that he was bitten by a serpent† (Egoism, Human wisdom) and the poison was mortally affecting him but he found a remedy, he transferred the poison to the orb in the Sun (Siva-Surya-Bhargava as defined by Maitrayanya Upanishad) and lo, he was free and the poison began to

* The word means the worlds.

†The Serpent is the Kudila or Kundalini representing the material Force, and it is a power for good or for evil just as one uses it.

shower amirta* ; which idea has also been beautifully rendered into Tamil by an ancient Poet.

Hence he was called Tirunilakanta Nayanar. He had a wife who was a model of chastity. While so, our Nayanar being young, the wiles of the world began to affect him. His wife discovered it one day, and when our Nayanar failed to appease her though he used all his persuasions, and when he attempted to touch her, she said, "don't touch us by the holy word Tirunilakantam." This acted like magic and brought him to his senses. He saw that his religion up to the present was all a mere cloak. It was not real. Though he was uttering the name of God and he was otherwise pure, yet this one vice which is the last to cling to man made it all hollow. His wife was his real Guru in this instance and she converted him by a single word. We are in the world. The outside is so beautiful and so alluring. The serpent tempts us to taste the fruit and we taste it. But it is what gives us death and birth and sorrows endless. It contained virtual poison.

* "Thy Throat shows the poison and showers ambrosia."

The scales fell of our Nayanar's eyes and he saw something more in his wife's words, she told him not to 'touch us' in the plural, which meant all women-kind and he resolved, therefore, in future not to touch any women, and what is more, not to think of them 'even in his thoughts.' With this one resolve firmly carried out, they continued their life as before and not even their neighbours knew that they had given up all carnal desires. They grew old in God's service and in ministering to His devotees, and the Lord willed that their great merit should be revealed to the world. He assumed the garb of a Siva-Yogi and appeared before our Nayanar who received Him with all respect and ministered to His wants and asked Him what His further commands were. Our Lord handed to him an earthen begging bowl and told him it was worth more than gold and silver and asked him to keep it against His coming again, and took leave of him. Our Nayanar kept it in a safe place in his house. After the lapse of many days, our Lord of Chidambaram appeared and claimed His bowl, when our Nayanar went and

searched and could not find it. He was confused in mind and did not know what to say. The Siva-Yogi called out why he was delaying. He came out and told Him what happened and offered to replace it by a fresh bowl but our Lord would have none of it. He protested his innocence and said he did not *commit theft even in his heart* and told our Lord that he would do anything. He wanted to prove his innocence. The Siva-Yogi asked him to bathe in the sacred tank and, holding his son by the hand, to take an oath. Our Nayanar having told Him he had no son, He asked him to hold his wife by the hand and take the oath. Tirunilakantar said that owing to a subsisting oath between himself and his wife he could not do this, but he would himself bathe and take the oath. The Yogisvara said that this was a mere evasion and he must follow Him before the Council of the Tillai Muvayiravar*, and taking him before them, laid His complaint. The Council heard both the versions and decided that our Nayanar should take the oath desired by our Siva-Yogi. Our

* The word means the three thousand (priests.)

Nayanar would not tell them the reason for his not touching his wife, but felt convinced he must take the oath and thought of an expedient whereby he could keep his old resolve. He brought his wife and made her take one end of a stick and himself took the other end, and in answer to the protest of the Brahmins, he declared the true facts of the case as all should hear and plunged into the tank and rising, took the oath. Lo, as they rose, they had resumed their youth in all its freshness and the Devas showered flowers on them. While the people wondered at this, they became bewildered as the Yogisvara who was before them had disappeared. On the other hand, they saw our Lord and gracious Lady riding in the firmament on the Bull of Dharma, Who gave out to the worshipping pair that they had excelled in the world by *their having conquered the five 'senses'*, and that they were to remain by His side always in their youthful form which was to be eternal. This happy pair continued to live for some time more in this world doing great good and was finally received into the Bliss of the Lord in their ever fresh youth.

THE TEACHINGS

In this story, the moral lies almost on the surface. It is one particular virtue that is held up for commendation. The fondness for women is a besetting sin of even people whom the world considers as the greatest and wisest. Even the great Rishis, who had acquired such vast Tapas when they were tempted by the Gods were tempted with women. It is a vice which even the world is apt to look upon in the man as the most venial. Yet this one vice acts as a canker and a poison, even when one possesses all other good qualities. As the world considers the vice itself as venial, they are not prepared to recognize the virtue and appreciate it at its true worth when it is found in man. All other traits would be praised but not this. Hence, the importance of declaring to the world that this virtue is the greatest of all and the crowning glory of man's life. It is this virtue which will preserve also man's youth and virility and which will make him ever young. And the moral is given out in such good setting as in the story before us. Tradition recognizes this story

in the dedication of a particular Temple in Chidambaram. The Temple is called "Ilamaiyakkiyar Koyil", *i.e.*, "The Temple of the Lord who granted youth."

Consider the following verses:—

"Their worthless charms, whose only weal is wealth of gain,

From touch of these the wise, who seek the wealth of grace, abstain."—Pope's *Kural*.

"Glory to that Form of Grace that showers Amirta in the hearts of those,

Who having conquered their five senses perceived the Truth,

Glory to Him who granted the vision on the Mount,

Glory to His Foot tinkling with the Bells of the Vedas and who danced reverse in the Sabha"—

Tiruvilaiyadal.



IYARPAGAI NAYANAR

—:o:—

There was the city of Puhar * otherwise called Kaverippumpattinam situated at the confluence of the famous Kaveri and the sea, and which increased the fame of the race of King Anapaya. In it dwelt a merchant prince; and he was devoted in his love to the moon-crested Kapardin, and in the service of His devotees, and if any of them approached him, he would satisfy all their desires without sending him away. Such a person was our Saint Iyarpagaiyar. The poet brings out the real meaning of the name by adding the world (ulakam), loka, to it, which is "He to whom the world was hateful." By this it is not to be understood that he was a dark pessimist or a misanthrope,

* Puhar was a most ancient seaport and capital of Chola Kings. Pattinappalai of the Ten Idyls (Pattu Pattu) recites the fame of its ruler Karikala Chola and gives a full description of the sea-port and its vast merchandise. The first scene in Silappadikaram is also laid in this ancient city and its wealth and luxury and civilization praised. Then Saint Pattinattar was also a native of this famous city. Its grandeur is all lost now and it has become an insignificant seaside village.

as we know that he loved God and his creatures and was a loving husband and a *grahasta*. It only means as we explained in the concluding remarks on St. Sundarar's life, he was eccentric, he had departed from the centre of the world and established himself in God's centre. He can continue to live the old life and his God-love fills him and pours out through every pore of his body and mind and extends to one and all. Then does the world and all its contents become dear to him, as of old, not because they contributed to his self-pleasure, but that he may love God who is immanent in everything and whom he sees in all.* His love to them increases a thousandfold, but his attachment to them has ceased. Flowers for instance do not appeal to his sensuousness but when he sees one, it gives him a thrill of exquisite pleasure, as he sees in it the beauty and grace of the Lord's light and love. Women and wealth and everything else affect him in the same way. The result

* Note the famous verses in Brihad. Up. II 45 commencing with "verily a husband is not dear that you may love the husband, but that you may love God, therefore a husband is dear."

of this love of life without attachment is that he does not resort to any unfair means in the acquisition of these, that the deprivation of any of these things do not cause him a single pang, and what is more to our purpose, he parts with them in the service of God or of his fellow creatures readily. And this brings us to the moral of this tale which we had intended to reserve to the end. We know how lip deep is all the professed service to humanity to his country, to his religion, and to his God. When it comes to the touching of one's pocket, all this enthusiasm and love melts into thin air. St. Tirumular reduces this parting with one's possession to a leaf blade, a handful of grass, a handful of rice, one kind word. How many are there who would do even this much in proof of his-devotion to God or his creatures? And here it is the importance of the life we are sketching comes in. As we had shown in the previous chapter, of all one's attachments, the love of woman is the strongest, and lasts the longest, and in this, the love of one's self and love of children do not even compete. The greatness of the sacrifice can be easily

recognised therefore when one gives up this attachment as in the previous story, and one parts with his beloved, to another in the service of God or of his devotees as here. This shows the relation of the two sketches to one another.

We now resume our sketch.

As the love of God and His service filled his mind completely, he performed every duty as ordained by God and his domestic life was based on the highest virtue; and the felicities he enjoyed he traced to his obedience to God's commands.

Our Lord, who though subtle yet chooses to dance in the Hall of Space (Paramakas) either to the knowledge of His inseparable Consort or perhaps without Her knowledge (so the poet expresses his doubt) assumed the delusive form of a Brahmin, with holy ashes shining on His resplendent body and in a vein of a gallant, so that the fame of His devotee may be declared to all. He appeared before our Saint who after serving him with every mark of respect and worship said that the holy Person was due to his long tapas in previous births. The false Brahmin

told him He had heard of his fame to the effect that he would give anything to the devotees of the Lord, and He had Himself a request to make and He would mention it if he would grant it. Our Bhakta replied that if it was in his power, He need not doubt and that he would gladly do anything He wished, and our Lord at once said that He wanted his beloved wife. He at once prostrated before Him with greater gladness in his heart than before he had heard the request; he said that it was an act of grace on the part of His grace that He demanded only such a thing as was in his power, and went straight inside his house and informed his beloved wedded wife that he had given her away that day to this virtuous Ascetic. And our lady heard it, was troubled in heart for a moment and then regained clearness and replied that if that was what her lord, the soul of her soul, was graciously pleased to say, what further right had she but to simply obey him and fell prostrate before him and he fell also at her feet, thereupon both of them rose and appeared before the Ascetic, and our lady, who far surpassed Sri Lakshmi, worshipped the feet of Him, and

stood *bewildered*. The momentary trouble was caused by the suddenness and strangeness of the proposal and it must have been a wrench to her heart to be told to part from her loving husband and life-long help-mate. But the ideal of chastity which was always before her came to her rescue. To disobey him would have amounted to being unchaste. That is the definition of the word as conveyed to us by our good old mother Auvai, "not to disobey the words is chastity." The mere deed alone does not constitute unchastity. One can be disloyal in her thoughts. But the ideal is carried to the highest pitch; and nonconformity to her husband's wishes would constitute unchastity. This does not mean that women are treated as mere chattle or slaves. Woman is as much the equal of man and in some respects superior. She is his half, as is represented in the Supreme, the Ideal of Ardhanarisvara, and is man's light and love and joy. The importance of domestic life is considered so high and higher than all other Asramas, that this is treated of in the very opening chapters of the sacred Kural under 'Dharma.' It is founded on Dharma (virtue is a very

narrow word) and Love. Says St. Tiruvalluvar :

“ If love and virtue in the house-hold reign
This is of life the perfect grace and gain.”

—Pope's *Kural*.

The next chapter is entitled “ The excellence of life's help-mate,” and the life is called life's help-mate.* She is the glory, the fullness and treasure, of life, the stay and fame and blessing of the family and her own best guard.† Her strength is her virtue and love of her husband, which would not pay homage to God while her husband lives.

* Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope points out how differently the subject is treated in *Naladi*, another moral treatise composed by Buddhist or Jain writers. This exhibits a very low estimate of women and quite a dread or abhorrence of them and a most disgusting persuasion of life in general. I am afraid that it is their spirit that has poisoned the thoughts of the Indians in this respect and accounts for the low position now occupied by women. And Hinduism is charged with all the faults of other beliefs which have from time to time appeared on the surface of the Indian nation and sometimes left their indelible marks. Hinduism owes nothing to Buddha or Jaina, and all their ethics were copied from earlier Hindu codes as pointed out by Dr. H. Jacobi, (*Vide* p. 79 our translation of *Sivajñana Siddhiyar* for a fuller treatment.)

† Verses 6 and 7 of Chap. VI of *Kural* contain the best condemnation of the Zenana system.

"No God adoring, love bends before her lord,"*

Then rising serves ; the rain falls instant at her word"—Pope's *Kural*.

As Burn Jones observes two loves are not practicable though in the absolute possible. Her absolute love to her husband makes her not his slave, but makes herself merge in that of her Lord. Both cannot rule the household. Oneness has to be obtained and this is of the nature of the Advaitam postulated by the Siddhanta. One will is merged in the other will. The one eye must follow the lead of the other, otherwise one's vision cannot be perfect. She can however be independent and strong and assert her own will, whenever there was necessity, as we found in the previous history of Saint Nilakanta Nayanar, and she can be learned and wise, and is not our mother Uma, all power, all wisdom, and all will and love (Kriya, Jnana, Ichcha and Arul Sakti), and we need not wonder therefore if Mrs. Flora Annie Steel upholds *Uma Parvati* as the type

* Readers of Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere* would know how the wife refused to part from her husband even when Jesus called to her.

of the noblest ideal of womanhood. As self-sacrifice is the corollary of love, one must know the depth of love, heroism and self-sacrifice, an Indian woman is capable of, to appreciate and admire her. Those displayed are so common that we have grown callous, we do not proclaim them from the house tops and she does not fill so much space in our literature as she does in that of the European.

The great sage, his heart willing and his face beaming with great pleasure and his head bent low asked the Ascetic if he could do anything else and the Latter told him to give Him a safe conduct till He could get out of the town and the reach of her loving relations. His reply was to the effect that it was his mistake that he did not think of doing it himself till he was told, and went inside his armour room and armed himself fully and followed the Ascetic and the lady.

The news had somehow spread already and his relations and castemen armed themselves and followed this party to prevent this act of folly on the part of our Nayanar and take

back his wife. As they approached our Lord pretended as though He was afraid and looked at the lady, and she said, "O! Lord be not afraid, Iyarpagai will surely win."*Our Nayanar heard this and said that he will surely make them measure the earth and that He need not be concerned in any way. Facing his relatives who had come to remove their disgrace, he told them to go home quietly and if they refused they would fall a prey to his flaming sword. They replied, "What folly is it you have committed? What words are you uttering? You have not thought of the disgrace in the world nor ashamed that your enemies would deride you. What bravery is this of yours after having parted with your wife to the Ascetic. We will not suffer her given away. We will rather die with her" Our Saint was incensed, and the poet here describes the fight in which our Saint, with the added strength of the grace of God was victorious, having slain all those who opposed him. He then addressed our Lord, and proposed accompanying

* Note here how she addresses our Nayanar. The word having passed, he is no more her husband and lord.

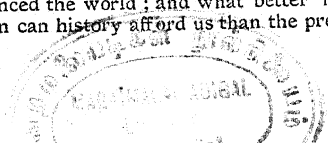
Him till they crossed the forest. They proceeded on their way and when they neared Tiruchaykkadu, our Nayanar was permitted to go back. Falling at the feet of Him, Who had appeared to save the world and raising his hands aloft, he praised Him and said it was his fortune to have deserved His grace and then retraced his steps.

Our Lord Who saw this great and rare act of renunciation * on the part of his devotee whose heart was freed of all guilt and who would not even once look back and was naughtily pleased, and resolving to recall him cried He in Whose search even the Vedas and Mal and Ayan cried and cried in vain.

“ Oh ! Iyarpagai Muni, grant me refuge,
 Oh ! do come back, grant me refuge,
 Oh ! thou, strong of heart, grant me refuge,
 Oh ! my beloved friend, grant me refuge,
 Oh ! thou who didst perform act so rare, grant
 me refuge.” †

Our poet here reproduces the words from *Kural*.
 ‘ Things hard in the doing will great men do.
 Things hard in the doing the mean eschew’ :—Pope.*

† Its importance arises from the fact that this verse occurs in the chapter on the greatness of persons who have renounced the world ; and what better illustration of renunciation can history afford us than the present story.



The moment he heard, he cried, 'Lo, here I am,' and said if there were any who did Him harm his sword would see an end of them and as he approached, the Form Divine vanished before his eyes; and our sage saw the lady standing alone, and saw anon in the firmament, the beatific vision of our Lord and His Consort seated on the white Bull, and straight-away he prostrated himself on the ground and uttered the following praise :

"Glory to the vision that was graced,
 Glory to these that came fast to make thy own,
 Glory to Thee that didst grant me endless bliss,
 Glory to the Foot that danced in Tillai's Hall."

Our Lord replied that He was pleased at the great love displayed by him, who was blameless and He bade him and his wife possessed of divine chastity, and re-entered His golden hall. To the rain of flowers by the gods, and the sound of Vedic chants, and the praises of Jnanis, our Nayanar entered Siva-loka and dwelt therein. His relations were also received into Heaven.

Hail, Hail to our beloved Bhakta.



ILAIYANKUDI MARA NAYANAR

—:0:—

In the last history, we recorded the greatest act of renunciation as the result of one's love to God and His devotees, and in the present history, we meet with another phase of this renunciation and love. It is not with much when one gives when one is rolling in wealth and luxury, but if one can deny himself and make a gift to satisfy the necessity of another, when one is reduced to the greatest penury and extremity himself, then this is love indeed !

Our Nayanar was a native of Ilaiyankudi and a Vellalar by birth, which caste as the poet observes is distinguished for its truthfulness and he was a devoted servant of the Lord of Chidambaram. Two sources of wealth he possessed and they multiplied fast and he enjoyed the benefits of both. The first was the wealth he derived from his lands and the other was his heart which ever went out in love of God's Bhaktas. If he met them, whomsoever they may be, his love took a precedence before himself, and he welcomed them with

uplifted hands with words cool and sweet like ambrosia, and leading them to his house and seating them properly would wash their feet and worship and feed them with different kinds of sweet food, and satisfy their hunger. In such life and love and worship he continued long and he could be compared to the very Kubera* himself.

Our Lord of Tillai desired to make known to the world that our Nayanar was imbued with true love and service and would carry out duty not only when as now he was rolling in wealth but also when he would be reduced to the sorest straits. He willed therefore that our Bhakta's affluence should decrease day by day and be reduced to great poverty. And so there was a shrinkage in his means soon, but there was no shrinkage of his heart's love and he continued his service as of yore by selling and mortgaging his properties etc.

While so, our Lord unapproached by the Gods, assumed the form of an ascetic and neared our Nayanar's house at a late hour of the

* Kubera is the god of wealth.

evening when rain was pouring down in torrents. Our Nayanar received Him, removed the wet from His Body and desiring to feed Him, asked his wife as to what should be done, though they had themselves nothing to eat. The lady answered that she did not find any way, and none of their neighbours would help them and it was late in the night and what could she, the sinful do. She remembered however one thing ; they had sowed the paddy that day in their land, and if they could be collected and brought, she could prepare some food otherwise, she sighed and said, she knew no other way.

And with all that is said falsely against Indian women, who does not acknowledge in his heart of hearts for all the help and valuable advice he received when he was in a tight corner through life's struggles ; and who does not acknowledge the heroism and self-sacrifice displayed by his partner, all her property to the last pie, all her service unto death are placed at her lord's disposal, and her only thought and care is that he should be well. They pinch themselves, they starve themselves

so that their husbands and children may have some more comfort. They are not weak but strong in their heroism; they are strong enough to prevent their partners from being led astray, as we saw in the case of Nilakanta Nayanar. All this, when they are illiterate and ignorant. Are they? They possess more wisdom and knowledge. The wife, the mother and grandmother, can quote any number of proverbs to suit any occasion, and can give you the leading incidents of every Purana and Itihasa. How did they learn all this? There is a common fund of philosophy and knowledge which in India passes easily from mouth to mouth. For how then did the illiterate Svami Ramakrishna Paramahansa show himself forth as such a profound philosopher? and yet every one of his sayings can be gathered easily from books written long long before his time. We are strong advocates of female education, but is it being imparted on proper lines? Do we find our educated girls, more simple, more homely and more godly and less fond of ornaments and dress? Our experience just points to another way. The education is imparted in a haphazard

way and not on godly lines, and unless we tackle the problem, we do not think their future is at all rosy. However to resume our story :

As he heard his wife's words, he felt glad as though he had recovered a lost treasure. He started at once to bring the seed paddy. It was pouring in torrents, the darkness terrible and invisible, and it appeared as though the thick darkness was melting itself out 'in' all the world.*

Impelled by love, he took a basket and covered his head, and felt his way and reached the fields where the birds had gone to sleep. He felt with his feet, and gathered the seed paddy where they had been driven together by the rains, with his hands and filled his basket and returned to his house. His wife who was waiting for him received the basket from his hands and washed the paddy of all dirt and finding no firewood to kindle a fire, her husband tore up portion of the roof

* The phrase *Ulagelam* 'in all the world' which was the first phrase used in this work as having been given out graciously by Lord of Chidambaram is repeated by the poet from time to time and is the concluding phrase in this work.

and gave her some wood. The wife kindled the fire, fried the seed paddy and pounded it into rice and then cooked it. Finding no curry she appealed to her husband and he repaired to the backyard and cutting some of the greens, as though he was surrendering all his *Pasa* he brought them to her. She washed them and made several dishes out of the same, and told her husband to bring their Guest. He went and woke Him up, One Who could not be comprehended by our senses. (There is a fine play on the word which could not be reproduced in English). Then, lo, the Guest was gone and in place rose a Brilliance and our Bhakta and his devoted wife were dismayed. The sight converted itself soon into the Divine Presence of Our Lord and His Lady seated on the Bull, and our Father addressing His adoring Bhaktas said He was highly pleased with his service to His devotees, and then directed them to go to His own place of Peace where they will be worshipped even by god Kubera, and enjoy bliss eternal. And they accordingly attained their goal, and let us lift their feet on our head.

THE TEACHINGS

So the story ends and as we were writing, with our thoughts intent, our love gushing out, the words, while even jotting down, recalled to us some statements we had come across in our study of Siddhanta. They had eaten up all they had, but they had the seed-paddy which would be food for to-morrow; which will induce fresh births. This seed had to be crushed. Karma is eternal and cannot die but its power to sprout and give new births can be destroyed. The seed when fried, its power of germination is gone. The last remnant of attachment is destroyed and the veil of thick, invisible darkness of Anava is torn asunder, and the weeds of Pasa rooted up or cut, and lo, the effulgent light of the Lord floods the Jivanmukta and diffuses through and through and he is indistinguishable from this Light, he becomes One with it. According to *Tiruvartupayan* (X. 8), the Prarabdhakarma is destroyed with the body, and the Ahamiakarma, (the seed for future birth), is *burnt* by the grace of God. In *Sivapprakasam*, this is said to disappear as darkness before Jnanasurya. In *Siddhiyar* this is said to be broken down by the

wisdom of God. Our Nayanar lighted the fire of wisdom and fried the seed paddy whereby the latter lost all power of germination and so destroyed the seed of future birth for ever. The Karma we reap is food and also seed for future food. This food when partaken by us acts as poison and induces all our Punyam and Papam, sin and suffering. But, when, instead of partaking of this food, this poison, we offer it to God as *Nivetanam* (Tatbhoda kavalan) as in this case, this poison, transferred to God, showers on us ambrosia.



MEYPPORUL NAYANAR

—:0:—

Tirukkoyalur* was the capital of Chedi Nadu, where reigned a king, who to the glory of the Truth of our ancient Vedic religion waxed strong in that faith and in his devotion to godly men. He protected his kingdom by carrying out all his kingly duties and freed it of all its enemies by subjugating them and excelled in dealing out strict justice to his subjects, and ever contemplated the form of men who were devoted to the Lord Siva. He carried out faithfully the worship in all temples with all due rites and ceremonies, with the recitation of hymns of praise, accompanied by music and dance, and he firmly believed he had no better hold than the feet of God's devotees. He wanted all his gold and wealth to be made use of for their service, and whenever they came to him, he granted to them whatever they desired, with all his heart.

* Corrupted into Tirukkoyilur is situated in South Arcot District between Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai on the S. I. R. line.

While so, there was a neighbouring chief who rose against our Nayanar several times, and yet had to go away defeated and disgraced. Hopeless of winning in fair fight, he thought of some means whereby he could gain his object and assuming the false guise of a Saiva devotee he entered the town. His whole body was covered with holy ashes, and his hair tied up in braides. He held a satchel in his hands in which was concealed a weapon. Like the lamp-light, possessing the black part, in his heart was concealed deceit. And the man who entered the town in this false guise of an ascetic was called Muttinadhan.* He reached the gate of the palace and he was given free admission by the guards, who had evidently orders to admit all Bhaktas without question. Nearing the gate of the innermost compartment he was stopped by Tattan, the King's faithful attendant and told that the King was sleeping. He brushed him aside and boldly entered saying that he had some secret instruction to give the king. While he neared the cot

* From his name and the incidents, it is to be gathered that he was one who professed Buddhism.

where the king with his queen was sleeping, the latter woke up fast and seeing a stranger woke up her husband. He rose and seeing a Bhakta in his room he lifted up his hands in worship and fell at his feet and asked what good fortune brought this sage to his doors to bless him with all felicity. He replied that he had brought with him a rare Agama given out in days of yore by his* (Nayanar's) Lord and he had come to teach him from that book. Our Nayanar replied that he could not desire greater blessing than this and prayed him to read out that truthful science. On this false man telling him that he could do so only when they were alone together, our Nayanar desired his queen to leave the apartment. Seating the false devotee on a high seat, and himself on the floor he bent low to him, and desired the teaching may be imparted to him. Muttinadhan who waited for this opportunity drew out the weapon from his satchel and carried out his nefarious project, and our

* This showed the cloven foot, but the fixed principle of our Nayanar was that whoever he be, if he wore the holy ashes, he was to be worshipped and treated as the equal of God.

Nayanar fell crying that, "the true garb of the Devotee was the only truth", (Meypporul), and hence our Nayanar's name. Tattan who had some suspicion from the manner in which this man went into the apartment, rushed in, on the instant and tried to use his sword to kill the enemy, and our Nayanar caught hold of his hand and as he fell to the earth said, "Oh Tatta, He is our own." The faithful servant worshipping asked him for his orders and was told that he should take the ascetic and see him safe outside his capital, without any harm happening to him. The news had spread and people came out saying that they would lynch the man who had killed their beloved king; and Tattan waved them aside saying that it was the command of the king that this ascetic should have a safe conduct, and took him outside the city and leaving him there, he returned and reached the side of the king, and falling at his feet told him that he left the ascetic quite safe outside the city. The king who just bore his life to get this news was overjoyed, and addressed his royal relatives and friends and dependants, enjoining them to

preserve their love for the sacred Holy Ashes and spread the religion. He became absorbed in the contemplation of the Dancing Foot of Lord Nataraja. Our Lord appeared before him at once and granted him the grace of his ever-dwelling under His foot and worshipping Him. Thus ends the story of our Nayanar who saved the man who killed him, for the reason that he appeared in the guise of our Lord's devotee.

THE TEACHINGS

In the twelfth sutra of *Sivajnanabodham*, the rule is laid down that Siva-bhaktas should be worshipped as God Himself and the reasons therefor are also given. This will explain what an important part Sangha plays in Buddhism. The further question arises how we are to distinguish false Bhaktas from the true. Whenever we meet a Sadhu are we to enquire and find out whether they are real Sadhus or not? This procedure will neither be pleasant nor one calculated to bring us nearer the real Sadhu. The further rule, therefore, has been evolved that our duty is simply to respect and

worship such as bear marks of holiness. Our love is evoked and our heart is filled and our duty is done. It does not matter the object of our adoration is unworthy in himself. He will reap the reward of his own deceit, and we will not be touched by it. The extreme extent to which this principle has been carried out is exemplified in our Nayanar's history, and in another history where the King came down from the elephant he was riding and fell at the feet of a washerman, whose body had become white from fuller's earth he was carrying on his head and which had streamed down on his body from wet, and becoming dried was mistaken for holy ashes. When the washerman explained he was his bond slave, the king said he was the slave of his bond slave. The next history of Viranminda Nayanar, gives the corrective to this extreme form of faith in mere form, and St. Sundarar was rebuked for his apparent want of holiness and reverence of Bhaktas though it, at the same time, illustrates another form of the same faith.

The Sacred *Tirumantiram* contains, however, very strict injunctions to the King to discover

and punish false Jnanis, in the chapter on "Rajadosha", verses 3, 5 and 10.

In the chapter on "Having Bhakti," this service and love to God's devotees is particularly insisted on in verses 2 and 4.

"I become the Servant of the Slave of the servants of God and served them, reaching God's feet by the grace of His servants, God took me as His slave knowing me to be a slave of His devotees."

"Who will know our Father as to where He dwells, Whom all the seven worlds were not able to discover? Unless it be God's Bhaktas, who will come forward to speak to us about that Pearl?"



VIRANMINDA NAYANAR

—:0:—

The author describes the land of the Perumals and its fertility in the opening verses. The land was acquired by Parasurama as a result of his worship of Lord Siva. The hill country (Malabar) commanded the wealth of the sea, the land and the hills.* In this country wherein are produced the pearls of the sea, and those of sugarcane,† jack and ivory which are strung together by the pearl-teethed damsels was situated the chief town of Sengunrur. In this town lived Viranmindar, an ornament to the Vellala community, a man of great name and fame who having held fast to the feet of Lord Siva had parted with all his clings to the world and was also firmly devoted to God's

* The wealth of the sea comprises pearls, corals and chanks etc.; that of the land paddy, sugarcane plantains etc.; and that of the hills, sandalwood, ivory etc. •

† These were not myths but they are shells of small insects which attach themselves to the roots of sugarcane, guava, jack etc., and are what are called ground pearls and are offered to tourists in bulk or made up into necklaces in Barbados, Montserrat and other places. Vide the extract in the *Siddhanta Dipika* Vol. VII p. 236.

servants. He visited all the holy shrines worshipping God in all those places. He specially delighted in appearing before the assembly of the holy ones and singing their praises. He visited Tiruvarur and worshipping God and the Tirukkuttam assembled in the Devasiriyam (the thousand pillared Mantapam), he dwelt with them for sometime. One day, he noticed our Nambi did not approach the Tirukkuttam and bow before them but passed aside, and he was at once incensed, declared that our Nambi was alien to them and even to the Lord, the destroyer of the Triple city* and the wearer of the serpents, Who showed him grace. Such was the power and greatness of this Saint,

- *The term Vaidika Ter (Vedic car) occurs in this section, and means the car driven by the four Vedas as the four horses. This story of Siva riding out in this car to destroy the Tiripura Asuras is as old as the Yajurveda. This incident as well as God's drinking the poison, His destruction of Yama, His subjection of Ravana, and the God's searching Siva's foot and crown will be found mentioned in praise of
- God in almost every page of the Tevara Hymns as they represent some of the highest spiritual truths. The clue to the unravelling of the Tiripura story is given by Saint Tirumular himself, and it has reference to God's manifestation of grace in destroying our Triple Mala. Vide for fuller treatment pp. 146 to 150, our edition of *Sivajnana Siddhiyar*.

which enabled him to make this declaration and which he acquired by the grace of the Tirukuttam. Such was his power which enabled us to obtain the sacred *Tiruttondattogai* for the salvation of the world and of ourselves, and for the glory of the path trodden by our Nambi. And if this was so, who could understand the greatness of Siva-bhaktas? And we learn from Nambi's own history, it was not out of any disrespect, he did not approach the Devasiriyam. It was his own feeling of unworthiness to approach them that made him send forth his heart's prayer to God for the day when he would be made a fit servant of these devotees of God. God understood his prayer and bade him appear before the holy assembly and when he complained that he did not know how to begin, God gave him the first words of the Decad; and he began, "I am the slave of the slaves of Tillai *Andhanars*,"* finished it and earned the hearty appreciation of Saint

* The word *Andhanar* has a significance of its own. But, often it is mistakenly used as an equivalent to the Sanskrit *Brahman*. Saint Tiruvalluvar in his *Kural* defines *Andhanars* as those righteous people who act with love towards all other sentient beings.

Viranmindar, who, continuing in this life of love, was received by the Lord and made a chief among His ganas. What greater merit can we ascribe to this Saint, says the poet, than that he was the cause of *Tirattondattogai* being given to the world.

THE TEACHINGS

The several incidents go to emphasize the great importance of a holy life, and the necessity for association with holy men, (Sat-sanga or Sadhu-sanga) as the chief means of leading a holy life ourselves and thereby securing salvation.



AMARNITI NAYANAR

—:0:—

In the last few histories we read of acts of renunciation by giving up one's wife, and wealth and property, and in this history we will read of our Nayanar giving up himself and his wife and child and all that he possessed for the sake of God's devotees. This furnishes also as to what high standard of commercial honesty was possessed in those days. Our Nayanar was born in Palaiyarai north of Tirunallur*, in the fertile land of the Cholas watered by the famous Kaveri. He belonged to the Vaisya community and dealt in gold and pearls and silks and cloths and grew rich in the practice of his trade. His mind dwelt on nothing but God, and he gave to His devotees whatever they wished ; food, cloths, kovanam, etc., and by employing his vast wealth in such acts of charity, he really reaped the benefit of his wealth. The wealth that one gets is God's gift and it is not to be abused by

* This is situated midway between Ayyampet and Kumbakonam east of the Railway line. And it is also connected with an incident in the life of St. Appar. God was pleased to grant him *Pada Diksha* in this place.

employing in self-enjoyment but it must be used for the relieving of the poor and the distressed and the sick. As God's children they are all entitled to a share of this patrimony and when we deprive them of the use of this property, we will be simply abusing our trust. In the adjoining town of Tirunallur, he celebrated God's festival on a grand scale and built a Mutt where all the poor could be fed and clothed. While engaged in such acts of devotion, one day, God willed to show to the world the greatness of our saint, and, concealing His Form, He appeared in the guise of a Brahmachari, His face adorned with holy ashes, His body with the sacred thread, and the piece cloth (Kovanam) and holding a deer skin, and a stick to which the piece cloth and ash bag and darbha grass were tied; and His sacred Feet which is never removed from the heart of His devotees who had got rid of the dark poison, trod this earth, and as people viewed His gracious aspect, their hard hearts melted, indeed.

He reached our Nayanar's Mutt and our Nayanar's face beamed with joy more than his heart, as if it were in rivalry, and he accosted

the Brahmachari in due form and respect and asked Him what His wishes were. Our Lord replied that He had gone to him on learning of our saint's great acts of charity in giving food and clothing and *kovanam*. Our Nayanar bade Him welcome again and asked Him to stay in the Mutt and partake of the food prepared there. Assenting to this, He proposed to return after bathing in the Kaveri and as it might rain He proposed to leave His *kovanam* with our saint, who took it and left it in a separate and safe place. Our Lord left and returned in a short time, and whether He bathed in the sacred Kaveri or in the Ganges which He carries on His Person, sure He came drenched in a pouring rain, and asked our saint to give Him the *kovanam*. The latter went in and could not find it in the place he left it, and was troubled sore and searched high and low among all his goods and wares. He, with his wife and relations, were bewildered and could not think, and were afraid that this happening may mean some great misfortune. Our Saint could not pause, as he was afraid the Guest would suffer by the wet, and hastened to

His Presence with a fresh cloth and bowing before Him, told Him as to the loss of the cloth, as it was a wonder to him as to how it could have happened, and prayed Him to excuse him and accept a fresh cloth and remove the drench from His body. The Guest was incensed greatly at this and said it was very nice indeed that he should proclaim himself as a great donor of cloths, when his object seemed just to steal others' cloths, and how he dared ask Him to accept another cloth in exchange. How many times hearts have suffered unutterable pain by the levelling of such unjust charges, but of course they know not what they do and perhaps, one who would do the right has to pass through all this trial and tribulation as even our Lord chose to subject our saint to such trouble. Our poet describes in a few telling phrases as to what suffering our saint endured under the ire of the Guest, and he fell at His Feet and prayed Him to excuse this great fault of his low self and he offered to place all his gems and silks and wealth at His disposal. The Guest appeared appeased, and said all his silks and gold and gems were of no

avail to Him, and He would accept only a *Kovanam* in exchange. Our saint's heart gladdened at this and asked him as to how he could replace the cloth. The Guest untied another cloth from His *tandu* * and said if he could give its equal in weight, He would accept it. Our Nayanar accordingly put up the weighing scale, and placing the Guest's cloth on one he placed his own in another, and lo ! it went up. Wondering he piled all the other cloths one over the other which he had prepared for giving to God's devotees, and the scales were not balanced still. Wondering more, he piled all his silks and our saint's scales rose higher and higher and our Lord's lower and lower if only to evidence how our Lord in His graciousness and love lowers Himself to His devotees. Having exhausted all his cotton and silk fabrics and even unwoven thread, he was afraid and prayed to the Guest as to what he should do. He replied that he could add his gold and jewels. This he did and yet the scales were not equal, and our poet wisely observes, if it is mere praise to say that all the wealth of our saint

* *Tandu* means a staff.

did not equal the *kovanam* of our Lord which is woven of the threads of the sacred Vedas when nothing in all the world could equal it. Our author follows St. Manikkavachakar as to the meaning of the *kovanam* as set forth in verse 2 of *Tiruchalal*.

“ Our Father, our Master, The Lord of all,
What is it that he wears as *Kovanam*, dear !
With the threads of all science, knowledge and
four Vedas,
He weaves Himself into the *Kovanam* which He
wears, Oh dear !”

The Vedas are webs of mere threads, and the Lord is the woof thereof, and without Him they fall apart and have no meaning and no force. This is in answer to the Atheistical Purvamimamsaka who though he believes in the Veda does not believe in God. But where can there be Veda and Science and Wisdom without God? Our Saint Tiruvalluvar puts it thus,—

What can all learning avail one
If it cannot lead him to the Foot of the Bright
Intelligent (God).

Passing on, our Nayanar said that he was freed of the bondage of wealth by giving it

up all, and he and his wife and young son alone remain, and if it was His pleasure he had no objection to ascend the scales, and our Lord who was pleased to save His devotee by the means of the weighing scales, assented thereto. Our Saint bowed before them and circum-ambulating the scales with his wife and child, and saying that if his love and service to God was true, the scales should be equal; praying thus the Lord of Tirunallur uttering His Holy syllables, they ascended the scales. And lo! they were perfectly balanced, his service unfailing to God's devotees and the *kovanam* of God having become equal.

Our Lord disappeared and He appeared again on the firmament with His Beloved Consort and commanded the bowing devotees as they stood on the weighing scales, and bade them follow Him into His own world; and they ascended into heaven with the scales as a car, to the delight of all mankind and the showering of flowers by the Gods.

THE TEACHINGS

Iruvinai Oppu or karma-samya is a favourite phrase in the Siddhanta and means that perfect

balancing of one's good and evil when all Mala fall off. This has no reference to one's good works being equal to one's bad works, but that perfect balance of mind which is not attracted by the false pleasures of the world nor repelled by pain and suffering in following God's law. This is analogous to the judicial mind which has to weigh the evidence in both the scales with an impartial and open mind, not being impelled to this side or that side with pity or love or idea of gain of any kind, like the sharp needle of the scale beam, which should not incline even by a point. This karma-samya is possible when one gives up everything out of his love to God and His creatures. Once this is gained, he is released from the effects of karma, from the cycle of deaths and births, he attains *malaparipakam*, is granted the vision of the Sat Guru, (our Guest was such in our saint's case), and he attains the Grace of God (Sakti-nipada) and the vision beatific. The appropriateness of all this is evident when we remember our saint was one engaged in trade and had to deal out equal measure to all.

Note.—St. Sekkilar's *Periyapuranam* comprises thirteen Sarukkams or Sargas. The first Sarukkam is called the Tirumalai Sarukkam which portrays the early life of St. Sundarar. This Sarukkam will be published later.

The second Sarukkam is called the Tillai-val-Andhanar Sarukkam. The first purana in this Sarukkam deals with the Andhanars of Tillai, a group or community of priests. This is the first of the nine groups praised in the *Periyapuranam*, and the other groups will be dealt with in their places.

Tirunilakantar, Iyarpagaiyar, Ilaiyankudimarar, Meypporular, Viranmindar and Amarniti are individuals who led the ideal domestic life, and obtained beatitude through the worship of the devotees of Lord Siva, *i.e.*, by the Association of holy men (Sangam or Tirukkuttam.)

The third and fourth Sarukkams are Ilaimalindha Sarukkam and Mummaiyal Ulaganda Sarukkam which will be published later. The fifth Sarukkam is Tiru Ninra Sarukkam which begins with the History of Saint Appar, which has been already summarised in the pages of the *Siddhanta Dipika*, and republished at the instance of the Palamcottah Saiva Sabha and which will be published again later. The next sketch to St. Appar's is of Kulachchirai Nayanar which is followed now.



KULACHCHIRAI NAYANAR

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Manal Merkudi is a fertile town in the far-famed Pandi Nadu. The Chief of this Town was our Saint who had the honour of being spoken of by Saint Sundarar as *Perumanbi*. He held steadfast to the service of God and His devotees. Whenever he met any devotee of God, he would fall at his feet and receive him with joy and with uplifted hands would utter sweet words. This reception he accorded to one whether he belonged to the four castes, or even to castes other than the four. He would worship and pay respects to them whether the world thought of them well or ill, if they were true devotees of God. Whether only one came to him or the devotees came in numbers, he would receive them with open friendly hands with increasing love and supply them with sumptuous meals. He daily worshipped those devotees of God whose person was adorned with holy ashes and who were clad in rags and whose tongue ever uttered the Pan-chaksharam. In course of time he became the

Chief of the Ministers of the Pandiyan King and had vanquished all his enemies. Loving God as he did, he became the devoted servant of the Pandiyan's Queen who invited Saint Tirujnanasambanthar to the Pandi Nadu, and became thus the means of uprooting Buddhism and Jainism which was rampant in the land then. He became a devoted servant of the Divine Child (Dravida Sisu) and he speeded the Jains to their self-inflicted doom. The author himself says he has not done justice to his greatness and then proceeds to detail the next history.

For his share in the great revival of the sacred Religion, the reader is referred to the long account in the History of Saint Tirujnanasambanthar in the next Sarukkam.

THE TEACHINGS

The point to be emphasized in this history is the treatment of God's devotees without distinction of caste.



PERUMILALAIKKURUMBA NAYANAR

—:o:—

Perumilalai was the Chief Town of the ancient and prosperous Milalai Nadu. Of this town and country, the Chief was Milalai Kurumbanar.* Whenever he saw a devotee of the Lord, he would anticipate their wishes even before they expressed them, and receiving them with joy preceding him, he would treat them with all choice foods and load them with riches. While so, he heard of the fame of Nambi Arurar (Saint Sundarar) and determined that nothing would bring him salvation, as the worship daily of Arurar's feet, praise of him with his speech, and the thought of him in his mind. With this conviction, he began to think of him always and repeat his name. When for a wonder, he easily attained to the eight kinds of Yoga-Siddhis, *Anima* etc. After this, with this name of Arurar, he began

* This would support the claim of Rev. Foulkes in the Salem District Manual that Kurumbars, though now one of the depressed classes, was once a ruling race. Even to-day, their tutelary Deity is God Virabaddirar, which would show their ancient warlike character.

meditating on the Panchaksharam also, as his sole help and riches and fruition of his highest thought. While so, Nambi Arurar reached Kodunkolur in Seraman Perumal's country and was nearing Vanjaikkalam. Our Saint through his Yoga understood at once how soon our Nambi was to reach Kailasam, and would not care to live in this world parted from him, like those who would live with their eyesight lost, and determined to reach Kailasam along with our Nambi.

Then he sat in Yoga, all his four internal senses fully concentrated, and his highest sense fully developed, he passed the breath through the Brahma Nadi, and his spirit spread through the Brahmarandra and reached Kailasam and the feet of God and of our Nambi.

THE TEACHINGS

This illustrates how Bhakti to God and his devotees is an important element in Yoga, and without this love, Yoga is an empty thing.



THE MOTHER OF KARAIKKAL

—:o:—

Fortunately for us, the life and incidents of Karaikkal Ammaiya^r is given in the *Periya-puranam* of St. Sekkilar; and we follow the account as far as it goes. In the famous seaport town of *Karaikkal** inhabited by merchants noted for their virtue and veracity and wealth, there lived once a merchant by the name of Danadattan. As the result of his great tapas, he was blessed with a daughter who was named *Punitavadiya^r* (the immaculate). From her earliest years, she developed instinctively a love of God and was given to the study of religious literature and the service of God's devotees. After she attained her proper age, the parents were casting about for a suitable match, and they had an offer from the neighbouring town of Negapatam. This was approved, and *Punitavadiya^r* was married in great pomp to Paramadattan at Karaikkal. The parents were not willing to part with their only daughter, and they assigned a separate house and large

* This is now a French possession, and at some distance from Negapatam.

property to the son-in-law, who agreed to live in Karaikkal. While so, one day, Paramadattan received a couple of mangoes from his friends, and he sent them on to his wife. At home, a devotee of the Lord came and asked for food. Punitavadiyar had only cooked rice, and the vegetables were not ready, but she remembered she had the mango fruits, and thinking that nothing was too precious to be bestowed on God's bhaktas, she served him with one of the two fruits, and appeased his hunger. The bhakta left, and later, the husband returned about noon from his business, bathed and sat down for dinner, and Punitavadiyar served him with the other mango fruit. He found it sweet and asked to be served with the other. She went inside as though to bring it, and felt distressed and prayed to God who always succours those who think on Him forgetting their self, and lo! a mango was placed in her hands. She took it to her husband, who eating it wondered and said that this fruit surpassed anything in the three worlds and asked her where she had got it. On hearing this, she was unwilling to declare the truth,

as she felt that the manifestation of God's mercy was not fit to be disclosed, and she felt at the same time, that it was not right to tell an untruth to her husband. She then related what had actually occurred. Paramadattan did not feel convinced, and asked her to procure another such fruit, if what was obtained previously was by the Grace of God. She went aside and petitioned to God that if He did not grant her another fruit, her words would be found to be untrue, and another fruit was surely in her hands. She presented it to her husband, and it vanished from his hands the moment after he held it. He was at once struck with fear and trembling, and he felt that his wife was no ordinary woman and she must be divine and secretly determined to leave her at the earliest opportunity. With this object in view, he fitted up a ship for trading and took all his wealth in it and left abroad, and after exchanging his merchandise, he arrived at a port in the Pandiyan Territory and settled there, and soon after married a suitable girl, and he got a female child by her whom he named after *Punitavadiyar*. The relations of

Punitavadiyar heard about his whereabouts, in course of time, and they determined to take his first wife to him, and they did so carrying her in a palanquin, and arriving in Parmadattan's town, sent word to him of their arrival and mission. Greatly perturbed, he however determined to face the matter and taking his wife and child approached Punitavadiyar's presence and fell prostrate at her feet. The relations wondered and asked how he could worship his wife. Paramadattan related all that took place before and how he named his own daughter after her, and they should all worship her also. Our Lady then prayed to God that that being her husband's view, she could no more bear the flesh and the beauty of her person which was solely for her husband, and she should be given the form of a demoness (Gujji) who could stand by God ever in prayer. She shed her flesh at once and bearing the bones alone became a demoness, by the Grace of God. The gods showered flowers and the music of the heavens sounded; Devas and Rishis burst forth in praise, and the relations and others who

stood there fell at her feet and worshipped and left.

She then composed her first poem called *Arpudhat-thiru-andhadhi*, the wonderful *Andhadhi* of 100 verses, and any one reading it could not but feel the wonderful beauty and pathos and love that permeates those verses. We have cried over them when reading in private, and even in public company, tears have gushed to our eyes when others recited them. Our civilized notions prevent us from doing any such effeminate thing, as shedding tears, at the recitation of some devotional poetry. But if this is civilization, let us part company from it at once. True Religion and Love is cast in a different mould. To the God-over-powered, there is no caste and company, shame and pride of etiquette.* They roll in a world of their own,

*cf. மலமில்லை மாசில்லை மாண்பி மாணம்
குலமில்லை கொள்ளுங் குணங்களு மில்லை
நலமில்லை நந்தியை ஞானத் தினாலே
பலபன்னி யன்பிற் பதித்து வைப்போர்க்கே.

No sin, no dross, no shame, no pride,
No caste, no qualities nor good is possessed
By those through Jnana by repeated praise
Embed in their Love our Blissful One.

loving God, delighting in God, revelling in God, and rejoicing in God and really attain to Svaraj † and not they who roll under the feet of their worldly rulers. They become mad of God and the world accounts them also mad. They become God-possessed and the world accounts them as Demon-possessed. Says St. Tayumanavar :—

பாலரொடு பேயர் பித்தர் பான்மையென நிற்பதுவே
சீலமிசு ஞானியர்தஞ் செய்கை பராபரமே.

Like babes and demon-possessed and mad men
Do the great Jnanis behave, Oh Lord of Lords.

And truly enough, as our mother, moved about in her Demoness-form, the world fled from her presence, but what did she reckon how she

அன்புள் ஒருகி அழுவன் அரற்றுவன்
என்பு முருக இராப்பகல் ஏத்துவன்
என்பொன் மணியை யிறைவனே ஈசனே
திற்பன் கடிப்பன் திருத்துவன் தானே.

Melting in Love will I cry and loudly sing
Even my bones to melt, will I pray night and day,.
My ornament of Gold, My God and My Lord,
Him will I prepare, eat and masticate.

—Tirumantiram

† Chandogya Up. VII. 7, 25, 2.

appeared to the truthless world if she was accepted by the Lord of the worlds. She proposed to visit Kailasam and travelled through many regions and approaching the out-skirts of the silver mountain, she was afraid to walk with her feet and travelled on her head. From where our Parents (Bhuvanesa Pitaram) were seated, our Mother, Uma observed the lady and wondered what great love should have been possessed by her who was approaching on her head and with the bare bones for the body. Our Lord said that this mother was His devotee and had obtained this form purposely. And when she approached the Lord, He called out to her, 'Mother', and she fell prostrate at His feet calling, 'Father.' The poet exclaims here that the Lord uttered this one good word, so that the whole world may be saved. But how many do really understand all that is implied in this one word! all that love, and loving sacrifice and the love that finds no fault and beareth all faults, that love that would save from all harm and would redeem from all sin, that Love in fact that is more typical of Divinity than humanity. Is

not all this synonymous with this one word 'mother'? And when the prodigal son returns and is received into the bosom of the mother, the response 'mother!', how much does it not imply. It is the acknowledgment of this all-love, and one's own worthlessness and sense of joy and bliss which this acknowledgment brings about!

She rose up and when asked what special prayer she had, she said, she desired undying love and deathlessness, and if she should be born, she should never forget Him, and she should ever dwell under His Dancing Foot ever singing His praise. The Lord granted her prayer and told her she would see His Ananda Tandava at Tiruvalankadu. She accordingly retraced her way to Tiruvalankadu in the same way and sojourned there singing many hymns waiting for the day when God would fulfil her wish. She sang her last hymn and she saw the Lord's Dance and she was taken under His anklet-sounding Foot, with her own song ringing in the ear of the Lord. Such is the narrative as given by St. Sekkilar and it is replete with many lessons.

THE TEACHINGS

It teaches us many domestic virtues, and above all that the worship of the flesh and beauty is of no use; and even if the world should reject us for our faith in God, this is alone what would land us in everlasting Bliss.

We give below a selection from her verses, which would show their worth and beauty.

பிறந்து மொழிபயின்ற பின்னெல்லாங் காதல்
சிறந்து நின் சேவடியே சேர்ந்தேன்—நிறந்திகழும்
மைஞ்ஞான்ற கண்டத்து வாநோர் பெருமானே
எஞ்ஞான்று தீர்ப்ப திடர்.

Ever since I learnt to lisp after my birth,
My love to Thee increased, I reached Thy foot.
Oh! God of Gods, with throat of shining blue,
When wilt Thou rid me of my pain?

இடர்கனையா ரேனு மெமக்கிரங்கா ரேனும்
படருநெறி பணியா ரேனும்—சுடருருவி
லென்பரூக் கோலத் தெரியாடு மெம்மானூர்க்
கன்பரூ தென்னஞ் சவர்க்கு.

Even though He frees me not from pain nor show
Me pity nor the path to go, my heart shall never
Cease loving Him Whose flaming Person is
Adorned with skulls and Who midst fire doth dance.

அவர்க்கே யெழுபிறப்பு மாளாவே மென்று
மவர்க்கே நாமன்பா வதல்லாற்—பவர்க்கடைமேற்
பாகாப் போழ்சூழி மவர்க்கல்லான் மற்றொருவர்க்
காகாப்போ மெஞ்ஞான்று மாள்.

Even to seven births am I His slave,
Ever my love is fixed on Him, naught else.
To Him whose coral braids are covered with buds,
And to none else my service shall be due.

இறைவனே யெவ்வுயிருந் தோற்று விப்பானரேற்றி
யிறைவனே யீண்டி றக்கஞ் செய்வா—னிறைவனே
யெந்தா யெனவிரங்கு மெங்கள்மேல் வெந்துயரம்
வந்தா லதுமாற்று வான்.

The Lord creates all life and creating
He destroys all in this here world. The same
Lord when we cry to Him, 'Oh my mother',
Will rid us sure of our mortal sorrow.

வானத்தா னென்பாரு மென்க மற்றும்பர்கோன்
ருளத்தா னென்பாருந் தாமென்க—ஞானத் தான்
முன்னஞ்சத்தாலிருண்ட மொய்யொளி சேர்கண்டத்தா
னென்னஞ்சத் தானென்பன் யான்.

'He dwells in Heaven', 'He dwells in Indra's World',
They are pleased to declare, I will let them do.
Wisdom Lord Whose throat is with poison dark
Dwells in my heart I do declare.

அருளே யுலகெலா மாள்விப் பதீச
 னருளே பிறப்பறுப்ப தானு—லருளாலே
 மெய்ப்பொருளை நோக்கும் விதியுடையே நெஞ்ஞான்று
 மெய்ப்பொருளு மாவ தெனக்கு.

'Tis Isa's grace that rules the world,
 'Tis Isa's grace that destroys birth,
 'Tis with such grace I look at Truth,
 Let me be merged e'er in such Truth.

எனக்கினிய வெம்மானை யீசனையா னென்று
 மனக்கினிய வைப்பாக வைத்தே—னெனக்கவனைக்
 கொண்டேன் பிரானாகக் கொள்வதுமே யின்புற்றே
 னுண்டே யெனக்கரிய தொன்று.

My Father own so sweet to me, My Lord
 Him I treasured sweet in my heart always
 Him as My Lord I owned and owning Him
 My heart rejoiced. What is then rare to me?

இனியேனா முய்ந்தோ மிறைவன்றாள் சேர்ந்தோ
 மினியோ ரிடரில்லோ நெஞ்சே—யினியோர்
 வினைக்கடலை யாக்குவிக்கு மீனாப் பிறவிக்
 கனைக்கடலை நீந்தினோங் காண்.

Henceforth we have been saved, we reached God's Feet
 Henceforth no more pain, Oh ! my heart ! Henceforth
 The endless sea of births whence rise karma
 We have crossed without doubt.

காண்பார்க்கும் காணலாந் தன்மையனே கைதொழுது
காண்பார்க்கும் காணலாந் காதலாற்—காண்பார்க்குச்
சோதியாய்க் கிந்தையுனே தோன்றுமே தொல்லுலகுக்
காதியாய் நின்ற வரன்.

Him visible to Seers, He can be seen
By those who worship Him. If seen with Love,
He will appear within thy heart as Light,
Hara Who stands as the old world's First cause;

அறிவானுந் தானே யறிவிப்பான் றுனே
யறிவா யறிகின்றான் றுனே—யறிகின்ற
மெய்ப்பொருளுந் தானே விரிசுடர்பா ராகாச
மப்பொருளுந் தானே யவன்.

He knows all future and He intuits everyone,
He the Intelligence that knows the present,
He is the Truth that knows. And He is all
This Earth and Akas and effulgent sun.

அவனே யிருசுடர்தீ யாகாச மாவா
னவனே புவிபுனல்காற் றுவா—னவனே
யியமா னனாயட்ட மூர்த்தியுமாய் ஞான
மயனாகி நின்றானும் வந்து.

He is the fire, Akas and the twin lights,
The earth and air and the water is He,
He is Ejaman and Ashtah-murti
And the Intelligence that transcends all.

தூலறிவு பேசுதுழை விலாதார் திரிக
நீலமணி மிடற்று நீர்மையே—மேலுலந்த
தெக்கோலத்தெவ்வுருவா யெத்தவங்கள் செய்வார்க்கு
மக்கோலத் தவ்வுருவே யாம்.

Let alone what fools with bookish lore declare :
About the Nature of our blue-necked God
In whatever form and figure one worships
In that same form and figure He shows grace.

பிரானவனை நோக்கும் பெருநெறியே பேணிப்
பிரானவன்றன் பேரருளே வேண்டிப்—பிரானவனை
பெங்குற்று நென்பீர்க னென்போல்வார் சிந்தையினு
மிங்குற்றான் காண்பார்க் கெளிது.

If one desires the path leading to God
And wishes to deserve His grace and asks
Where He dwells sure—Even in the heart of those
Like my poor self, It is easy to find.

அன்றுந் திருவுரு வங்காணு தேயாட்பட்டே
னின்னுந் திருவுருவங் காண்கிலே—னென்றுந்தா
னெவ்வுருவோனும்பிரானென்பார் கட்கென்னுரைக்கே
னெவ்வுருவோ நின்னுருவ மேது.

I did not know thy form the day I was Thy own,
Nor do I know it now. "Of what form is Thy Lord,
They ask. To them what reply shall I give?
Which is Thy form? What is It? Oh my Lord!

ஏதொக்குமே தொவ்வாமே தாகுமே தாகா
தேதொக்கு மென்பதனை யாரறிவார்--பூதப்பால்
வில்வே டனாகி விசயனோ டேற்றநான்
வல்வே டனான வடிவு.

What form will fit and what will not,
What It will be, what It will not,
Who will know ? That form that became
The bowman strong whom Arjun met.

[யேனே

கண்டெந்தை யென்றிறைஞ் சிக்கைப் பணியான் செய்
லண்டம் பெறினுமது வேண்டேன்—துண்டஞ்சேர்
விண்ணுநந் திங்களாய் மிக்குலக மேழினுக்குங்
கண்ணாளா வீதென் கருத்து.

If I cannot see Thee and serve and pray
I will not care to dwell even in Heaven
Oh, Moon, Lord of skies and the seven worlds
Oh, my dear ! This is my sole desire.

பணிந்தும் படர் சடையான் பாதங்கள் போதா
லணிந்து மணிந்தவரை யேத்தத்—துணிந்தென்று
மெந்தையார்க்காட் செய்யப்பெற்ற விதுகொலோ
சிந்தையார்க் குள்ள செருக்கு.

Bowing, adorning with flowers the Feet [praise
Of the Lord with spreading braids and uttering His
With constant devotion fixed on my Father true,
Is this not what makes His devotees proud ?

காலனையும் வென்றோங்கு நரகங்கை கழன்றோ
மேலையிரு வினையும் வேரறுத்தோங்—கோல
வரனூர விந்தழிய வெந்தீயம் பெய்தான்
சரனூர விந்தங்கள் சார்ந்து.

We conquered death. We lost our hold on Hell.
The roots of Twin`karma we did tear up
When we did reach the lotus Feet of Him
Who with fiery dart the Triple forts did shoot.

நாமாலை சூடியுநம் மீசன் பொன்னடிக்கே
பூமாலை கொண்டு புனைந்தன்பாய்—நாமோ
ரறிவினையே பற்றினுலெற்றே தடுமே
யெறிவினையே யென்னு மிருள்.

With garlands of words and flowers
If we adorn the golden Feet
Of our Isa' with love and one mind
How will the karmic darkness afflict ?

அவன் கண்டாய் வானோர் பிரானுவா னென்று
மவன் கண்டா யம்பவள வண்ண—னவன்கண்டாய்
மைத்தமர்ந்த கண்டத்தான் மற்றவன்பா னன்னெஞ்சே
மெய்த்தமர்ந் தன்பாய் நீ விரும்பு.

Behold He is the God of Gods,
Behold He is the coral-hued,
Behold He is the Blue necked One,
Desire Him, Oh, Mind with True Love !

APPUDHIYADIGAL NAYANAR

—:0:—

In the last line of the last chapter, the author says he will narrate the sacred service of this saint. Service then is the keynote of this sacred tale. It acquires greater importance from the fact that the saint was a Brahmin of the highest caste, and his services were in the name of St. Appar several degrees lower than himself. His love and devotion to St. Appar was of the highest kind, because it was manifested even before he had seen the latter in person. It is not, therefore, that birth that counts in the sight of God ; nay, it is not the highest wisdom or knowledge that counts, it is not rigid adherence to religious rites and ceremonies, and observance of caste rules, but it is simple unstinted obedience to God, and service and devotion to God's creatures however humble they may be. And the several details of this narrative will bring out the full meaning of this principle. Our Adigal (meaning a servant) was a great devotee of our Lord, and was of great renown, and had accumulated great Tapas. Even before he had seen Saint Vakisar, he had become a great devotee of him. He had burnt

up desire, anger, falsehood and other passions ; and he was a house-holder, and he had named his children, cattle, measures and weighing balances all after Saint Appar, by which the author indicates how he was blessed with all the good things of the earth and yet was so humble as to regard them all as God's gifts. Though he had not seen Saint Appar, yet from what he had heard of his great love to God and God's grace manifested towards him, he had become his great devotee and named all his charities, the Mutts where he fed the poor and the water-pandals etc., after him, in utter contrast to modern day philanthropists, who would blazon forth their own names by suitable inscriptions, even to water troughs and whose subscriptions to the charities could be measured by the amount of public notice it would get and in the newspapers, and by the amount of appreciation in high quarters. While leading this quiet and unostentatious life, Saint Appar after visiting various Sacred Shrines, approached our *Adigal's* place and being greatly fagged by the heat of the day, found great rest in the water-pandal in Thingalur, but was surprised

to find his own name everywhere. He enquired of persons present there as to who had done all these and they informed him that it was our *Adigal* who had established this in the name of Saint Appar as also other mutts and tanks and topes and that he had just left for his home, which was not either far off. He at once reached our *Adigal's* place, and the latter seeing a devotee of God approach, received him with all respect, and prostrated before him who returned the prostration even before the other and enquired as to what great fortune had brought him to his door. Our Appar replied that he had just finished his pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lord of Tirupalanam and on the way he was delighted to see the water-pandal and other charities established by him; but that, one thing struck him as curious. Instead of these charities established for the comfort of God's devotees bearing the name of our *Adigal*, they bore the name of some one else and he desired to know the reason therefor. Our *Adigal* of faultless speech heard this and lost his balance of mind and in anger asked whether the name of him

who by the might of his great service to God had frustrated the cruel designs of the Jains and their king could be spoken of as the name of some one else. By his great devotion to God, he had made it manifest to him and others that even in this life they could be saved and it was harsh for him to hear such name spoken of so lightly. Who had not heard of his greatness in crossing the sea tied to a stone? And he bearing the gracious form of a devotee of the Lord had uttered these words.

At least he wished to know his name and where he came from. Hearing these words and knowing his greatness he replied that he was the loveless man, devoid of clear understanding, who treading other paths was saved by the gracious act of giving the colic pain and was thus made God's own slave. The touching humility of these words moved our Adigal to lift up his hands over his head, and tears rained down his cheeks. He blabbered in his speech, his hairs stood on end, and he fell prostrate and clasped his feet. Saint Appar returning the salutation, lifted him up, and the latter ran and danced and sang

in joy as one utterly destitute had gained untold wealth. He was beside himself with the joy forgetting his first duty to the guest, ran inside and brought out his wife and children and relations, after conveying to them the joyful news of Saint Appar's arrival and made them all prostrate at his feet, and with unabated love washed his feet, and sprinkled the water over themselves and drank it also. They placed him on a raised seat and after worshipping him in proper form, received from his hands the sacred ashes and proceeded to give him a grand dinner. Various sweet and savoury dishes were got ready, and the eldest son called Tirunavukkarsu, after our Saint's name, was asked by his parents to bring plaintain leaves, which he thought was a special act of goodness on their part. He hastened to the garden and while cutting the freshest leaves was bitten by a cobra. He threw off the snake, while the poison burnt into him fast, but faster he ran with the fixed idea that he should deliver the leaves before he fell. As he ran into the house he vowed that he would tell nobody that he was bitten to prevent any

delay in serving food to Saint Appar, and as he handed over the leaves to his mother the poison overpowered him, he grew black in the body and fell. The strength of love in one so young could go no further and the parents who saw with broken heart and noted the signs of cobra poisoning which stilled their heart, made up their mind not to disclose this, and serve food. They therefore hid the body of their rare and blessed child in a corner and proceeded to wash his feet again and place him in another, and receive the holy ashes from his hands. After the parents received the *Pra-sadham*, the children proceeded to receive it, but the eldest was missing, and Saint Appar asked our Adigal to call him, and as he would never utter a falsehood said that the child would not be of use at present. As he heard this our Saint was perturbed in mind and knew there was something wrong and bade them tell the truth. Though he was tempted to hide the truth for fear that this would delay the dinner to Saint Appar, yet he would not utter a lie before him, and with a sorrow wrenching his heart, not for the death of his beloved son but

for the delay that was caused, he respectfully related the true incidents. Our Saint declared that what our Adigal had done was very nice, and who would have done it at all, and rising as he said so, he proceeded to the spot where the dead child lay and sang a hymn invoking God's grace. As he sang it, the boy rose as though from deep sleep and falling at his feet, received the *Prasadham*. Those who saw this praised our Saint's greatness, but the parents felt sorry that the child had caused some delay in the serving of food. Then a sumptuous dinner was served, and scented water was given for washing and our Appar asked our Adigal and children to sit down for dinner with them, and the lady of the house served, they all partook of it. After many days spent in this blessed company, our Saint returned to Tirupalanam, and in a most delightful hymn, he sang of the greatness of Saint Appudhiyadigal. The latter continued in daily meditation of Saint Appar, and finally reached our Father's Abode, by the strength of his loving devotion to Saint Appar. Praise be to them both.



TIRUNILANAKKA NAYANAR

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In the fertile land of the Cholas watered by the Kaveri, the township of Sattamangai, peopled by holy Brahmans occupied a chief place. As the women plunged their graceful forms in the tanks, the swans in rivalry also plunged and played. As the Sama Vedic chants arose from the various Mutts, the trained Nightingales trilled forth their song also. As the Brahmans holding as they did the sacred ashes as their true possession tended the three sacred fires, for the sake of the house-holders' Dharma, the women also safeguarded their chastity as the fourth fire.*

In this ancient town there dwelt a sage called Nila Nakkar, who being convinced that the esoteric teaching of the Vedas consisted in the true worship of God and His devotees bestowed all his thought and service in such worship, according to the strict rules contained in the sacred Agamas.

* The author of *Manimekalai* calls this highest Virtue of women as *Sudukarpu*, the chastity that burns. The author's description here is appropriate as he is going to describe the great virtue of our Saint's wife.

One day, this being Tiruvadirai, he finished his daily Vedic rituals and repaired to the sacred shrine at Ayavanti and commenced a puja assisted by his loving wife. While he was deeply meditating on Sri Panchaksharam, a spider alighted on the person of God and our lady in alarm blew it off with her mouth and as though she was also pouring out her love a few sprays of spittle also fell. Seeing this, our Saint asked her why she had done this so senselessly and she replied that she did this in haste to remove the spider. Not reckoning the love that induced her action, he told her that as she, without trying to remove the spider by some other means, had committed this improper act, he could no more live with her and told her to leave him. The sun as though ashamed of his act disappeared behind the hills, and the Brahman left for his house and took to his bed. The lady not knowing where to go, spent the night in the Temple itself. While he slept, he saw the vision of God, with spreading Braids, pointing to his person and saying that He was covered all over with sores except where his wife had blown with

her mouth. He took this Vision as real and got up in great alarm and recognising God's great grace sang and danced and cried. After dawn he repaired to the Temple and after worshipping and praising God, he returned home with his true wife, and in greater hope and joy, he conducted his daily service.

While so, he heard the whole world utter the praise of the Divine Child of Sirkali (Saint Tirujnanasambanthar) and waited for the day when he would be fortunate enough to worship his feet. Our Pillaiyar chanced to go to this town after visiting various shrines on the way, and the moment our Sage heard of his coming, he was overjoyed and prepared for him a royal reception with flags and buntings, *toranams* and arches and pandals and taking all his people with him welcomed him most heartily. He fell before him and sang and danced and took him and his large retinue to his abode and gave them a sumptuous dinner and allotted places for their rest for the night and appeared before our Pillaiyar to take his leave for the night. The latter asked him to assign a place for Tirunilakanta Yalpanar, one of his

followers, and straight away he took him to the middle of *Vedhi* (Sacrificial place), the most sacred spot in the house and asked him to rest. The fire that burnt there unceasingly, glowed up even brighter than before, to the delight of our sage. Our Saint Sambanthar tarried there many days pouring out in new Tamil, the truths of the Old Vedas, and celebrating Nila Nakkar in his verses and giving him his great love. The latter desired to follow him everywhere, but at the injunction of the Divine Child, he remained at home in a way, though his heart had followed the former. He lived for many days, doing works of charity, but the forthcoming marriage festivities at Achapuram drew him there and he entered The Great Light along with Saint Tirujnana Sambanthar and all his great followers.

THE TEACHINGS

His history is almost the last in this Puranam. The first incident in the present tale opens our Sage's eyes to the fact that love more than form is what counts before God, and having once learnt this lesson, he readily accepted the fact, without question that love again counted before

caste and birth and Vedic rules. Yalpanar was of a low caste and yet he was assigned the most sacred place in the house. The wise can profit by such teachings with the grace of God.



NAMINANDHIYADIGAL NAYANAR .

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In the famous land of the Cholas, and in the fertile valley of the Kaveri was situated Emapperur, noted in all the eight quarters of the globe. Everywhere played the floral festoons, in the broad streets, the clouds sucking up the water from the sea played over the house-tops, the cool zephyr played over the dark Solais, and the bees played on areca spathes, the Vedic chants rose sweet over the morning air, and the Nymphs played in every well-filled pool. The red lotus rising over white ears of paddy looked like the sacrificial fires rising over the sand spread ground. In this famous town there lived one, named Naminandhi Adigal, who was a Saiva Brahman and whose fortune it was to worship in both the births the Great Lord, and who thought it his sacred duty under the Vedas to tend the fires and who held the sacred ashes as his true wealth. And in such thought and constant worship of God, he was enjoying unalloyed bliss. Tiruvarur was only a few

miles off his place and he used frequently to visit it and worship God in that great shrine. While he was returning one day, he entered the Temple at Araneri and after due worship and praise of God, he was leaving when the desire arose in him that he should light some lamps in the Temple. It was too late in the evening for him to go and return from his village, and therefore he approached some homestead that were nearby and asked the house-holders to give him some ghee for lighting the lamps in the Temple, and they happened to be the false Jains who held to the doctrine of *Asthi Nasthi*. They taunted him by saying that lights were too much for the God, who held the fire in his hand, they could not spare any ghee for such a purpose and if he wanted to light the lamps he could do so with water. Our Adigal could not bear these cruel words, and reaching the Temple, he fell down before God, his heart melting in tears, while a voice arose and comforted him saying that he need not feel any concern, he could take the water from the tank and light the lamps always. Our Adigal on hearing this

Divine Voice was lost in joy, and praising His Grace rose and entering the tank he uttered the sacred Panchaksharam and took the water. With it he filled all the lamps and lit them and they shone brighter than ever and this became known to the world to the discomfiture of the reviling Jains. Soon after this, the Jains were driven away by the King from Tiruvarur and thereabouts on account of the miracle performed in connection with Saint Tandi Adigal Nayanar and the King appointed Our Adigal to the superintendence of the Tiruvarur Temple and he was conducting the daily Pujahs and festivals very regularly, and he instituted a special festival in Panguni Uthiram day in Honor of God's Great Leela.

Even such a holy man and God-lover as our Adigal had a mite in his eye and this was removed by the following incident. While conducting one of the festivals, the God had to be taken to Tirumanali, and he went with all the people and the whole affair went off very grandly and he returned home? He would not however enter his house and bade his wife to bring water for his bath as he felt defiled by

mixing with all sorts of people at the festival. Even before his wife returned, either he was too tired or it was God's grace, sleep overpowered him and he saw a Vision. God approached him as though he was going there for his worship and told him that all those born in Tiruvarur were His own ganas. Our Adigal rose from his sleep in great trepidation, and understood the meaning and felt deeply for thinking that he was defiled, and communicating what happened to his wife entered his house without further delay and finished his pujahs in the usual manner. Rising early and finishing his ablutions, he went to Tiruvarur, and lo! he beheld the whole population of the place transformed into Siva Ganas as Siva Himself. He fell down to the ground and worshipped and praised them, with uplifted hands. Transformation soon passed and he entered the Temple and petitioned God that He would be graciously pleased to excuse his fault. For many more days he lived doing his duty to God and His devotees meriting the title of "The Sacred Devotee" from Saint Vakisa, and finally was

received into the Bosom of our Father of Tiruvarur.

THE TEACHINGS

The meaning of the last incident is plain enough. There is no defilement except by sin. All are children of God. Unto the pure all things are pure. This principle was thought of so much importance even in those days as to be reiterated over and over again. How much greater reason have we to remember it in these days.

Besides, all our external worship is symbolic. They furnish a means for drawing our heart out to God. Flowers are symbolic of our love, and ghee of our sacrifice. Love and sacrifice is the keynote to all true religion.

Note :—The first chapter, in the sixth or Vambara-varivandu Sarukkam contains the History of Saint Tirujnana Sambanthar and as this is the longest in the whole Puranam we reserve it to the last. The next chapter is that of Saint Eyarkonkalikkama Nayanar, which is the continuation of Saint Sundarar's history. Next to that is St. Tirumular.

TIRUMULA NAYANAR

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In the concluding lines of the last Chapter, our Poet says he will proceed to relate the history of Saint Tirumular, who in sweet Tamil had declared the esoteric truths of Chariya, Kriya and Yoga and Jnana Margas. As we have elsewhere shown, this is the cream of Agamanta or Siddhanta. Agama is otherwise called Tantra as Veda is called Mantra, and the several adhyaya in *Tirumantiram* are called Tantras also. And our Saint declares himself that by command of God he was giving out the truths of the Agamas in Tamil. We may therefore regard him as the first and foremost expounder of the Agamanta in Tamil. As such next to Nandikesvara, Sananta, Sanatkumara and other great Seers, Saint Tirumular is regarded as the foremost Teacher and Guru in the Tamil land, and Saint Tayumanavar, who styles him as Tava Raja Yogi traces his spiritual descent from him. Our Saint's *Tirumantiram* occupies a unique place in Tamil Philosophy, nay in the Philosophy of the whole

world ; and though we have attempted translations of his verses and tried to expound a few of them, there is hardly any student in the Tamil land, who could interpret him properly and do him justice. In it lies the whole keynote of Yoga or practical Philosophy, and we have among us only smatterers and imposters who pretend to Yoga. We may refer also to the valuable introduction of Dr. V. V. Ramanan appended to the Tamil edition of *Tirumantiram* of the late lamented Visvanatha Pillai though we are bound to say we do not agree with him in all his conclusions.

To proceed to the narrative, our Saint was one of the Yogis who had obtained the grace of Nandikesvara in Mount Kailasam. He had attained to the eight great Siddhis and he desired to travel to the Tamil Pothiya Hill to meet the great Muni Agastya and renew his old friendship. On his way he passed through and worshipped at the Temples of Kedhara, of Pasupatisvarar in Nepaul, of Visvanathar in Avimukta (Benares), of God in Vindhya and Sri Parvatam and Sri Kalahasti. After visiting Tiruva-

lankadu, he passed further south, he worshipped God in Sri Kanchi and Tiruvadigai, and reached Chidambaram. Here he bided sometime, witnessing and enjoying in truth Sri Nataraja's Ananda Tandava, his heart and soul melting in love. Leaving this Presence with great reluctance, he crossed the Kaveri, which as the poet says would not mix its waters with that of the sea, in as much as the latter yielded the Poison as food for God, bringing out thereby how every drop of the river is utilized by the people in increasing the fertility of the country. Bathing in its sacred waters, he reached the shrine of Pasupatisvara in Tiruvavaduthurai * and his heart leaped in joy at the sight of the same. He felt as though he could not leave the place, still he left it, and on the bank of the Kaveri, he came across a herd of cattle which were bellowing in great distress over the dead body of their shepherd. They were going round and round

* The seat of the famous Mutt of this name, which adjoins the Temple. Our Saint's Shrine is found in the temple. The passage to it is long and dark even during the day. The Sacred Fig Trees (*Ficus Religiosa*) in this Shrine are very nearly creeping ones and called Padar Arasu.

his body and smelling it and bellowing. Our Saint saw it and his heart was touched, be it by the grace of God. The real Sage and Yogi is one, who is filled with love of God, and this love flows over and over and in its broad embrace covers all sentiment, creatures without any distinction and gives joy to all and removes all pain and sorrow. Every one is familiar with the definition of the anointed of God given in the Sacred *Kural* "The Anthanars (Brahmins-Brahmajnanis) are lords of Dharma, as they conduct themselves by showing true love to all sentient creatures." Saint Umapathi Sivachariyar had declared that out of the depths of their love, they are troubled and tossed about from the sorrows of their erring kind. Our Saint himself had said, which deserves to be written in letters of Gold, "Let the whole world share the Bliss I had attained." Naturally our Sage's heart was moved at the sight of the distress of these cows and he desired to remove their pain. And this we conceive to be the KEY-NOTE OF THIS CHAPTER. He desired, and what is impossible to such? With true self-sacrifice, the greatest

obstacles can be overcome, and the greatest achievements possible. In this instance, the only way our Saint could help these cattle would be by giving life to the dead shepherd. He therefore prepared to enter his body and after placing his own body in a place of safety, his life passed into that of the Shepherd. The Shepherd arose as though from sleep, and lo! the joy of the kine. They licked him, smelt him, crowded round him and leapt in joy with tails held aloft. After a time, being satisfied he was alive, they began to graze as usual. Our Saint's heart was also gladdened at this sight, and he followed the cattle as they grazed in the cool banks of the river and drank of its refreshing waters. It was soon evening, the kine thinking of its calves began to return to their home which were in the adjoining village of Sattanur and our Saint also followed them to their village. Each cow entered its respective owner's house, and our Saint, who had entered the body of the Shepherd who was called Mulan stood in the Village Street. The Shepherd's modest wife, who was anxiously waiting her husband's

late return came near him, and looking at his strange appearance went to touch our Saint. He would not allow this. The woman was alone. She had no children and no relations. She bewailed her lot and our Saint told her that she had no more connection with him, and saying so, he entered a common Mutt in the village. The woman, who sadly noted his altered condition ceased to trouble him, and spent a sleepless night and next morning informed the Villagers about his condition and solicited their aid. They came and saw our Saint and told the woman, that his condition did not betoken insanity, nor did show that he had contracted any new attachment but that he appeared to be a Siva Yogi, who had attained to Chitta Nirodha, and it was not possible to measure his greatness. He seemed to be one who had attained Omniscience and to the Feet of the Ninmala God and he would not therefore enter again the entanglements of Samsara. The woman was sorely troubled in heart but chaste and modest as she was, she went away quietly with the Villagers.

Our Saint Tirumular as he was now called, left with the cattle, which proceeded to their pasturing grounds and going to the place, where he had concealed his original body, he could not find it. In his Omniscience he learnt that it was by the Lord's Grace the body was lost and it was His Supreme Will that he should bide there and give out in Tamil to the world the great truths of the Agamas revealed by the Lord adorned with spreading braids and the crescent Moon. He repaired again to Tiruvavaduthurai and worshipping God, sat in Yoga under the Sacred Fig Tree to the west of the Shrine. And he gave a verse of his *Tirumantiram* one in each year, beginning with the following verse :

“ He is only one. His gracious Sakti is the second. He is established in the three. He revealed the four (Dharmas). He conquered the five (senses). He gave out the six (religions). He transcended the seven (worlds). He stood as the Intelligent eight (Ashtamurthi).”

He thus composed the three thousand verses comprising the Tamil *Tirumantiram* and remained on earth for three thousand years and

was then received into the gracious Foot of the Lord without any more return. If it is said that it took a whole year for composing each verse, it means that so much thought is actually condensed in each verse, and it follows that unless one can meditate on each verse for a whole year or more, the condensed meaning cannot be sensed.

THE TEACHINGS

It has to be noted also that real Mukti can alone be secured when one transcends the thirty-sixth Tatva and attains Nahanta, and as Saint Arulnandi has pointed out, though there may be no return when one has reached Nadu Tatva, yet it is not the final Bliss.



TANDIYADIGAL NAYANAR

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Saint Tandiyaadigal Nayanar had the great merit by his acquired Tapas of being born in Tiruvarur and he was born blind, as though, with his inner eye, he was ever intent, in meditating on the golden foot, dancing to the melody of the heavenly songsters, and would not see the outer world.

He was convinced that true service was real Sathyam (Truth) and he was ever devoted to the feet of the Lord of Tiruvarur and excelled in His service. .

Everyday he would go round the sacred shrine, and stand before, and praise God's Devotees in front of the Devasiriya Mantapam, (thousand pillared) and he would utter lovingly the Sacred Panchaksharam. As to the west of the Shrine, the Jains had numerous Temples* of their own, he resolved to dig a tank. He

* About nine miles from Tiruvarur, in the village of Dipangudi, is situated a fine Shrine of the Jains and there are a few Jains living thereabout. From its appearance it does not seem to be an ancient Temple and the improvements have been effected in recent times. We visited this Shrine about a couple of months ago i.e., in December 1919.

chose the spot, where he wanted to dig the tank and stuck a post in the centre of it and roped it all round and he tied a rope to guide him, from the centre to the outside and he took out the earth and guiding himself by the rope, he brought out and threw it outside, ever uttering the Sacred Panchaksharam.

The Jains, who saw this day after day became envious and approached our Saint, and told him to desist from the work as by so digging, he would be causing injury to Sentient things. Hearing the words of these Jains with unwashed bodies our Devotee replied, "O! Ye unfortunate men, how could you know that this is good and faultless Dharma, to devote ourself to the service of the Lord, Whose person is smeared with holy ashes?"

Hearing the words of our Saint, who had attained to limitless knowledge, these fools retorted, "You won't listen to dharma, have you even lost your ears." To this our Devotee replied that the dull intelligence and sightless eyes, and senseless ears were all that they possessed on the earth, and that he himself would see naught but the fragrant lotus feet of

the Lord, Who had burnt up the Tiripuram and that how would it be possible for them to know the same.

One thing he could tell them, supposing he should regain his eye-sight and they should become bereft of their senses and their sight, what would they do? The Jains told him that if he really gained his eyesight, they would leave that city altogether ; and saying so, they took away the spade from his hands as also the ropes and the post.

Becoming angered by these cruel acts of the Jains, he entered the Temple and standing before the entrance, he cried to God, that he was subjected to this disgrace and was sorely troubled in heart, and praying that God would graciously be pleased to remove his sorrow, he fell prostrate.

And he went home, after praising God and worshipping Him, and took to his bed. God appeared to him in his sleep and told him, "Cease all anxiety, you will gain your sight, and these deceitful Jains will become blind. Don't fear." The same night God appeared to the King also and told him that the Jains

not being able to bear the sight of Tandiyadigal's service, had obstructed the same, and He had become angered and that he should go to him and carry out whatever he wished. The King woke up, his hairs standing on their end and praised our Lord, crowned with Cossia wreaths. After daybreak, he went to our Saint and told him what had happened. Our Saint praising God's great mercy said, "Hear, O King, I was digging a tank for God; these Jains obstructed me saying it was not Dharma, and took away my spade and the ropes with the post and told me I had no sense. I asked them that if by the grace of God, I should gain my sight what they would do. They took an oath that they would leave the city altogether and it is your duty to see the end of this dispute."

The King sent for the Jains and they signified their consent. They all proceeded to the tank and the King asked our sage to make God's grace manifest and regain his sight. Our Saint said that if he was a real servant of Siva, he would gain his eye-sight and the Jains would become blind and holding God's foot

as the sole refuge and uttering the Panchaksharam, he plunged into the tank and rose with his eyesight fully restored and the God rained down flowers darkening the horizon.

The Jains at once became blind and their plight was most sad. The King finding them to be professors of a false religion drove them out of his country and pulling down their places of worship dug a big tank and with joy in his heart, he fell down at the feet of our Saint and worshipped him. Our Saint lived many days after this, meditating on the Panchaksharam and praising and worshipping God, and was in the fulness of time received into the bosom of God.

This tank is in existence to this day with a fine Temple in the middle of it and is the largest of its kind in Southern India. This Kamalalayam Tank is said to be as large as the Temple itself and the Senkalinir Odai of similar extent. But the greater part of the Odai is now turned into paddy fields and it is only here and there in small pools you see the *nymphae odoratum*.

As regards the merits of Buddhism the

reader is referred to the Chapters in my edition of *Sivajnana Siddhiyar* and the notes therein. There can be no doubt that in its essence and practical work, it is an atheistical religion and it denies the permanent existence of a Soul also. Naturally the moral sanctions are very weak. You find the Buddhist nations partaking of any kind of meat in spite of the noble ethical doctrines of Buddha.

THE TEACHINGS

One more important lesson we have to learn from this history namely that inner worship is of greater importance than outer worship and that even when one is born without riches or other powers, if one's heart is solely placed on the thing he loves, he can achieve even the impossible. It is the power of the mind over the body and one's environments. And let no one despair that he is not able to do this or that for want of means or opportunities.



MURKKA NAYANAR

The town of Tiruverkadu is situated on the Northern Bank of the Palar River in the famous *Tondainadu*, and in its pools sported the swans, while in the dancing halls sported the sprightly damsels and the flags swayed over the palatial buildings. In this town, in an ancient Vellala family, ever devoted to the service of God, was born our Saint. Since he attained the age of discretion he held firmly to the truth that the sacred ashes were the only wealth and in practice he took to the service of feeding God's devotees, before he himself partook of any food. He devoted all his wealth to this end, and in course of time, his resources became exhausted, and he sacrificed all his lands and his slaves and yet his heart waxed strong in this service, and there however neared a time when he had absolutely nothing wherewith he could feed God's Bhaktas. Then he resolved to put to use the art of gambling which he had learnt, but found none in his own town who could play with him for stakes. Then he travelled over various places

visiting God's Shrines and finally reached Tirukkudanthai (Kumbakonam) and there he met his adversaries in gaming. He played with them and won large sums. But he won his money honestly and by pure skill. If his adversaries played him false he fought them and ran them through with his poniard, so that he acquired the name of good gambler and *Murkka* (fierce) and hence his name. With the gains of his profession he carried out his service and he would not touch a pie of it for his own use. He fed all the devotees first and with the leavings he satisfied his own hunger. Owing to the good service he was doing, he gradually became purged of all his sins and in due time, reached Salvation.

THE TEACHINGS

This story illustrates a principle in spiritual psychology where when a person becomes freed of all notions of "I and Mine," he becomes selfless, and then, even the actions which, considered by our ordinary notions as wrong or sinful become virtues. See the last verse in Saint Umapathi Siva Chariyar's *Light on the True Path* V. 6, and my notes thereon.

SOMASIMARA NAYANAR

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Our Saint was born in the Town of Tiruvambar in Cholanadu of a Brahman family well versed in the true Vedas and he excelled in the service of feeding God's servants. As even our Mother Uma had excelled in worshipping God, he held that to worship and praise God was the highest virtue in this life. Irrespective of his caste or position, if one was God's Bhakta, him he regarded as his true Master. He stood steady in the path of ever uttering the Sacred Panchaksharam. In his visits to Tiruvarur he acquired the strong love and friendship of Saint Sundarar and became himself famous. To excel in his worship and acquire his love he considered as the conquest of the five senses and the ridding of the six sins. In such a life of sanctity and loving service he finally reached Sivaloka.

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NOTE—Here ends the sixth Sarukkam. The seventh Sarukkam is called Varkonda Vanamulaiyal Sarukkam which is followed now. In this Sarukkam, the history of Saint Seraman Perumal Nayanar is omitted as it forms the continuation of Saint Sundarar's history.

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SAKKIYA NAYANAR

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We will now relate the story of the Saint who though he wore the garb of an alien religion yet became the loving servant of the Lord, standing at the head of the Six Orthodox Schools, and who overjoyed at the sight of the Sivalinga worshipped It by throwing stones at It and thus was received into the Flawless Foot of the Supreme. He was born in Tiruchchangamangai in a Vellala family, was very learned in the arts and ethics and was filled with Jivakarunya to all sentient beings. And he desired to know the path by which he can put an end to births and deaths. He therefore sojourned to Conjeevaram, and in his search after wisdom, he first became acquainted with the Buddhists and tried to learn all that they could teach him in attaining cessation from birth. He soon learnt that this did not satisfy the cravings of his heart nor the other schools which he investigated and finally became ac-

quainted with the truth of the Saiva Religion. He was convinced that good path was the only truth. He found that there were these entities, the doer, the act, the fruit and the giver of the fruit, and these were enunciated in no other religion but in Saivism, and the great truth was God Siva. He also learnt that in whatever condition he remained and whatever garb he wore, the great thing was that one should not forget the feet of God. With this firm conviction, he continued to wear the garb of a Sakkiya and progressed in his faith in God. The false Buddhists would be really those who would not believe in Isa as the Ruler of all. The faith grew strong in him, and he began to worship daily the Sacred Symbol of God, the Sivalinga which is of Rupa Arupa Form, and of the form of fire and light, undiscerned by the Gods Brahma and Vishnu. He made it his daily duty to worship the Sivalinga before partaking of food, and one day as he neared a Sivalinga, which stood in an open place, his heart throbbed in delight, and unconsciously he picked up a stone at hand and threw it at the Sivalinga. And our Lord

was pleased at it, as the loving parent rewards with pleasure the silly sallies of their beloved little ones. Next day as he neared the same Sivalinga he pondered over what he did the day before, and feeling that what he did without thought was induced by Divine Grace, he made that as his ordained service and continued to throw stones every day. He thus reached that spiritual state when he felt that God was all and all acts were his acts, subjugating His own will and mind completely. And the rationale of his curious worship would be this. No feeling of *Ahankara* and *Mamakara* possessing him in the least, his whole being permeated with love of God, all his acts were acts of love, and the stones he threw were to him real flowers of Bhakti, though to others they appeared as stones only. And it was in this way also, the sandals of Saint Kannappar became the holy crown of God.

One day our Saint on some unaccountable failure of memory began to take his food without worshipping God's symbol, but regaining sense at once, he blamed himself for this fault and hurried out to God's presence with his

heart overflowing with love and taking a stone he aimed it at the Sivalinga, as though he was really aiming at the goal of all things. Our Lord was also overjoyed and appeared in the firmament with the Goddess Uma and showered His grace. Our Saint worshipped the parent of the worlds with uplifted hands and eyes streaming with tears of joy and was received into Sivaloka.

Our Poet says how he could know this Goal, except through Him Who granted it to our Saint as the fruit of throwing stones at the Sivalinga, and may we remind our readers of the following famous Upanishad text. (Mundaka Upanishat 2-4.):

“Om is the bow, Atma is the arrow, Brahman is called its aim. It is to be hit by a man who is not thoughtless; and then as the arrow (becomes one with the target) he will become one with Brahman.”

Compare also Maitrayana Brahmana Upanishat, 6-24. St. Tirumular has a similar idea in V. 2607: “Hit with the arrow, and drive far away the eating bird, (Karma), one can reach the golden Sivaloka.”

THE TEACHINGS

Besides, this History contains an obvious lesson in these days of extreme sanctimoniousness. Great stress is laid on formal prayers and forms of worship, and the number of times, and the days it should be performed; strict rules are enjoined as to the wearing of religious marks and symbols, *i.e.*, no attempt is made to inculcate real love and devotion to God. All Religions and Schools are alike in this extreme adherence to mere form, though we do not mean to say that forms and rules and symbols have no uses at all; but on the other hand they may be of the highest help to aspirants to guide and control them. But it is wisdom to remember that all these are as nothing, when one is imbued with real love of God; and this love becomes his guiding star in his life.



SIRAPPULI NAYANAR

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Tiruvakkur is a town in the valley of the Kaveri, and it was praised by Saint Tiru-jnanasambanthar, as containing Brahmins, who would never refuse help to people in want. In this town resided our Brahmin Saint Sirappuliyar, and his fame as a lover of God and his God's devotees grew far and wide. Whenever he saw a Bhakta, he would prostrate before him and standing up before him with his heart brimming with love, would utter sweet words of welcome and treat them with dainty food, and load them with all that they desired. Uttering the Panchaksharam and performing Yagnas in the name of Siva and rendering every help to God's servants, he matured in faith and love and was finally received into the Feet of God.



SAINT SIRUTTHONDA NAYANAR

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In that town loved to dwell our Lord with the Frontal eye who burnt up the God of love. In that town was found all together the abundance and beauty of the Valley of the Kaveri, wherein the fields at planting time, the joyful songs of the Palla woman could be heard. This township was known by the name of Tiruchengattankudi. In this town dwelt our Saint who protected the people by his spirituality and power being the ornament of the Amadhya sect of Brahmins and his name was famed all the world over as Paranjoti. He was learned in all the sciences and arts of war and armaments and well versed in horsemanship and training elephants, and so excelled all others in this knowledge. As he also incessantly cultivated the spiritual sciences he was convinced that its cream consisted in one's becoming united to the Gracious Foot of the Lord, and as a result of this conviction, his love flowed fast to that Foot that felled Death, even as a flood rushing down a torrent. He was doing kindly service to all God's devotees, and

was engaged in the service of the King as his minister and general, and gaining very many victories over the king's enemies and having conquered their countries, he was the chief shining Light of the King's Court. Being called away to fight the enemy in the north, he reduced their chief town of Vatapi to dust and gathering a vast quantity of spoils of war in money and jewels, horses and elephants, he placed them all before his Sovereign on his return from the war. The King wondered at his heroic deeds and praised him much. His other ministers, who knew him better said that he was a devoted Bhakta of our Lord with the crescent Moon and so there was none, who could oppose him in battle. The King on hearing this said he had committed a great sin in employing such a God's Bhakta in war and bowed before him, asked the pardon of the Saint for having committed by doing so. Our Saint prostrated even as the King did so, and said there was no harm in having done simply his duty according to the rules of his order. The King, however, would not hear of his continuing in service but loaded

him with all kinds of riches and lands and told him that it was his pleasure that he should ever after continue in the service of God and of Truth and gave him leave accordingly. Returning back to his native place, he carried out his service to God at the temple of Ganapathisvaram and to his devotees. And he made it his daily duty to eat only after feeding God's devotees, and by his manner and sweet words, he felt so lowly before God's men, he was called *Sirutthondar*. He became united in wedlock to a sweet maid called Tiruvenkattu Mangai, of faultless birth, for carrying out these sacred duties, and she was in due course delivered of a son, who was named Sirala, and who became at once the greatest joy of our Saint's existence. He carried out in grand style the birth ceremonies etc., and in the third year, the tonsure ceremony was performed and the child was put to school. During these days, the fame of the Divine Child Sambanthar had spread far and wide and our Saint had the great honour of receiving him and his followers in his town and feasting them. The Lord of *Sirkali* was also much pleased by his

worship and reception, and praised him in his verses addressed to the God of Tiruchengattankudi; and after sojourning there for sometime, he left it for other sacred Shrines.

The loving service rendered by our Saint received due recognition in the sight of our God of Kailasam and He left it in the form of a Bairava Mendicant, so to test his true love and manifest it to the world. And in the next ten exquisite verses, the Poet describes the person and habiliment of this Kapalika ascetic. "Ye who praise God's grace by seeing His gracious manifestation on earth to His incomparable Bhaktas! Come Ye forth in love and receive him, so rung forth in all the quarters the tinkling sounds from the bracelets covering His sacred Feet like the Vedas. Smiles beamed from His face pouring Grace; Light flashed from His Trisula destroying the triple mala causing illusion; His love welled forth scattering favour to the praise of the world; and in this wise He set foot in Tiruchengattankudi situated in the wise Tamilagam." As though one suffering from great hunger and thirst, He enquired of the passers by our

Saint's house and reaching it, he asked if Sirutthondar, who ever fed God's devotees was at home. The maid servant named Santhanam feeling that he was a great ascetic bowed before him and informing Him that the Saint had just left his house in search of Bhaktas, invited Him to enter the house and be rested. He intimated that He cannot enter the abode where females dwelt alone, and the maid was afraid He might leave and so fetched forth her Mistress, who entreated Him to stay, as her Lord would return immediately having gone forth in search of guests whom he was not successful in finding till then. The Bhairava told her that He belonged to the North, and having heard of our Saint's fame, He had gone down to see him and He could not stay there however in the other's absence and He would wait under the *Alti* tree in Ganapathisvaram, and Sirutthondar could be informed of the same. He left accordingly and took His seat under the tree. Sirutthondar returned home quite sad and informed his wife of his fruitless search who soon related to him of the visit of the Bhairava together with all that passed

between them. Our Saint said he was saved and hastened at once to the presence of the Ascetic and prostrated before Him. Our Lord asked him if he was the great Sirutthondar, to which, he in modesty replied though he could not call himself as such in the presence of God's devotees, yet they call him as such in their great graciousness and telling Him of his search for guests, invited Him to his house to partake of food. Our Lord, whose feet the great Mal was unable to find told him that He had come from the North expressly to see him, yet it will not be possible to feed Him; such feast will be nigh unto the impossible. Our Saint said that he was not speaking without thought and nothing will be impossible to find, when God's devotees themselves deign to appear. On hearing this, the Bhairava replied that he dined only once a year and on the meat of a Pasu, and it was even that day when his dinner was due, and so it was difficult for him to satisfy His hunger. The other said that it was good, he was not wanting in cows of all kinds and if He would only say what kind of cow was to be killed he would at once get the

dinner ready. Seeing the great love of this matured soul, our Lord said that the meat on which He dined was that of a Nara Pasu (Human being) and its age must be exactly five, and of faultless person, and He had to tell him one thing more but He desisted as that would cause him pain. On our Saint saying that nothing mattered and He might be pleased to give it out, the Ascetic went on to say that the boy must be the only son of his parents and the father must cut him when held by the mother and in joy must cook the dinner and such food only he would partake of. Our Saint said even that was not impossible if he would only give his consent to stay for the dinner and getting his leave after prostrating before Him, in great joy, he hastened to his house, where his expectant and loving wife joined him and after worshipping him looked at his face and made enquiries of the guest. He related the Guest's desire and the wife asking how that was possible, he said that though it was possible to get a child of this description by giving much money to the parents, they will never consent to kill the child as required and so he

asked her to bring the child she herself begot for his salvation, so that he put it to her that it was by her merit he was himself saved. She readily consented, asked her lord to fetch their beloved son from the school so that the ascetic may be fed soon and His glad delighted face may be seen by them. He hastening to the school, with feeling that all his evil had vanished, that he had secured the *summum bonum* of existence, his beloved child ran to him, and embracing him he lifted him to his shoulders and brought him home and delivered him to his mother. The mother combed him and washed him and after adorning him to heart's content she handed him over to the father. As the child was to become food of the Bhairava, our Saint would not defile him by kissing or embracing him, and taking a purified knife, he took him aside and he holding his head and his wife the feet, and while the child laughed in joy at the sight of his parents' own great joy, the operation was performed. Joy shone on the father's face at the thought his incomparable son had served the cause of truth, and the

mother felt in her heart exceeding gladness that her child had secured her the life of her husband, and in this united delight, the rare operation was performed. The mistress handed over the head to her maid deeming it not fit, and the rest she cut and washed and mixed it with spices and made various dishes out of it and informed our Saint that dinner was ready. On hearing this, he was even gladder than before and hastening to the seat of the Ascetic invited Him for the feast and brought Him home, as though a poor man was bringing home a great treasure.

His wife received the honoured Guest and after giving Him a high seat, His feet were washed, and the water they partook themselves and sprinkled all over their persons and house and after offering Him incense and flowers and high worship they prayed to Him that He might be pleased to partake of the dinner spread before Him. He viewed the feast and asked if every portion of the child had been prepared. The goodly dame replying that she had rejected the Head as not fit, He said that even that was food for Him. The

Master and Mistress were troubled sore on hearing this and their maid came to their rescue however and told them that she had herself dressed the head thinking it may be wanted by the Guest and at this, their faces were gladdened. The Guest was again prayed to eat after this dish was served and he however said that he cannot partake of it alone and some devotee of the Lord should also sit with Him and he should be brought. Our Saint was troubled that even this cause may delay the dinner and going out and running hither and thither, he could find none and approaching Him again he said that he could find none and if it so pleased Him he was at least one who seeing others wear the sacred ashes had also worn the same. Our Lord replied that there was none like him who had worn the Vibhuti, and so bade him sit and ordered the wife to put a separate plate of leaf for him and serve the food. On this being done, our Saint would proceed to eat first to persuade the Guest to eat, when the latter told him to desist and wondered how he who ate every day proceeded to eat before Him who fasted

for six months and asked him to call his son if he had one. Our Saint saying that he would be of no use then. He said unless he was sent for He would not eat and so bade him go out and call him. Our saint knew nothing then, except that his Guest must eat somehow, and as God's grace impelled, he went out with his beloved spouse, they called out together, "O, my child come, Oh, my jewel, Oh, Sirala, come fast. Siva's devotee is calling you to share His dinner"! By the grace of God, the child ran to them as though he was coming from school, the mother took him and embraced and pressed him to her bosom and handed him to his father, who felt glad that at least now the devotee of the God, who burnt up the Tiripura would be fed. Entering the house with the child, to their surprise and sorrow, they did not see the Bhairava, and the dishes had vanished! They fell down to the ground sorely troubled and rising up they ran hither and thither in search of the Ascetic and could nowhere find Him. Then our Lord with the Mountain Maid and their gracious Son appeared on the firmament, riding

on the white bull, to the chant of Rishis and Devas and Yogis, and before our Saint and his loving spouse, who had prepared the dinner, and his eye of grace looked on them. This hero, who conquered even in love, and his partner and their child saw the Gracious Presence and their heart and bones melting into love, were exalted in joy, and they fell down and rose and sang God's praise. And thus God's Grace was manifested and our great Saint together with his wife and maid were received into the Great Bliss of joyful Union with our Lord and His consort and beloved Kumarar.

THE TEACHINGS

Thus ends this strange sacred history unique in so many respects. Yet with all, it is the most popular story of this whole Puranam; that of Nandanar and Kannappar only coming next. It is the first favourite with all story-tellers, dramatists, and Bhagavatars, and popular not only in this Presidency but in the sister presidency of Bombay. We have seen Poona Dramatic Companies perform this story with great spirit, and the late Tanjore Govindasami

Rao's acting of it was very moving and sublime. The Poona Brahmins call our Saint Siyala Maharaja, and observe an annual feast in his honor. And this is due evidently, apart from Virasaiva influences, to his historic connection with that Presidency in having invaded what was then Chalukyan Territory and reduced Vatapi, the modern Badami. This one fact mentioned in the Periapuranam and referred to in the Hymn of Saint Tiru Jnanasambanthar, furnished the single clue to the date of our great Acharya.

Next to its popularity and its historic importance, we have to unravel the strange mystery imbedded in this tale. But to the seers versed in our Siddhanta Philosophy and all true religion, this will no longer appear strange and mysterious. As we have repeatedly pointed out the burden of this whole Puranam may be summed up in two words LOVE AND SACRIFICE. Without sacrifice, no real love. can be begotten and sacrifice is the seal and symbol of love. Even in the ordinary love affairs of this world, strong love has brought about this sacrifice, a husband for his wife, a

wife for her husband, parents for their child and brother for his brother, and a friend for his friend. If it be the highest teaching of religion that one should give up the world and all its allurements and all that we consider dear and near, and one is enjoined to follow Christ, giving up his wife, a wife her husband etc., how can one cavil, when one sacrifices his child at the Altar of God. There is another aspect of this love and sacrifice which has also to be noted, and which is not inconsistent with one's loving his wife or child. When one has so far gained in detaching himself from the world, he looks upon his wife or child as the veriest Gift of God, nay as the veriest Embodiment of God, and then one loves the wife or the child, not because they are his wife or child but because of the Light of the Supreme in them.

- The idea of Sacrifice is common to all religions but this has been refined and carried to its utmost height in the Siddhanta and its Symbolism. The Bhairava asked for a Pasu, and Nara Pasu in Sacrifice. This is the Pasu-tvam, the animal portion of our self which we are asked to Sacrifice at God's Altar, Balipitam

and this becomes the food, Naivetyam of God. What is poison to us is what is wanted to be parted from us and offered to the most High as delightful food. This is the true meaning of the Lord drinking the Poison as food. Our dark sin which pursued relentlessly and burnt us up we are asked to give up in silent acknowledgment of our own impotency and the great might of God to save us, and submit our will to His. This poison can have no effect on Him but showers on us Bliss unspeakable, as a result of this rendition. This is the real atonement. A Vedic Rishi feels stung by a serpent and feels the Poison running in his veins, and he lifts it to the Sun, when it is at once turned into Ambrosia. In our Sacred *Tirumurai*, one of the Saint brings out the same idea.

“O Thou Supreme with death dealing Trident of justice ;

Thy Braid overflows with water and showers Fire ;

Thy Throat shows the Poison and showers Ambrosia ;

Thy Form of terrific Fire is mellow as a leaf ;

Thy foot crushes the Asura and shames the Lotus ;

Thy Supreme Nature we are unable to discern.”

We must, however, here protest against one great mistake made in staging this History. The tableau presenting our Saint and his wife and the child together before the dire operation, a long colloquy is made to ensue between the trio. The parents shed copious tears and the child consoles them. This is at once foreign to the genius of the great history. Its very essence consists in the joyful way this sacrifice is made. They are beside themselves with joy, a condition near unto madness, it may be, in Para-avasta, in the most exalted kind of Spiritual Joy. And our Poet brings this out prominently from beginning to the end. Praise be to the Great Sirutthondar."



GANANATHA NAYANAR

—:0:—

Saint Gananathar was the Chief of the Brahmins dwelling in the city of Sirkali, which floated at the great deluge, and was famous as the birth place of the Divine Child, who drank the milk from off the hands of the Mother of the Worlds. He carried out in love and in due form all his services to Sri Thoniyyappar, and instructed them, who came to him with a desire to worship God in their sacred duties. Each, he taught, according to his maturity and bent of mind, to tend flower gardens, or cull the flowers and make them into garlands, or to prepare sandal etc., for abhisheka, or to sweep and wash the Temple or to light the lamps, or to copy the Tamil Veda or recite the same. Each he instructed and stimulated in their spiritual exercises and excel in their love to God and lived a life of love and truth as a house-holder and did service to mankind in general. As his love to Saint Jnana Sambanthar increased daily, he worshipped him with flowers, and other accessories thrice a day and

waxed strong in faith and joy. He worshipped God and His son and instructed men in their religious duties, leading them to the right and by such means, he gained the seat of the Lord of Kailasam where he was made a chief of the Ganas, hence his name Gananathar.

Hail, All Hail to Gananathar.



KURRUVA NAYANAR

—:o:—

The Lord of Kalanthai was a great hero having conquered his enemies by the might of his arm but his fame did not rest on this alone. He was equally devoted to God and his servants and his tongue never ceased to utter God's name. Assisted by divine grace, he brought the whole land under his subjection and gathered round him a strong army of infantry, horsemen, elephantmen and carmen, and thus became a terror to his enemies. In various battles which he won, he was crowned with *Tumbai* and *Vagai* garlands, and the whole land came under his sway, but being a commander, he could not bear a Royal crown. He therefore prayed to the Andhanars of Tillai to crown him but they refused saying that they cannot crown him as he was not descended of the old Chola Kings, and being afraid of his anger, they all left for the Chera country, leaving only one

family in Chidambaram to perform God's service.*

Being greatly depressed by their refusal and desertion, the King spent the night in deep meditation of the Kunjithapatham, and prayed that the Holy Foot of Sri Nataraja should become his crown. God accordingly granted him who even in his sleep had not let go his hold of God, his prayer and with His Foot as his crown he reigned over the land and protected his subjects.

He carried out the worship of God in all His temples to the joy of his people, and after a long reign, praised even by the Devas, he was received into the Great Joy of God.

. IN PRAISE OF ST. SUNDARAR

He who commanded the service of Kapardin, in whose braids the moon and serpent forget their enmity, as a messenger to Paravaiyar, whose sweet voice excelled honey and

- * May this possibly account for the Namburis of Malabar. They resemble the Tillai Dikshadars in their externals in wearing the top knot and they officiate in all the Malabar temples, and their Namburi is clearly derived from the Tamil word Nambi, a common appellation of the Dikshadars.

music, and He on that day commanded the service of the hump-backed and blind men, and removed their infirmities, His Lotus Foot I praise, and get rid of my own hump of the past seven births.



THE HISTORY OF POYYADIMAI- YILLATHA PULAVAR*

—:0:—

“ The poets whose homage to God was flawless”, these are the Saints who are chosen for praise in this chapter. According to some, Pulavar with the honorific plural suffix means Saint Manikkavachakar, but that is not the opinion of Saint Sekkilar will be manifest from his narrative which is as follows.

They gained the strong conviction that the truth gained by all true poetry, and the view of all good books is the knowledge of God, the only truth, the true Sat, and as such they became the humble servants of the Blue-throated Deity. These are famous as Poyyadi-maiyillatha Pulavar. In their poetry they

Note—Here begins the eighth Sarukkam called the Poyyadi-Maiyillatha Pulavar Sarukkam. The first Puranam here describes the second group of Saints who are “ The poets whose homage to God was flawless ” which is the meaning of the heading of this puranam or story.

will never voice forth the praise of any but that of Kapardin in whose braids the serpents swarmed, and as such they were the true servants of God. Who can do sufficient justice to their greatness?

THE TEACHINGS

All arts can be turned to good as well as ignoble purposes but the true scope of Poetry is strictly religious and must elevate the mind, and exalt it to the highest spiritual pitch and those who have heard even a few hymns of Devaram and Tiruvachakam cannot deny their power.



PUGALCHOLA NAYANAR

—:0:—

Uraiyur, now a suburb of Trichinopoly, was the most ancient capital of the Chola dynasty and the Poet celebrates its greatness in a number of verses. In verse 4, there is a slesha (pun upon the word) on the dark clouds and the elephant herds and in verse 5, on the foaming sea and the frothing steeds. The flowery deep ditch round the fort was like the sea surrounding the Devaloka with intent to get back its treasures, which the Gods had abstracted from it of yore. Its towers extended to the clouds and the tree tops approached the solar regions; its streets swarmed with cars, and their beauty spread in all the quarters; and damsels decked their person with sweet flowers; such was the greatness of this city that it is not possible to describe it.

In this city dwelt and reigned the king, whose ancestor was the great Anapaya, who

beautified Chidambaram, our poet's patron and whose name was Pugal Chola (the famous Chola). He brought the whole land under his single umbrella, and by the might of his arm, he made all other kings his vassals, and yet his sceptre was wielded in justice, and the sacred Saiva Religion grew under his rule. He saw that the services in all the loved Temples of God were conducted properly, and his charity was bestowed on all in a discriminate manner, and he guided himself in his rule by the dictates of the true religion. While so, he repaired to Karur, another of his capitals, and therein great state received his vassals of the West Coast and received their tributes in gold and pearls and elephants. Rewarding them suitably, he wished to be informed duly if there were any among his vassals, who proved disobedient.

While he bided there, it was that the incident of Sivagamiyandar and the elephant took place which is related in the history of Saint Eripatta Nayanar. And by his piety on this occasion he had gained renown.

A short while after this, his ministers brought word that Adigan of the Malaiya Nadu,

had not brought his tribute; the king at once ordered an expedition to reduce him and his hill fortress. The expedition returned victorious, Adigan having fled, and brought with them vast wealth and the heads of the slain. While viewing the spoils, the king who was as the life of his subjects, perceived that one of the slain wore braided hair. He shuddered at the sight, his mind was troubled, and in great trepidation he brought it out and seeing the braid clearly, his eyes rained down tears. He felt sore that what he had calculated on as a noble victory had just turned out the reverse. His boasted rule of Religion was indeed a sham. The person wearing the braid was indeed a great servant of God and he had really secured divine favour, while how could he still continue to rule after he had this head severed and brought to him. If he did so, he would only bear shame his whole life. He resolved upon one thing, and bade his ministers crown his son as king to carry on his service to Sri Natarajar, after overcoming their reluctance. He ordered a huge fire to be built up and smearing his person with holy ashes

and bearing the severed head on a plate of gold and carrying it on his own head, and uttering the sacred Panchaksharam, and going round the fire he descended into it. The Gods rained down flowers, and the heavenly music sounded and our Saint reached the tinkling Foot of Lord Natarajar, and thus gained his heart's desire and the praise of the world. Though the greatest and mightiest monarch, he fulfilled the highest ideal of his position, as the very life of his people. His people's joys and sorrows were his own, and any infraction of his duty, however unwillingly it was committed, he atoned with his very life. A noble example indeed of the highest devotion to duty of a king. Hail, Hail to Saint Pugalchola.



NARASINGA MUNAIYARAIYA NAYANAR

—:0:—

Our Saint ruled over Tirumunaippadi Nadu and would be remembered as the Foster Parent of Our Saint Nambi Arurar. He ruled justly and wisely and held Bhutisadhana in the highest Reverence. He spent largely in services to the Temples and conducted special services on Tiruvadirai day and to every devotee on that day he gave a donation of 100 gold pieces after feasting them sumptuously.

On one such occasion, he saw one wearing holy ashes approaching him but his demeanour showed that he was wanton debauchee. He saw the by-standers observe his condition and avoid his shameful contact. He himself left his seat and went up to him, held out his hand and led him to his seat, made much of him, gave him twice 100 pieces and with sweet words and humble worship he gave him leave.

THE TEACHINGS

He thereby taught to the world that even if one possess no virtue if he wear the holy ashes

he was not to be despised, otherwise they would not merit well. O! these white-washed hypocrites, how many are there such in the world? If they were pure, would they not show their pity instead of sneering at them and despising them and showing their horror of sin and shame? And instead of avoiding them and sending them to their doom, would they not give them their helping hand and by their love and sympathy lead them right and redeem them? There is no man so lost to all sense that does not possess one redeeming feature which if availed of in time may lead to his great salvation. The world cannot be saved by hate but by love alone. O! my Lord of Tirumunaippadi, how my heart melts in love of Thee.



ATIPATTA NAYANAR

—:0:—

The seaport town of Negapatam was a flower in the Kalpaka branch of Ponni Nadu of the Cholas. Its wealth and trade and beauty were immense and of this, its produce from the sea was no small item. They who practised this industry lived in hamlets of their own. Of these fisherfolk, the Chief was called the Atipattar (The great Baktha). Though he practised this sinful calling, he carried out duly one vow of his. Every day as he hauled up his net, he picked out the biggest fish in it and let it into the water in the name of God. And even if he succeeded in a day in catching only one fish he let it off in God's name. And it so chanced by the grace of God that he had a succession of unsuccessful days, and his resources dried up in consequence; and he was facing starvation. And yet he would not give up his vow. And lo, one day his net caught a heavy thing and what seemed like

fish, but was really one of gold and embedded with flashing diamonds and rubies. His men brought it to him, and he viewed it and saw it was of the form of a fish and therefore a fit offering to God and cast it back into the roaring waves. "The whole world looks upon gold as its support," is the famous saying (*Vide Kural*, Chapter V).

And from this faulty attachment, our True Seer was severed. And our Lord appeared in grace, and made him His own, while the flowers rained from above and the five kinds of Divine Music sounded in the skies. Though so lowly born his mind was as great as his devotion to God. *



KALIKKAMBA NAYANAR

—:o:—

Pennagadam was a flourishing town of the West, where the inhabitants observed faithfully their old traditions and carried out their daily duties in justice and good faith. And our Saint was born in an old family of merchants and his mind grew as it dwelt on the Foot of God in love. He had no hold other than this same Foot, and carried out his service to God in the adjoining temple of Tirutthunganaimadam. He lavished his vast riches in feeding God's servants. He would receive them, wash their feet and spread before them dainty dishes. One day, he was engaged in washing their feet in succession while his wife poured out the water from a vessel and he proceeded to wash the feet of one in holy guise, though the latter was at one time, his servant whom he had sent away in disgrace. His wife remembered him too and delayed pouring the water. Our saint noted his wife's hesitation

and the cause thereof, hesitated not an instant and taking off the water pot, drew his knife and cut off her head. He then took up the water pot himself poured out the water and washed his servant's feet and fed all the devotees himself. Continuing in such loving service, he was soon united to the Foot of God.

THE TEACHINGS

What a lesson in humility do we learn from this, and is this not greater than worshipping the feet of one's disciples?



KALIYA NAYANAR

—:O:—

Tiruvorriyur is situated in the Thondai Nadu and the poet does full justice to this seaside place, with its groves and gardens, broad streets and high buildings, its mantapams and mutts. In the *Sakkarapadi* (inhabited by the oil mongers), there lived Kaliyanar, an oil monger by birth, of vast riches and untiring devotion to God. He made it his service to light innumerable lamps in the temple at Tiruvorriyur, both day and night and in this service he continued. Our Lord wished to manifest His love to the world and his vast wealth soon vanished on earth, even as his twin karma. But our Saint desisted not from his service. He bought oil from others and sold it in retail and from the profit so earned he carried on this service. But this source of income soon failed and he was driven to the necessity of engaging himself as a cooly in driving the oil mill. Owing to competition, he lost his place. However he

sold his very house, the last that remained of all his property and with the sale proceeds he carried on the service for some time. When this money was exhausted, he took his own wife round the town and cried her for sale, but there was no one to buy her. Dejected beyond endurance he repaired to the temple and vowed that when the last light went out, his own life would also go. So waiting for the moment, he put the lamps and the wicks and prepared to fill them with his own blood instead of oil, he raised the knife to cut his own throat, when lo! the Lord appeared and held his hand and showed him Grace, and took him into his own Abode for ever.



SATTI NAYANAR

—:0:—

Varinjiyur in Kaveri Nadu as an ancient town in the Chola Empire in which the king had put up a pillar of victory. There lived then one Satti Nayanar who was descended from an old Vellala family and whose heart was altogether bent towards God. His name he obtained by the fact of his great prowess in cutting out the tongue of any one who would despise God's servants with his weapon. If he heard anybody revile them, he would draw out their tongue with a pair of tongs and cut it out with his knife; and in such a great service he excelled. And finally for his heroic Bakthi, he was rewarded by the God of Gods by inviting him to His Lotus Feet.

This phase of Bhakti, is similar to that in the history of Eripatta Nayanar.



AIYADIGAL KADAVARKON NAYANAR

—:0:—

The Saint belonged to the ancient Pallava dynasty and reigned at Kanchi as stated by the poet in stanza 7. He conquered all his enemies and was also a great patron of letters, both Sanskrit and Tamil, and what was more he was himself a poet. He was a great devotee of God and became soon convinced that the sovereignty was a great curse and so undertook a pilgrimage to all God's shrines. In each shrine he visited, he composed a verse in Venba metre, in each of which he points out the transitoriness of this immense existence and its joys and triumphs and appeals to a higher life and to the need for worshipping God in truth and love. This collection of his verses finds a place in the eleventh *Tirumurai* and next to Karaikkal Ammayar's poems. In such pious service he spent his days and in due time was received by the Lord in His Abode. The fact that he chose the Venba metre shows that he must

have belonged to an age even before Saint Jnanasambanthar and to the pre-historic days. We find one Ayyanna mentioned as the grand-father of whose date was given as 877-911 A.D. (*Vide* p. 86 Duff's Chronology of India.) We subjoin a translation of one of his verses.

IN PRAISE OF SAINT NAMBI ARURAR

My heart is rid of cloud. The dark throated
God,

The gold He gave which thrown in river
wide,

In tank of fertile Arur praised by worlds
He found. He did lift me from pit of Sin.



KANAMPULLA NAYANAR *

—:0:—

Irukkuvelur situated on the southern bank of Vellar was a populous and flourishing town, and in this town lived our Saint, of an ancient and immensely wealthy family, incomparable in his qualities of head and heart, and who however regarded the Foot of God as true Wealth. Acting on this conviction he took upon himself to the lighting service in the Temples of God and in this service his wealth was all spent. He then repaired to the Holy Chidambaram and worshipped Lord Natarajar there. He began to sell even the little he possessed and with the proceeds thereof, he began the lighting service in the adjoining temple Tirupulisvaram where the Sage Vyagrapadar had performed Tapas of old. When this source failed and ashamed to beg, he was prepared to earn the money by toil and went

*Note—Here begins the ninth Sarukkam called the Karaikkandan Sarukkam.

out to cut grass and sell the same. With the money so earned, he continued the service and one day he could find no sale for the grass. His heart did not fail. He made them into small torches and burnt them and when they were soon exhausted he held up his own head of hair to the flame and set it ablaze, his bones melting into love. In this way he burnt up his *pasa* as well, and was received by the Lord in His Sivaloka.

(Kanam in Sanskrit means Cummin seed plant.)



KARI NAYANAR

—:o:—

He was a Brahmin of Tirukkadavur, one of the Ashtaviratta Sthalam, and connected with the great Markandeya Rishi. He was a great poet and composed a poem in Kovai style excelling in clear diction and hidden meanings. He had the honour of reciting it before the **Three Great Tamil Kings*** elucidating the same with his own commentary and was rewarded by them with untold riches. Being a true Baktha of the Lord adorned with serpent and crescent moon, he spent his wealth in building temples and feeding God's servants with all due reverence and love. With thought of God ever in his mind he deserved God's grace and in due time reached Kailasam even with his body.

THE TEACHINGS

No such work as Karikovai has come down to our times, but the most famous work

* Chera, Chola and Pandiya Kings.

of the kind is the Tiruchchirrambala Kovai of Manikkavachakar. It treats of *Ahapporul* i. e. of every shade of love exalted and spiritualised. There is a parallelism between the love of man and woman and that between God and man. It does not consist so much in its quantity or intensity but in the mode of manifestation or the psychological reciprocity of the two loves. In the actual realization there is a complete merger of the two minds, made possible by the nature of the soul, namely that it becomes one with whatever it is attached to and this realisation is the supreme Advaita union and Anubhava. Sage Tayumanavar says :

“Of that Advaita anubhava (experience) the endless Vedas cry out they have not understood even still.” Compare Tayumanavar’s “Revel in Bliss” as an exquisite example of this manifestation of love to God.



NINRASIR NEDUMARA NAYANAR

—:0:—

The great Pandiyan King who before he was saved by the great Jnanasambanthar was known as Kun Pandiyan. It was at the entreaty of his devoted consort Queen Mangaiyarkkarasi herself, the daughter of Chola King that the Divine Child visited the Pandi Nadu and vanquished the heterodox Jains by his miraculous powers. After his reconversion to Saivaism, he became famous all the world over and his fortune also increased considerably. He was victorious over all his enemies and won a great battle at Nelveli. His was troublous times. Not only were the rival creeds fighting each other for supremacy, but the political atmosphere was most keenly disturbed. All the three Tamil Kings together with the King of Ceylon were not only fighting among themselves but the Chalukyas and other northern dynasties were also in conflict with them with varying successes. Our poet says he was victorious over his northern enemies and he spent his long reign in ruling his people well and in religious services and received finally God's great Grace.

VAYILAR NAYANAR

—:0:—

Mylapore is situated in the old Thondai Nadu and even as we see it now, our poet's description of this seaside town with its wealth and education and lofty palaces and lovely gardens, does in no way belie it. But possibly, even then as now, there was a section of the community relying upon their superior birth and Vedic lore looked down upon the lower classes, and would not credit them with much intelligence much less that could possess real wisdom or jnanam. But there is not much merit in birth or education if they cannot lead you to the worship of the great intelligence in all love and spirit. Our Saint though of the lowliest birth, a sudra, proved that the highest jnanam was possible to be attained by true devotion. And his was internal worship. With unceasing thought, he established a temple of God in his own heart, and lit there the bright lamp of discrimination whereby he learnt what

was his true kith and kin, and he bathed this Image with undying bliss and fed him with his love and performed archanai. This internal worship of the Lord he practised for a long while, with undying love in the Mano Alaya, attained Monolaya and reached the great Refuge of Sacred Foot.



MUNAI ADUVAR NAYANAR

—:0:—

The poet bestows great praise indeed when he says that in the fields of Tiruneedur of Ponni Nadu, the very sod turned up by the ploughman smelled sweet with the honey flooding them from its groves. In such a town was our Saint born of a high Vellala family, and excelled in his service to God and His devoted servants. He was, however, by profession a duellist, and if any one appealed to him to serve his honour, he would conscientiously stipulate for a particular reward, and accepting it, he would vanquish their enemies. With profit thus earned, he fed God's servants with all sweet and dainty dishes. In such devoted service, he spent his days, and finally reached Sivaloka.



KALARCHINGA NAYANAR *

—:0:—

Our Saint was of the ancient race *of Pallava Kings, and naught but the thought of God ever filled his mind. However he did his duty as King and extended his sway in the north and protected his subjects from external and internal enemies and led them in the path of Dharma. He visited various shrines of God and performed loving service therein, and finally visited Tiruvarur with all his family and retinue. While going round the temple, and noting all its interesting features, his royal consort came near to the Mantap where flower garlands were tied, picked up a fresh-blown flower and smelt it. Saint Seruttunai Nayanar who observed this sacrilege, ran up and cut off the queen's nose,

* *Note*—Here begins the tenth Sarukkam called the Kadal Sulntha Sarukkam which consists of four more histories which are reserved for the Part II of this publication.

and she fell down and rolled like a peacock and cried. The King after worshipping God came up to her and observing her horrible condition, asked as to who had done this cruel deed without any fear. Saint Seruttunnaiyar who stood by explained the circumstances and our King took up his sword, saying that the fit punishment for the sacrilege was to cut off the hand that picked the flower first and cut off her hand too. This greatly evoked the acclamations of the Bakthas, on earth and of the Gods in heaven who rained down fragrant flowers. Performing such rare deeds in God's service, he reigned long and by Great grace, he was received into the Foot of God.



THE HOLY MEN BEYOND *

—:0:—

The anointed of God, who dwelt in regions beyond the three Tamil Kingdoms, those who lived before and after the times of the saints mentioned in *Tiruttondattogai* these are the true Bakthas of God whom he describes in this chapter.

IN PRAISE OF SAINT NAMBI ARURAR

While passing Tirumuruganpundi with the treasures given by his friend, he was robbed of the whole by Sivaganas appearing as thieves, and thereby he secured his endless Bliss. To praise his feet, Oh, what merit had I acquired in my past births?

**Note*—This is the ninth group of devotees who reached the Foot of God. The history of this group and other six groups form the eleventh Sarukkum called Pattaraippanivar Sarukkum. The other groups will be published in Part II. The next is the Manniya Sir Sarukkum which is given here in full. The last is the Vellamai Sarukkum which is the closing chapter of the history of Saint Sundarar which is reserved for Part II.



PUSALAR NAYANAR

—:o:—

We now proceed to give the History of Saint Pusalar, who not finding the wealth required for building a Temple, built one in his own heart. He was born in Tiruvarur of a Brahmin family and his mind ever dwelt on God, his heart ever gushed in love and he was fully learned in the truths of the Vedas. He was firmly attached to God and to the service of His devotees, and he entertained a great desire to build a Temple to God. He sought every means to find the money required for this purpose and was unsuccessful. Nothing daunted he resolved to erect a sacred edifice in his own heart. He gathered all the wealth in his own heart and choosing a day for laying the foundation stone, he began the edifice and it slowly rose day after day. The foundations, the building, the top and stupi were all finished, and then the prakarams with the walls and tank and well etc., were also

completed and the day approached for the final consecration and abhisheka.

About this time, the King of the Pallavas had begun a Temple at Kachchi Karrali, the famous Kailasanathar Temple and had expended all his vast wealth on its construction. The day also approached for its consecration and on the night of the day previous our Lord appeared to the King in his dream and told him as He was to enter the Temple dedicated by Saint Pusalar on the next day, he must defer his own consecration to a day later.

The Lord having thus willed to manifest His devotee's greatness, the King prepared to visit Tiruninravur on that day and bow before the holy man, whose service was acceptable to God. Arriving at the place, he enquired of the Brahmins there as to where the Temple was which was erected by our Saint, and they replied there was no such Temple. He assembled the Brahmins and wanted to know who Pusalar was but he was not there and they said he was a holy Brahmin of that place. He felt it was disrespectful to send for him and so he

himself approached our Saint's abode and prostrating before him, he told him that under the orders of God, he had gone there to visit the Shrine built by him and worship him, inasmuch as that was the day of the consecration. Our Saint was considerably bewildered and felt how great was God's grace to his poor self and told the king of all the details of his construction of a Temple in his own heart. The King on hearing this felt how great was the Saint and praising and bowing before him, he went back to his capital. The Saint duly consecrated his Mano Alaya and worshipping God for long, he entered the Blissful Abode of Lord Natarajar.



MANGAIYARKKARASIYAR

—:0:—

The Queen of all women, our Goddess, the daughter of the Chola race, the Lady of the jewelled wrists of great virtue, the Goddess, residing on the Lotus Flower, the Goddess, who removed the reproach from the race of Pandiyans, she who with the grace of our Lord of Sirkali, rid the Tamil land of its great danger, and spread the light of the holy ashes, those who praise her, their feet, we praise indeed.

How can we praise her, who deserved to be praised by the jewel of Brahmins, the King of Pukali, in the glorious hymns of wisdom which poured from his mouth? She was the true Saiva helpmate of her Sovereign Lord Nedumaran, King of Pandi, and continued long as such, and together with him received the final grace of God.

We praise the feet of her who not only brought lustre to the race of Chola Kings from which she was descended but added great lustre to the King of Pandi to whom she was united in wedlock.

NESA NAYANAR

—:0:—

Kampili was a very ancient city filled with palaces towering to the skies, and by people, who excelled in their conduct and their truthfulness. In this town and of an ancient Saliya family (weaver class) was born our Saint. He excelled not only in his family profession but in his loving devotion to God and his servants. All activities of his mind were directed to the Foot of Hara, the activities of his mouth were directed to uttering the Sacred *Panchaksharam*, and the activities of his body were directed to the service of God's servants, in that he wove clothes and pieces for their wear. He made such cloths and gave them as gifts to God's Devotees, and in such loving service and worship of their feet, he spent his days and finally reached the shade of Hara's Foot.

KOCHCHENGOT CHOLA NAYANAR

—:0:—

There was a forest near Chandira Thirtham filled with the waters of the famous Kaveri flowing in the land of the Cholas descended from the Solar King Sibi Chakravarthi, who cut out his flesh to equal the weight of a dove. In this forest under the shade of a white Jamboo tree, our Lord appeared, and a white elephant discovering him began a daily worship of him, with water and fragrant flowers. Hence this shrine was called Tiruvanaikka (the forest of the elephant). About this time a spider also took to the worship of the same God and as part of its service it spread a net over him with its threads, to prevent the leaves from falling over the sacred person. The elephant, who discovered this, thought it was unclean and destroyed the net with its trunk and carried out its worship. The spider spun its net again and again and it was again and again removed by the

elephant. The spider angered at this entered the trunk of the elephant and bit it, and the elephant unable to bear it, struck its trunk on the earth and fell down dead together with the spider.

The Lord rewarded the elephant for its great piety, and the spider was made to be born in the Royal family in this wise. The King of the Cholas called Subha Deva and his queen Kamalavathi had no children and so were doing tapas in Chidambaram. The Lord was pleased at their service and granted the boon. The King that was the spider in its former birth entered the Queen's womb and the day of birth was approaching. On the astrologers being consulted, they declared that if the delivery be delayed by one Indian hour, the child will in due time become a Sovereign of the three worlds. The Queen coveting this fortune for her child, ordered that she should be hung by her feet till the hour approached. This was done and she was let loose at the precise hour and she gave birth to a beautiful child, whom she called out "Oh, my Kochchenkannan, my King with red eyes."

Immediately after she gave birth she breathed her last. Subhadeva brought up the child with all affection and crowned him King when he came of age, retired from the world and after doing great tapas reached Sivaloka.

Our young King, who attained knowledge of his previous birth, and his ministration in Tiruvanaikka, began the building of this Temple, and endowed it with his great wealth. He built other shrines in various places and endowed them also suitably. He repaired to Chidambaram and worshipping God there, he built the houses for the Tillai Andhanars also. In such service, and in protecting his subjects and holding undiminished sway over the land our Saint reached our Lord's Lotus Foot.



TIRUNILAKANTA YALPANA NAYANAR

—:o:—

Full reference is made to this Saint and his greatness in connection with the history of Saint Jnanasambanthar, as also in the history of Saint Tiruñilanakka Nayanar. Though of the lowliest birth, he was received by the Highest Brahmins into their houses and respected. In the present Chapter, his reception by God Himself is alluded to. He was born in Erukkatthampuliyur and he made it his service to sing God's praise on his Veena. He travelled round all the Chola Nadu, in visiting the various shrines and repaired to Madura. He stood in front of the temple, and sang in the sweetest tunes God's praise. Our Lord of Alavay was much pleased and under the orders of God, communicated to the Holy Brahmins of the Temple in their sleep. They went up to our Saint and took him inside and in front of our God he was made to sing. He sang sweetly

how our Lord burnt the Tiripuram and rode in the Divine Car and how he tore the Elephant and burnt Manmathan, how he was difficult of approach to Brahma and Vishnu and was easily accessible to His Devotees. Our Lord was highly pleased and there rose a voice in the air that a golden seat should be provided for the *Yal* (Veena) otherwise its power would be lost by contact with the cold earth. The Holy Men provided at once a Peetam of Gold for the Veena and the performance was continued. After dwelling there for some time, he visited other shrines and he went up to Tiruvarur. Our God provided a new approach to him in the north and entering by this gate, he worshipped the Lord in song and music. Travelling northward he went to Sirkali and singing before our Lord Sambanthar, he became his lifelong companion and set all the Devara Hymns to his music. And along with his master he entered the great Light on the marriage day at Achchapuram.



SADAIYA NAYANAR

—:o:—

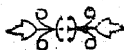
Our Saint begot for the salvation of the world, our Nambi Arurar, who had the fortune of getting our God Himself as his friend and of making Him go as a messenger to his beloved spouse, and who was the incomparable friend of Saint Seraman Perumal. What more can be said of his greatness? (Sadaiya Nayanar is the father of Saint Sundarar *alias* Nambi Arurar.)



ISAI JNANIYAR

—:o:—

She was the fortunate wife of Sadayainar of endless glory, and was the mother of our Nambi, and how can I sing her praise with my frail words, a task impossible even to the greatest?



TIRUKKURIPPUTTONDA NAYANAR*

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As this is the first history of a saint in the Tondai-Nadu to which our Author himself belonged, the greater part of this long chapter is occupied with a description of the country, its scenic beauties as found in the different kinds of *Tinai*, its sacred character, the achievements of heroes and saints, and the author lovingly depicts all these in great details, and one is led to suspect his great partiality for his own country above all others. And this furnishes one of the strong arguments in favour of the theory that the Tamil *Periyapuranam* is the original and not the Sanskrit *Upamanya Bhakta Vilasa*, which reproduces all these details. It will be impossible to reproduce all the beauties of the scenery in this summary and we will just touch here and there in the descriptive details and then proceed with the story.

* This history belongs to the Fourth Sarukkam and it is given here as it is of general interest; though it was originally intended to be included in Part II.

To begin with, this *Tondai-Nadu* is intimately connected with the sacred history of the Mother of the worlds, *Siva Sakti* who incarnating as *Sri Kamatchi* at Kanchi, performed *Tapas* and worshipped The Only One without a second. The country was famous for its good people, and was the seat of Vellalas whose veracity was tested and proved by seventy of them entering the fire and giving up their lives in fulfilment of their word given to a merchant of Palayanur. That Tondaimandalam was very early settled by Vellalas and they held a high position in society and practically owned the soil will be evident from the papers on Mirasi rights published by Government. Tondaimandala Vellalars have now spread all through the Southern Districts, and Ariyanayaga Mudaliar the Great General of the Vizianagar King was one of them. The veracity of Vellalas is proverbial and is praised in *Pattinappalai*, one of the *Pattuppattu*. Saint Umapathi Sivacharya refers to the story of the Palayanur merchant in Verse 15 of Saint Sekkilar's life, and declares that it is not possible for him to

measure adequately the greatness of Vellalas. Tradition also connects this *Tondai-Nadu*, with the country of the *Cheras*, and the warriors of these countries claim each others as brothers-in-law.

The famous hill-shrine of Srikalahasti, connected with Saint Kannāppar, and Tiruvidai-churam and Tirukalukunram are situated in the Kurinji portion of this *Nadu*. Where Forest (Mullai) and Hill (Kurinji) met, there were situated temples dedicated to *Kali*. In the *Mullai* portion, are situated the shrines of Tirumullaivayil and Tiruvural. Tiruvallam, Tirumarperu and Tirupasur are situated in the *Marutham* land; and in the *Neythal* (Seaboard), Tiruvorriyur, Mylapur, Tiruvanmiyur and others. The famous Palar * waters this beautiful country and the dry bed of the river yields streams of water when dug, as the mother's

* Hundreds of irrigation channels are taken from the apparently dry bed of the river and the perennial waters irrigate whole villages. In the famous *Navalac* garden situated between Ranipet and Aroot there is dug a channel which with its beautiful limpid waters irrigates two villages; and the pool from which the stream rises is situated within a short distance of the river bank.

breast yields to the touch of the child. The river Palar is described and extolled at greater length by Sivajnanayogi in his *Kanchipuranam*.

In this famous country is situated the far-famed City of Kanchi, which as the poet says, was in existence from eternity. The great poet Kalidasa had spoken of it as *Nagareshu Kanchi*. It formed the capital at different times of various dynasties, the Pallavas, Chalukyas, Cholas and Andhras, and each dynasty had vied with each other in enriching it with myriads of temples. It was a beautiful scene that we witnessed when on Tiruvadirai day, any number of *Natarajas* were taken out in procession in the broad streets of Conjeevaram. And this famous city was connected with the love story of Sri Kamatchi as already said, and the Author gives here a short *resume* of this sacred History.

Once on a time, Mahadevi heard from Our Lord all the truths of the sacred Agamas and came to the conclusion that our Lord loved nothing better than true worship according to the rules of the Agamas. She desired herself to perform this worship and the Lord

understanding Her wish, told Her to go to Kanchi in the South and perform the worship. She repaired at once to this sacred spot with Her attendants, and with all the articles of Puja collected, she commenced Her Tapas. With all Her heart centred on seeing God and Her lips always muttering the Panchaksharam, and her hands always uplifted, would Her loving consort delay to show His Presence? He appeared accordingly under the mango tree. She bowed low, Her heart swelling with love, and commenced the sacred Archana with flowers and limpid water and *Dipam* and *Dupam*. This She continued to perform for many a day and our Lord was highly pleased and was intent on a little sport (Lila). While She was doing the Puja, the river Kamba, rose in great flood and approached Her and appeared to submerge the Sivalinga and Herself. She would not bear it, and She embraced our Lord, as though She would protect Him from being carried away by the flood and She embraced Him so lovingly and tightly that the Lord softened to Her touch, and Her bosom and Her bracelets became imprint-

ed on His Person. And lo! the waters subsided and the Hosts of Heaven became softened in their hearts and rained down flowers.

Our Lord desired our Mother to ask for any boon She wanted and She prayed that Her Puja which was stopped by the flood might be allowed to be completed and our Lord smiled and answered that Her worship of Him would never know any end. She prayed then that He might be pleased to accept Her unchanging worship always and allow Her to establish and cherish Dharma and that all sinners living in Kanchi except those who blaspheme Him should be saved. The Lord granted Her wish and for the performance of Dharma, He gave Her two measures of paddy. With this She established Herself at Kamakotipitam and carried out the sixty-four kinds of Dharma for the salvation of all mankind.

The Author then describes the various *Tirtams* and their efficacy and the various marvels of nature and of art that could be seen in this sacred City.

In such a city, there lived one by birth a washerman, and yet who excelled all in heart

and conduct, and was a great devotee of the Lord. Since his appearance on this earth, he placed his mind, speech and body at the feet of the Lord, and as he waxed strong in the service of God's devotees, by understanding before-hand all their wishes, he was known as Tirukkuripputtonda Nayanar.

He was a washerman by birth and profession and yet his heart melted even when he heard the name of God and he made it his loving duty to wash the clothes of God (in temple) and of His devotees, and as he washed away the dirt of those clothes, he washed away the dirt of the triple mala which covered him, and with it, all birth and death.

While so one day, as our God proceeded to measure out the grain to His beloved Consort, Uma Haimavatam, He, intending to show His Grace to His devotee whose matured condition He had understood, approached him. It was the cold season. He assumed the form of a poor man, greatly destitute, clad in rags, tottering at every step, while His person was adorned with white ashes, His clothes resembled the dark clouds. As He approached, our

saint with spotless mind, prostrated before Him, filled with joy, his hairs standing on their ends. He understood at once His wants and with gentle speech, he enquired about His health, and asked Him to hand over His clothes to be washed. Our Lord replied that though His clothes were dirty, He could not part with them on account of the cold and if he would however return them before sun-set, he could take them for washing. He promised to return them in no time, while our Lord said if he did not do so, he would be guilty of doing great harm to His Body. Taking the clothes, he hastened to the washing ghat, and while he proceeded to boil the clothes and removed the dirt, it began to rain heavily, at the command of our Lord. Our Saint remembered his promise and was bewildered and did not know what to do. He hoped against hope that the rain would cease but instead, night was coming on rapidly like one's foes, he was sorely troubled that the devotee would be suffering from cold, and he fell down saying, "Oh how my service has proved so vain; the rain won't cease. The promised time is long

past. I cannot dry these clothes in my house. The devotee's body will suffer from cold, there is only one thing for me to do, who had done this grievous wrong ". He got up with mind resolved and nearing the washing slab, he struck his head on the stone and lo! our Lord's hand held out and prevented our Saint's head striking. And the rain ceased, and flowers rained down instead, and our Lord with His Consort appeared on the firmament riding on the Bull, our Saint overflowing with melting love raised up his hands in worship. The Triyambaka said his love was made manifest to the world, he would hereafter abide with Him in His own Sivaloka and saying so, He went back to His Yekambara shrine.

THE TEACHINGS

The meaning of the sacred tale is also manifest. However humble one may be by birth, however humble his profession, if he is righteous, and humble in the service of God and His devotees, the Door of Heaven will always be open.

APPENDIX I

THE TIRUMURAI

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The list of the twelve Tirumurais or the Sacred Books, their component parts and their authors are herewith appended for general information.

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THE FIRST THREE TIRUMURAI

Comprise

THE TEVARA HYMNS

of

St. Tirujnana Sambanda Murti Nayanar

—:o:—

THE NEXT THREE TIRUMURAI

Comprise

THE TEVARA HYMNS

of

St. Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar

THE SEVENTH TIRUMURAI

Comprises

THE TEVARA HYMNS

of

St. Sundara Murti Nayanar

—:0:—

THE EIGHTH TIRUMURAI

Comprises

THE TIRUVASAGAM AND TIRUKKOVAIYAR

of

St. Manikkavasagar

—:0:—

THE NINTH TIRUMURAI

Comprises

*THE PATHIGAMS**

of

St. Tirumaligai Tevar, St. Sendanar,
 St. Karuvur Tevar, St. Nambikadava Nambi,
 St. Kandaraditthar, St. Venattadigal,
 St. Tiruvaliyamudhar, St. Purudotthama Nambi,
 St. Sedhirayar

* Pathigam is a piece of poetry consisting of ten stanzas.
 These pathigams are twenty-nine in number.

THE TENTH TIRUMURAI

Comprises

THE TIRUMANTIRAM

of

St. Tirumula Nayanar

—:o:—

THE ELEVENTH TIRUMURAI

Comprises

*THE PRABANDAMS **

of

St. Tiruvalavudaiyar, St. Karaikkal
 Ammaiyar, St. Aiyadigalkadavarkon Nayanar,
 St. Seramanperumal Nayanar, St. Nakkira
 Tevar, St. Kalladanar, St. Kabila Tevar,
 St. Parana Tevar, St. Ilamperumanadigal,
 St. Adhiravadigal, St. Pattinatthuppillaiyar,
 St. Nambiyandar Nambi

—:o:—

THE TWELFTH TIRUMURAI

Comprises

THE PERIYAPURANAM

or the Lives of the Indian Saints

of

St. Sekkilar Nayanar

* Prabandam means a garland of verses. These Prabandams are forty in number.

APPENDIX II

SAINT NAMBIYANDAR NAMBI

—:0:—

At Tirunaraiyur in Cholamandalam, there lived an Adisaiva Priest who was doing service at the Shrine of Pollappillaiyar. The priest had a son who was destined to make the Saiva Religion flourish. One day, the Adi Saiva Priest had to go to a neighbouring place and he instructed his son to attend to Pollappillaiyar. So, the son, performing all the duties, offered fruits and sweet dishes to Pollappillaiyar and prayed to Him to eat the naivetyam (offerings). On seeing that Pollappillaiyar did not partake of the food, the son felt sore and asked if he had done any wrong and why Pollappillaiyar did not accept his offerings and he was about to knock his head against a stone. Thereupon, Pollappillaiyar saying, "Wait, Nambi", swallowed the offerings.

The priest's son, henceforth called Nambiyandar Nambi, became overjoyed and said, "Oh ! my lord, it is already late for my school ; my master will take me to task ; so I request you to teach me all the vedas and sastras."

Pollappillaiyar gladly taught His disciple everything. Nambiyandar Nambi was thus progressing with his studies and composed the poem *Tiruvirattaimani Malai*(1) on Pollappillaiyar. At this time King Apayakulasekara Chola Maharaja was ruling at Tiruvalur. This king was himself a great devotee of god Theagesar of Tiruvalur. The king having come to know of the miracles of Nambiyandar Nambi, with his mighty armies and all paraphernalia went to him with large quantities of fruits and sweets, and worshipping Nambiyandar Nambi requested him to offer all his fruits and sweets to Pollappillaiyar. Nambiyandar Nambi sanctified the offerings and gave them to the God Who graciously ate them.

Thereupon, the king was mightily pleased and prayed to Nambiyandar Nambi to bring to light the *Tevara Hymns* of the three great

Saiva Apostles and the histories of the Saiva Saints. Nambiyandar Nambi made a request to Pollappillaiyar Who said, "There is at the back of the golden temple at Chidambaram a room bearing the palm imprints of the three great Apostles and the *Tevara Hymns* are preserved there". Pollappillaiyar also recounted the histories of the Saiva Saints. This fact was intimated to the king.

The king accompanied by Nambiyandar Nambi went to Chidambaram. There they all bathed in the sacred tank "Sivaganga" and after the usual ceremonies, went to the temple and worshipped the presiding Lord. Nambiyandar Nambi then composed the poem *Koyirriruppanniyar Viruttam* (2) on the Lord of the Golden Temple.

The king intimated the Andhanars of Tillai (Chidambaram) about his errand. The Andhanars said that if the king could bring those three saints, the room could be opened. Thereupon, the king conducted a hugh festival in honour of Sri Natarajar and took the idols of the three great saints in procession

and brought them before the room containing the *Tevara Hymns*. The Andhanars were pleased with the intelligence of the king and opened the room. It was a most heart-rending sight to see the palm leaves on which the Hymns were written, all covered with white ants and earth. The palm leaves were carefully taken and cleaned with oil. The king wept at the destruction of almost all the leaves. Then the Lord of Tillai, in a voice from Heaven, proclaimed, "Only those hymns which are fit for this age are preserved; and all the rest have been consumed by the white ants at Our will". Then the king got pacified and danced in ecstasy. He asked Nambiyandar Nambi to compile the *Tevara Hymns* and other sacred utterances. Accordingly Nambiyandar Nambi compiled the sacred utterances excepting his own compositions into eleven *Sacred Books* as detailed in Appendix I.

• After completing this compilation and classification, Nambiyandar Nambi composed the *Tiruvandhadhi* (3) on the lives of the Saiva Saints having as his original the *Tiruttondattogai* retold by Pollappillaiyar. Further, Nambiyandar

Nambi composed another *Tiruvandhadhi* (4), *Tiruchchanbai Viruttam* (5), *Tirumummanikkovai* (6), *Tiruvula Malai* (7), *Tirukkalambagam* (8), and *Tiruttogai* (9) in praise of Saint Tirujnana Sambanda Murti Nayanar and *Tiruvegadhasa Malai* (10) on Saint Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar. At the request of the king the ten prabandams of Nambiyandar Nambi were also included in the Eleventh Book.

Then, they all repaired to the Shrine at Tiruverukkatthampuliyur and prayed to God to let them know the tunes in which the hymns were to be sung. A voice rose from the heaven and said, "Friends, go to the girl born in the family of Tirunilakanta Perumpanan* and she will fix the tunes." Then that girl was sent for and she sang the songs in their proper tunes. Again, a voice from heaven said, "Friends, take this girl to the Golden Temple and there fix the tunes for the *Tevara Hymns*." This mandate was accordingly carried out.

After this, Nambiyandar Nambi went back to Tirunaraiyur and after spending his days in

* Panan is a bard or a minstrel.

the service of our Lord Siva, he attained his salvation.

Apaya Kulasekara Chola Maharaja went back to Tiruvalur and engraved the Eleven Tirumurais on copper plates which were carefully preserved at the shrine of Theagesar. After long years of service in the cause of Saiva Religion, the king was gathered to the Feet of Lord Siva.



APPENDIX III

SAINT SEKKILAR NAYANAR

—(o)—

Arunmolitthevar and his brother Palaravayar were born at Kunrattur in Tondai Mandalam in the Sekkilar family of the Vellala community. As Arunmolitthevar was the most famous in the family, he came to be called "Sekkilar." As he was learned, wise and righteous, King Anapaya Chola Maharaja made Sekkilar the chief minister, and dubbed him "Uttama Chola Pallavar." Sekkilar was greatly devoted to the shrine at Tirunagesvaram in Chola Nadu, so he erected a temple at Kunrattur and named it Tirunagesvaram. He was continuing his daily worship in the temple, and at the same time, he was effectively and wisely administering the kingdom of Anapaya Chola Maharaja.

At this time, some of the Saivites including the King began to admire Jainism and were revelling in reading *Jivakachintamani*, the greatest of the Jaina works. Sekkilar felt very

sorry at this and said to the king that he as a Saivite should not believe in the false story of *Jivakachintamani* but should study his own religion which solves the problems of life here and elsewhere and worship the true God Siva. The King asked his minister which was the true religion. Sekkilar then mentioned the greatness of the *Tiruttondattogai* of St. Sundaramurti Nayanar and the *Tiruvandhadhi* of Nambiyandar Nambi. The King requested Sekkilar to explain and expound the *Tiruvandhadhi*. Sekkilar complied with the request; thereupon, King Anapaya Chola Maharaja asked Sekkilar to write a work in easy style enlarging and elaborating the lives of the Saiva Saints.

Providing himself with ample funds from the King, Sekkilar went to Chidambaram and with purity of body and soul, he prayed to the Lord of the Golden Temple to give him the first word to begin his work on the lives of the Saints.

“Whom all the world cannot know” rose from heaven. Having this as the first line, Sekkilar composed and finished his great work and called it “Tiruttondar Puranam.”

The King, who had been making enquiries about the progress of Sekkilar's work, was told by messengers that the work was completed. The King loaded those messengers with gold for the glad tidings they brought to the King who immediately started for Chidambaram with his hosts surrounded by chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry. The King was welcomed by Sekkilar, the Andhanars and the heads of mutts. At the sight of the divine and saintly appearance of Sekkilar, the King involuntarily worshipped Sekkilar and prostrated at his feet. Then they all went to the presence of the Golden Temple. A voice from heaven said, "Oh! Chola King!! With Our words as the first line Sekkilar has completed the lives of the saints, so, listen to them."

The King, thereupon, sent invitations to all to come and hear the great work sung. The temple and the city of Chidambaram were decorated most gaily. Innumerable pandits, professors, disciples, grammarians and all thronged at the temple.

Before the audience, the great work was placed with great devotion on a pedestal

with six legs and covered with green and white silks. Flowers were placed on the book. Incense was burnt. Camphor was lighted. Praises were offered. Then the King asked Sekkilar himself to sing and explain his songs. All became overjoyed at hearing the great devotion, sacrifice and the salvation of the lives of the saints. The King from that day ordered puja for the Lord of the Golden Temple. He also fed and attended to the wants of the Andhanars, heads of mutts and all the guests who came there to listen to the Tiruttondar Periya Puranam. Sekkilar commenced recounting the lives in the month of Chitrai (April-May) under the star Tiruvadhira and it was finished under the same star in the same month next year.

After this, pujas were offered to the *Periyapuranam*. Then it was wrapped up in green silk and placed in a golden bowl. Then it was placed on the head of an elephant. Sekkilar and the King both mounted on the same elephant, the king doing service to Sekkilar by fanning him with white fur with both the hands and saying, "Is this not the

fruit of my tapas?" Then they all started on a procession round the city which was decorated with flower garlands and green leaves. The streets were kept scrupulously clean and were strewn with flour drawings and fried rice. Brahmans chanting the Vedas, Andhanars singing the Tevara Hymns and the innumerable devotees shouting "Hara, Hara," accompanied the procession. After this, they all came once again to the front of the Temple. The *Periyapuranam* was taken down from the elephant and placed on the pedestal. Now the King gave the title, "Tondarsir Paravuvuar"* to Sekkilar who was then honoured with the crown of wisdom. The king then prostrated before Sekkilar and worshipped him. The king included *Periyapuranam* among the Tirumurais as the twelfth. He caused it to be engraved on copper plates and kept them at the Temple.

The king enquired after Sekkilar's brother Palaravayar who was worshipping God in Tirunagesvaram after constructing a tank

* The title means "One who spreads the praise of the devotees."

there. Palaravayar was sent for, dubbed "Tondaiman" and made the chief minister. Saint Sekkilar spent his days at Chidambaram and in the end reached the shade of the Feet of Lord Siva.

Saint Umapati Sivacharyar has composed in verses an authoritative and glowing history of Saint Sekkilar which is worthy of perusal.



APPENDIX IV

THE SOURCES OF THE PURANAM

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It has been the usual custom amongst ancient writers of great works to ascribe their authorship to God or a yogi. They further mystify it by saying that the works were written prior to the occurrence of the events mentioned in those works. It is said that the Ramayana was written before Rama was born. In the matter-of-fact world of to-day, such stories are called myths. Anyhow for our purpose, it is enough to indicate the several sources as handed down to us by tradition.

I. Lord Siva told the stories of the lives of the Saiva Saints to His Consort Parvati before these saints were ever born. This fact and the stories are found in Amsa IX of Siva-rahasyam, one of the chief Itihasas. If this tradition is correct, then the original of the *Periyapuranam* is in Sanskrit.

II. Saint Sundara Murti Nayanar sang the Tiruttondattogai at the inspiration of the Lord Siva as Theagesar at Tiruvalur in Tanjore District. This is in Tamil. It is not stated by anyone that Saint Sundarar knew the existence of *Sivarahasyam*. Hence, it is easy to say that the *Periyapuranam* is not derived from a Sanskrit source. Further, all the saints were born in the Tamil Nadu and it is really beyond the stretch of human imagination to trace the sources to an alien or a different language. Again, at the time the saints flourished, the condition, status and culture of the Tamil literature were perfect and supreme as is evidenced by the fact that the Chera, Chola and Pandiya Kings encouraged, honoured and worshipped the poets in such a degree unparalleled in the history of any other literature of the world. Therefore, it cannot but be concluded that the *Periyapuranam* is an original Tamil work of great beauty and art.

III. Upamanyu Maharishi in Mount Kailasam recounted to his disciples the tales of Saint Sundarar and other saints mentioned in

the Tiruttondattogai at the time when Saint Sundarar was entering Kailasam in flesh on the white elephant. Upamanyu's tales are called the **Siva Bhakta Vilasa** which is written in Sanskrit. Here it is clearly acknowledged that *the Tiruttondattogai* is the original.

IV. Nambiyandar Nambi sang his **Tiruvandhadhi** after receiving instructions on *the Tiruttondattogai* from Pollappillaiyar at Tirunaraiyur. Here also, the Sanskrit sources are not mentioned.

V. Saint Sekkilar composed the **Periyapuranam** on the inspiration of and in the immediate presence of Sri Natarajar at the Golden Temple of Chidambaram. It is needless to point out that the lives of the Saiva Saints are found originally in Tamil and not in Sanskrit. Also see my father's introduction *ante*.



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