

THE  
LIGHT OF TRUTH  
OR  
Siddhanta Deepika.

MADRAS MAY, 1903.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.\*

(By the Hon. P. Ramanathan, C.M.G. of Ceylon.)

MANIKKA-VASAKA SVAMI †

A miracle indeed! for unto whom has the Father been so gracious as unto me, who loved the company of fools that knew not the nature of Freedom?

He caused me to be taught in the Way of Faith, in order that works of the flesh may hasten away.

He caused the evil of my Soul to be severed,  
And made me attain His own godly form.

—*Tiruvāsakam, Achchopatikam (Poem on the Wondrous Works of God), § 1.*

LORD JESUS:

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.  
—*Matt. V. 48.*

ST. PAUL:

He that descended is the same also that ascended . . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets . . . . for the works of the ministry . . . . till we all come . . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.  
—*Eph. IV. 10-13.*

\* We have the permission of Mr. P. Ramanathan, C.M.G., the Solicitor General of Ceylon, to publish in our pages his much sought for pamphlet "on the **Mystery of Godliness** as a fundamental experience of the sanctified in spirit." The expression "Mystery of Godliness", which occurs in St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, Ch. 3, v. 16, corresponds to our term *Siva Rahasyam*. The pamphlet was written in 1895, when the learned Author was holding office as Attorney General of Ceylon, and was intended for the benefit of his European and American friends. We commend it to the careful study of all our readers.

† An ancient Saint, held in the highest veneration in Tamil-land (South India and North Ceylon).

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations

Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance . . . .

We spend our years as a tale that is told:

The days of our years are three score and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away . . . .

So, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto *Wisdom*.

—*Psalms, XC.*

There are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all . . . . To one is given through the Spirit the word of *Wisdom*, . . . . to another the word of Knowledge, . . . . to another Faith, &c.

—*I. Cor. XII. 6-10.*

*Wisdom* is justified of her children.

—*Matt. XI. 19.*

**T**HE high priests of modern material science have proclaimed far and wide that they have

scanned the whole universe and can see no signs of God, soul, heaven, or hell; that man is an extended and material mass, attached to which is

the power of feeling and thinking (Bain's *Mind and Body*, p. 137); that feeling and thought, no less than

our perceptions of right and wrong, are the correlates of the actions and re-actions of our nervous structure

in reference to the world without (Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, p. 62); that the animal system is actuated by

the self-regulating impulses of pleasure and pain; that pleasure is the result of an increase of vital

power, and pain of its diminution; that moral conduct springs from the impulses of pleasure and

pain, being an adjustment of one's acts to such ends as may be attained without preventing others from

attaining their ends; and that the *acme* of individual development is to combine the performance of the

highest duty with the enjoyment of the greatest comfort. These doctrines have fostered irreligion

and displaced morality from the austere and self-denying state of *Godliness*. The peccant mind has released itself from the responsibilities of future life, and the great concern of worldly respectability is to escape *detection* in wrong-doing. What priests of material science from the "secularization" of morals, its effect on their vast audience has been indeed disastrous.

Apart from the mischievous nature of the conclusions above mentioned, what a number of natural and necessary questions are left unanswered by this science! What, for instance, is the object of individual development? Why should one take so much trouble to act up to duty? How does the happiness of others benefit us? What, indeed, is happiness? What does all this panorama of joys and sorrows, pomp and poverty, health and disease, mean? What and wherefore is death? Why was I ushered into life? Where was I before I was born? Why have I been less endowed than others? What is to become of me hereafter, and of the friends and relations with whom I have lived? Why does causation reign in the universe? Is it more consistent with chance or design? If with the latter, what is the nature of the Intelligence which designed the universe? Is that Intelligence like, and does it bear any relation to, the intelligence which is in us? If so, is it not necessary to know all about our own intelligence? Is it possible to escape from the controversies of the metaphysicians, and, by adopting some other method of investigation than theirs, to arrive at well-founded harmonious conclusions as to the true nature of our intelligence and its relation to the aggregates known as the mind and the body?

Such are some of the questions which arise out of modern science. Are they to be solved by experimenting on the objective world? The answer is: No, they have proved far beyond the reach of the science of matter, and it acknowledges itself baffled. In these circumstances, an apology is hardly necessary for the

declaration that such questions fall within the domain of what is indeed the science of the spirit, which fathoms subjective existence. This science is known, in India, as *Wisdom (Jnanam)*, because its principles, underlying both the subjective and the objective sides of the universe, are based on the *knowledge of God*, the unravelling of the "mystery of *Godliness*." That mystery revealed by the science of matter.

In India the masters of the Science of the Spirit are called *Jnanis*, or men of Light or Wisdom, and the Knowledge they possess is *Jnanam*.

Other men are not of the Light. Being attached to the false shows and pleasures of the world, they are *a-Jnanis*, unwise men, men in darkness, whose knowledge is foolishness (*a-Jnanam*), because it makes them to think that the body is the Self or Ego that knows; to believe that the only happiness available to man is through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, or through thinking and speaking of things past, present, or yet to come; to mistake the world for the goal to which it is the appointed way; and to rest assured that nothing exists beyond the planes of thought and the senses. In their ignorance they esteem as folly the long-suffering humility of the *Jnanis*; their love of all beings, great and small, good and bad; their inability to hate, and unwillingness to exact satisfaction for wrong done; their sense of thankfulness under all conditions; their refusal to judge others; their want of concern for the morrow and their disregard of things deeply valued by the multitude. But the more enlightened of the *a-Jnanis* of India, who form a small fraction of the 250 millions of people who inhabit the country, feel drawn to the *Jnanis*, and it is to them they have always gone, from the remotest times to the present day, when craving for Light.

Europeans in India know something of the esoteric side of spiritual India, as exemplified in the objective worship carried on in the temples, but almost nothing of its esoteric side. The vast majority of the natives themselves are ignorant of its existence, though many



an exegesis is to be found, especially in Sanskrit and Tamil. Such works, however, are difficult to understand; and devotees, who have been initiated into the subjective form of worship—"worship in truth and in spirit" (John iv. 24)—are unobtrusive and far from communicative. But yet earnest seekers, who fail to find satisfaction in the objective method, soon discover that the exoteric system, which no longer appeals to them, is really intended as a stepping stone to the esoteric, and that the key of the latter is in the hands of the *Jnana-guru*, or Teacher of Godly Wisdom. Tired of the so-called enjoyments of the world, and thirsting for the sanctification of the spirit, they leave their homes in quest of him, crying to him now, as in days of yore, "O saint, teach thou, for thou art the way, and there is no other for us." "O saint, thou art my way, thou art My way." (*Maitrayana Brahmana Upanishad*; translated by Max Muller in the 15th volume of *The Sacred Books of the East*, pp. 290-299.) Occasionally, the saint comes to the very door of the seeker.

Of all teachers, the *Jnana guru* is acknowledged to be the greatest. Unlike the *Vidyaguru*, who imparts knowledge on any given secular subject; unlike the *Samaya-guru*, who imparts knowledge on any given religion, the *Jnana-guru* is concerned with the very foundation of knowledge, with truth eternal, unchangeable. He is therefore a teacher of teachers, a *guru* in the real sense of the term\*, and hence called a *Jagat Guru*, or *Loka-guru*, a Preceptor or Light of the world.

He is to be found mostly in secluded places from Cashmere to Cape Comorin, living in the utmost simplicity. Some of them are so dead to the world as to

\*The term *guru* means literally "he who has burnt up the world," that is, the 96 *tatvas* "rudiments," Cf. Gal. iv. 9. "elements," (Pet. iii. 10) that underlie every human constitution, beginning from the latest evolute *prithivi* (earth germ) and ending with the (earth-germ) and ending with the earliest evolute *netham*,—has so overcome the world. He is therefore called *master*, a visible light unto others.

Cf. "Our god is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 49. "God is light," John i. 5. "I am come to send fire on earth," Luke xii. 49. "I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33. "I am the Light of the world," John ix. 5.

go wholly unadorned, seeing nothing but the reign of God everywhere. To them, men, women and Children are all alike, without any distinction whatever of sex, age, colour, creed, or race. Such saints are often mighty in powers (siddhis), like Tirujnana Sambandamurti and others of old, and like Tillenatha Swami, who still moves about in Southern India, redeeming men according to their fitness. Other masters, too, there are who live in towns undiscovered, and perform worldly duties in different walks of life like ordinary folk, but whom the ripe soul discovers to its salvation. They make themselves the kindest and best of fathers, husbands, brothers, and citizens, though never so implicated in those relations as to forget for a moment the grace of God, which assigned to him and others their respective spheres in life, only in order that they might emancipate themselves from worldly bonds through service to others. One of these *Jnanis*, who for many years fulfilled the duties of a minister of a Native State in South India, has described as follows how to live in the world without being of the world:—

While I live in shady groves, fragrant with fresh-blown flowers;

while I drink cool and limpid water, and disport myself therein;

while I find enjoyment in sandal-scented breezes, which move through the court like gentle maids; while I revel in the day-like light of the glorious full moon;

While I feast on dishes of various flavours, seeming tempered with ambrosia;

While I am passing off into sleep, after much merriment bedecked with garlands and perfumed with scent;—

Grant to me, O Siva, who art true, spiritual, and blessed, all-filling, impartite, and substrate of all—grant to me the boon of never forgetting thy grace (so as to avoid the perils of worldly enjoyment).

*Tayumanavar: Saccitananda Sivam, § 11.*

In the spiritual history of India, which still remains to be written, there occurs many a *Jnani's* name in

intimate connection with different phases of worldly life. When *Jnanis* do not cut themselves off from the practices and pursuits of ordinary life, they play their respective parts in the domestic and social circles, little affected by what the morrow brings; for though they have not renounced the world openly, they have yet renounced it at heart. Otherwise they could not possibly have risen to the high estate of *jnanam*.

It is such masters in godly experience that have been for centuries, and are still, interpreting to earnest seekers in India the esoteric doctrines shadowed forth in the *Jnana-sastras* (the books of wisdom). Men most learned in the native languages, in grammar, rhetoric, logic, and the varied fields of literature, secular and sectarian find themselves at sea in dealing with a *Jnana shastra*. Even with hints, these scholars are unable to gather the sense of a passage, and rack themselves in vain to know how the passage before them can convey the meaning it really does. In illustration of this fact, reference may be made to any of the translations of the religious books of India which have appeared in English. Professor Max Muller, for instance, who is undoubtedly one of the most erudite of Oriental scholars in Europe, after rendering a verse in the *Katha Upanishad* as follows:—

There are the two, drinking their reward in the world of their own works, entered into the cave (of the heart), dwelling on the highest summit (the ether in the heart.) Those who know Brahman call them shade and light. (The *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. XV., p. 12.)

observes:—

The two are explained as the higher and lower Brahman, the former being the light and the latter the shadow... The difficulty is, how the highest Brahman can be said to drink the reward of former deeds, as it is above all works and above all rewards.

Without dealing with the translation itself, it is necessary here only to point out that "the two," called Light and Shade, are not the Brahman at all (unless

indeed in the Vedantic sense that all things are Brahman), but "desire" (thought) and "dark sleep" (oblivion, as opposed to "luminous sleep"), which cause each its own *karma*, being situated in the heart and drawing vitality from the self-existent. The reasons for interpreting "the two" as desire and dark sleep and for calling them "light" and "shade" respectively, are to be found in the spiritual experience of godly men, of "those who know Brahman." Learning, therefore, is of no avail when the *Jnana Bhūmi* (or the region of our spiritual nature) is attempted to be probed by it. Only those who have entered that region (called also the kingdom of God; *Siva-padam*, the state of the Blessed One; *Siva-puram*, the city of the Blessed One; *Sivá-lōka*, the blessed region; *Chit-dhāsā*, the sky of Intelligence) are able to realize its mysteries. It is they alone who can explain fully the truth.

But mere study of the doctrines regarding God, the soul, and the world will not, and cannot secure a footing in this sacred stronghold. He has to work for it, and toil along the "way of faith." He has to go through a course of spiritual training, into the several stages of which he is initiated only after affording satisfactory proofs of his contempt of worldliness and longing desire for godliness. Many are drawn but few are chosen, because of the difficulty they feel in purging themselves from the "rudiments of the flesh"

Like the magnet that attracts iron,  
Will the gracious Lord draw me towards Himself,  
And become one with me?

—*Tāyumanavar : Paingilikanni*, § 17.

*Jnanis*, as the stewards of the mysteries of God, show in secret the way to God. When God is reached, the soul is said to be in union with God, or to know God. Such knowledge or spiritual experience is not possible till the soul is cleansed of all worldliness and stands in the "image" of God, fit for fellowship with God. The healing (*sānti*) of the soul of its impurities (*mān*) is a work of profound difficulty. It must be

The "sanctification" of the spirit.



carried on from day to day—it may be for years together—under the guidance of the *Jnana-guru*.

When healed or sanctified, it is said to release itself from the carnal bonds of the body and “ascend” towards the Kingdom of God, which is in the soul. If the mind of the disciple does not discard worldly thoughts, he will make no progress towards God. “He, who in perfect rest rises from the body and attains the highest light, comes forth in his own proper form. This is the immortal soul” (*Maitrayana Brahmana Upanishad*, 11-2.) So risen, without a particle of anything that is earthly, the soul is fit for union with God. United to God, it knows God.

How man may rise towards God is well described in one of the ancient psalms of *Mānikka-vāsakar*, which are daily chanted by thousands of Tamils in South India and Ceylon. The ascent is by the ladder of one’s thoughts:—

O Siva, abiding in the limitless region of holiness, who, darkness dispelled, has granted me grace this day;

I thought of Thy way of rising from the bosom of the soul in the glory of the sun;

I thought of the non-existence of everything but Thyself;

I thought of Thee and Thee only,—having worn off thought, atom by atom, and drawing closer for union with Thee as one:

Nothing art Thou, yet nothing is without Thee.

Who then can think of Thee?

—*Tiruvāsakam: Kōyit Tiruppadiyam (the Holy Poem on the House of God), § 7.*

Even the most refined thought is found too earthly to perceive God. In His own true nature He is indeed unthinkable, nor is He to be perceived as Immaculate Spirit by the senses. He is, however, knowable. He is to be known by the soul only when it stands liberated from the fetters of thought and the obscurity of sleep.\* To know God one must know

\* Cf. the coming of Christ, as illustrated by the parable of the Lamps of the Ten Virgins. “Watch, therefore,” said Jesus, Matt. xxv. 13; in other words, Be wakeful while you worship, “in truth, and in spirit.” And as “God is Spirit,” they that desire to worship Him, “in truth” must worship Him “in spirit” (John iv. 24), unspotted by thought.

first one’s own spirit or soul in its purity, unspotted by thought. The gradual elimination of thought “atom by atom” from Consciousness, while drawing it closer and closer to God, leads first to a stage at which all trace of thought is “worn off.” Then and there the purified Consciousness (*Sākṣhi*) or the Soul, which lay hidden behind the veil of thought, becomes visible to itself or appears in its “own proper form” in unspeakable repose. This is called *ānṁā-darsanam*, or knowledge of the soul.\* Next is realized *Sivādarasānam*, or knowledge of God, who “rises from the bosom of the soul in the glory of the sun.” This is “His way”—His usual method—of manifesting Himself to those men who worship Him in a purely subjective manner.†

Just as the soul enshrined in the body “rises” or manifests itself from the body, God enshrined in the soul “rises” from the soul, and manifests Himself to the soul. These are the two fundamental experiences of human nature, the one leading necessarily to the other; and this is the goal of life—the knowledge of God. After attaining it, there is nothing more to attain here or elsewhere.

\* Cf. the “coming” (presence, appearance, Matt. xxiv. 3) of Christ, the Lord, who is in man. “The Lord is the Spirit” (the Soul, *anma*), 2 Cor. iii. 17 St. Paul speaks of the “appearing of the glory” of the Father and of Christ, in Tit ii. 13.

† Cf. Christ, when discovered in the heart of man, declareth the Father. “He that beholdeth Me (i.e., seeth the Spirit) beholdeth Him that sent me,” John xii. 45.

“No man cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me (the Spirit), ye should have known my father also,” John xiv 6. 7.

“The son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him,” John i. 18, “Neither doth any know the father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal Him,” Matt. xi. 27.

Note that in verses 7 to 10 of the 14th chapter of John, Jesus makes clear to Philip that to know Jesus is very different to knowing Christ. Knowledge of “Christ” or the spirit is thus a profound spiritual experience, known in India as *ānṁādarasānam*. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth.....Behold the son of man ascending,” John vi 62, 63.

Cf. John xvii 13: where Jesus declares: This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God and Him whom thou didst send, even Christ.

Progress with all its toils ends. The long-sought-for Rest has come. No longer do pure and impure thoughts strive against each other for mastery; no longer do kind and unkind words flow alternately from the lips; no longer does the flesh lust against the spirit, nor the spirit against the flesh. Differentiation between self and others has ceased. Peace reigns.

In the consuming fire of Truth (*Jnanagni*) all the beggarly "elements" of egotism and desire have been burnt up, and infinite bliss survives, bearing witness to the godly nature of man's Consciousness. This spiritual experience of the "burning up" or "melting" of the carnal elements of the Soul, known also as the cosmic stuff (*malam*) of the Soul is well emphasised in the following stanza:—

Thou art the indestructible bliss, which appears at the very moment when all the world of thought and the senses, like nuggets of gold, is melted into an ocean without waves or current.

To this day I have not thus realized Thee!  
Can I attain this happiness by merely singing Thy praises in verse?

When, O Lord, wilt Thou establish me in the reign of holiness, and grant me, a sinner, the bliss of the state resulting from non-differentiation?

—*Tayumanavar : panmalai*, § 9. \*

The dissolution of the "world," which occurs at a very instant when the mind ceases to differentiate,—when subject is unified with object,—is also known as the "death" of the *Jiva ahankaram* (nescient I which knows not itself, the sinful or worldly I) which veils the *scient* or godly I, the true Ego *parama-ahankaram*, which alone *knows itself* and is the basis of a *knowledge*, temporal and spiritual, and which therefore is truly *scient*, truly divine.

\* Cf. Peter iii. 10: "The day of the Lord shall come (as a thief in the night), in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with the fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." The day of the Lord is the day in which the Son of God or the Spirit is revealed, immediately after the melting of the elements.

- I became like the dead :
- Of all thought was I void :
- None but I remained :
- I knew no further change.

—*Venkadar : Arut-pulambal (the psalms of Grace)*, § 49.

The master means to say that when the *Jiva Ahankaram* (or worldly I) dissolved itself my non-differentiation, the *parama-ahankaram* (or divine I) stood forth unchangeable as the ego liberated (*Jivan-mukta*) from nescience or worldliness, as the soul infinitely expanded and at rest, the true Ego:—

My heart has hardly throbbbed for thee;  
But little have my thoughts dissolved;  
Divorced I am not from the body, so hard to separate.

I have not died: I am still in a whirl.

—*Tiruvacakam : Settilaputtu (the ten Hymns on "I have not died")*, § 2.

The "I" that ought to die is the nescient or worldly I, that knows not itself and is led captive by worldly thoughts. The true ego (or purified *Atma*) can never die. It is eternal.\*

The "world" (*Jagam*) and the nescient or worldly I (*Jiva ahankaram*) are really synonymous terms, denoting differentiated existence. The sum of human affairs and interests, or in restricted sense that portion of them which is known to any one, is popularly understood to be the world, which therefore consists of names (*nama*) and forms (*rupa*) only, resolvable at last into a number of thoughts; and the nescient I exists when one is conscious of differentiated names and forms, that is of thoughts. The "end or dissolution of the world" (*nama-rupu-nasam*) is thus another expression for the "death" of the nescient or worldly I. The world (*Jagam*) dissolving or ending, the nescient I dies; and the nescient I dying, the world (*Jagam*) ends. These expressions mean alike cessation from differentiation.

\* The "death" of the worldly or nescient or sinning I (*Jiva-ahankaram*) is the "crucifixion" (Gal. v. 24, Rom. vi. 6) of the sinner, "old Adam." When he is crucified, the heaven-born Adam (I Cor. xv. 45, 47), the son of God, the true Ego (*parama-ahankaram*) appears.



The question whether the world in the sense of tangible, material bodies, does really exist or can exist independently of our consciousness, cannot be adequately considered here from the standpoint of view of the *gnanis*. It is enough to remember that, according to them, all extended things, including the whole of the objective world, are evolved from the impartite consciousness which pervades allspace and that such evolutes, though in truth immaterial, appear to minds unqualified by the practice of non-differentiation to be real and permanent.

The doctrine of the immateriality of the objective universe has been accepted by some of the ablest scientists of Europe. They consider it to be only a consciousness of a relation between two or more affections of the senses, and that "it is inconceivable that what we call extension should exist independently of some such consciousness as our own." (*Lay Sermons and Addresses*, p. 358.) Professor Huxley's argument on this subject is worth quoting.

"I take up a marble, and I find it to be a red, round, hard, single body. We call the redness, the roundness, the hardness, and the singleness "qualities" of the marble; and it sounds, at first, the highest of absurdity to say that *all those qualities are modes of our own consciousness*, which cannot even be conceived to exist in the marble. But consider the redness, to begin with. How does the sensation of redness arise? The waves of certain very attenuated matter, the particles, of which vibrating with vast rapidity, but with very different velocities, strike upon the marble, and those which vibrate with one particular velocity are thrown off from its surface in all directions. The optical apparatus of the eye gathers some of these together, and gives them such a course that they impinge upon the surface of the retina, which is a singularly delicate apparatus, connected with the termination of the fibres of the optic nerve. The impulses of the attenuated matter, or ether, affect this apparatus and the fibres of the optic nerve in a certain way

change in the fibres of the optic nerve produces yet other changes in the brain, and there, in some fashion unknown to us, give rise to the feeling, or consciousness, of redness. If the marble could remain unchanged and either the rate of vibration of the ether, or the nature of the retina, could be altered, the marble would seem not red, but some other colour. There are many people who are what are called colour-blind being unable to distinguish one colour from another. Such an one might declare our marble to be green; and he would be quite as right in saying that it is green as we are in declaring it to be red. But then, as the marble cannot, in itself, be both green and red at the same time, this shows that the quality "redness" must be in our consciousness and not in the marble.

In like manner, it is easy to see that the roundness and the hardness are forms of consciousness, belonging to groups which we call sensations of sight and touch. If the surface of the cornea were cylindrical, we should have a very different notion of a round body from that which we possess now; and if the strength of the fabric and the force of the muscles of the body were increased a hundred fold, our marble would seem to be as soft as a pellet of bread crumbs.

"Not only is it obvious that all these qualities are in us, but if you will make the attempt you will find it is quite impossible to conceive of "redness," and "hardness" as existing without reference to some such consciousness as our own. It may seem strange to say that even the "singleness" of the marble is relative to us; but extremely simple experiments will show that such is veritably the case, and that our two most trustworthy senses may be made to contradict one another on this very point. Hold the marble between the finger and the thumb, and look at it in the ordinary way. Sight and touch agree that it is single. Now squint, and sight tells you that there are two marbles, while touch asserts that there is only one. Next, return the eyes to their natural position, and, having crossed the forefinger and the middle finger, put the marble between the tips. Then touch will declare that there are two marbles, while sight says that there is only one; and touch claims our belief, when we attend to it, just as imperatively as sight does."

The "world" is indeed a mode of one's own consciousness. Therefore did a Master say—

To him only the world exists  
who is alive to the ways of the senses.

—*Tiruvalluvar: Nittār perumai (the Greatness of the Separated Ones), § 7.*

Another Master has declared that the realization of the great truth of the immateriality of the world is one of the most astounding facts of spiritual experience.

When the germ of the grace of God has sprouted in the peaceful soul,

Father, mother, children, home, social life, and all the world besides

Are felt unreal, as dreams, as the quivering air.

A marvel, a marvel indeed, is this experience!

—*Tayumanavar: Tantai-tay, § 31.*

The "world," in the language of Wisdom (*Jñānam*) means everything except pure consciousness: not only the material universe, but also thought and sensual perceptions; and God, as *Being true*

The "dissolution of the world" is an essential condition of "knowing" God, as Immaculate Spirit.

or *unchangeable*, who pervades this

ever-changing and therefore untrue "world," is not to be found in it, that is, He will not reveal Himself in *His own true character as He always is*, if looked in the "world."

O Thou who in all things dost vibrate!

O Thou stainless consumer and container of the world!

O Thou king of the celestial hosts!

O Thou the only one, without a second!

Though, appealing to Thee aloud, I have sought for Thee throughout the world (*loka*),

Yet have I not found Thee there.\*

—*Tiruvāsakam: Arutpattu (the ten Hymns on grace), § 2.*

In His own true nature, as He was before the beginning of the "world," and as He will be after the end of the "world," He is to be "seen" only where the "world" is not, that is, only in the region of pure consciousness. Therefore the Master, who declared that God was not to be found in the "world," proclaimed also that he found Him elsewhere, in "resplendent *Tillai*," the glory of pure consciousness:—

\*Of the declaration of Jesus: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." John, xvii. 24.

I found Thee, immaculate and blissful, in resplendent  
*Tillai*,

Having overcome the darkness of desire,

The perception of forms, and the thoughts of "I"  
and "Mine":

I, who had been drawn into the vortex of caste, family,  
and birth, who was worse than a helpless dog;—

I saw Thee, who had cut away my bonds of misery  
and held me to Thy service.

—*Tiruvāsakam: Kandapattu (the Ten Hymns attesting Knowledge), § 5.*

This immaculate and formless being of the Deity "seen" beyond the veil of thought, in the region of pure consciousness, is His *nishkala sva-rūpam*. It is needless for the purposes of this paper to explain His *sakala sva-rūpam*, or thought-form, assumed for purposes of grace, according to the thoughts of each devotee.

Knowledge of God dependent on separation or "freeing" of the soul from thought and the senses.

The separation of the soul from thought and the senses is known as separation from the *body* or the *flesh*.

Meditating on the peerless ways by which He led me captive,

Having separated me from the *body*

Which knows not what it is to be established;

Meditating also on the gracious manner in which He cherishes the faithful;

Let me sing in praise of Him only who took me unto Himself, &c.

—*Sendanar: Tiruppallandu, § 3.*

Hear, O Bird, dwelling in groves laden with luscious fruit!

Raise thy notes to the Giver of all things,

Who, spurning the celestial regions, appeared on earth for the purpose of claiming man as His subject.

Pray that the King may come, who, spurning the *flesh*, entered my soul, made it as Himself, and stood forth the only One.

—*Tiruvāsakam: Kuyilpattu, § 4.*

"The flesh" or "body" includes not only the tangible body (*sthūla śarīra*) but also the subtle body (*śūk-*



*shma sarira*), consisting of the gasiform organs of thought and the senses. The complete "spurning of the flesh" is therefore equal to complete isolation from the flesh, which state is also spoken of as being wholly "dead to the world" (of thought and the senses). When this occurs the soul becomes *nishkala*, immaculate (unspotted by the least rudiments of the flesh), *god-like*. Drawing the soul from the sheath (*kosha*), or body (*sukshma sarira*), or womb\* (*garbha*), in which it had been encased, God "frees" or "separates" it from its carnal bonds and causes it to be "as Himself. Then only does He, who of old time lay hidden in the soul, become manifest; and manifested, He absorbs the soul by His sun-like glory and remains "the Only One."

All the doctrines and practices which are calculated to lead to the knowledge of the Soul, and through that knowledge to the knowledge of God, are locked up in the mystic formula "know the soul through the soul," which, in the language of Jesus, is represented by the expression "I (the spirit) bear witness of Myself (the spirit)." (John viii. 18.)

It is necessary to explain that in the darkness of deep sleep consciousness is so obscured that it fails to know. Awake, it knows nothing in particular, till, a vague desire to know arising from within it, the internal or external faculties report something to it. Then begins a knowledge of some definite thing. But so rapidly do the senses strike on the consciousness, and so constantly do thoughts present themselves from the very moment it wakes to the moment it falls asleep, that consciousness is "cheated with the blar illusion" that it is identical with thought and the senses even as thought is "cheated with the blar illusion" that it is identical with the body. The truth, however, as experienced by Jesus, is that consciousness or the true self is wholly distinct from thought and the senses, just as the latter are

\* Cf. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal the Son in me," &c. Gal. i. 15. This separation from carnality, or the *sukshma sarira*, is essential to the spiritual birth or appearance of the Son or soul (*anma*).

distinct from the body. "Separate from all thought and the senses, yet reflecting the qualities of all of them, it is the Lord and Ruler of all" (*Svetasvatara Upanishad*, l. iii. 17.) Consciousness, or the true self, or the Ego, or the soul, or the spirit—for these are all synonymous—knows the senses and thoughts, but the senses and thoughts are not subtle enough to know the soul, their "Lord and Ruler." *It knows itself. Nothing else can know it.* Hence the mandate "know the soul through the soul." The Soul is a witness (*Sakshi*) unto itself.

It is therefore difficult to establish these truths by reasoning. The basis of reasoning is comparison of one thing with another and drawing inferences therefrom, but there is nothing in the world without us which may be compared with our spiritual nature. The only proof possible under these circumstances is an appeal to spiritual experience.\* Such experience declares (1) that the body is an instrument of the mind; (2) that the mind, or the subtle organs of thought and the senses, are a vestment of the soul; (3) that the mind is not subtle enough to know the soul; (4) that the soul may be freed from its primeval taint of evil or worldliness; (5) that when freed from its worldliness, the soul knows itself, as naturally as the bound soul knows the mind and the world without; and (6) that peace (or infinite love, irrespective of objects of love) and knowledge (or the power of knowing, irrespective of objects of knowledge) are the fundamental qualities of the freed soul.

How few among us recognize even the first-named of these truths! Metaphysicians of European repute have argued that the mind, so far from using the body as its instrument, is only a property, power, or function of the body. Professor Bain, desiring to follow a middle course, defines man to be "an extended and material mass, attached to which is the power of becoming alive to feeling and thought, the extreme remove from all that is material" (*Mind and Body*, p. 137); and

\* "Every one that is of the Truth (i.e., sanctified in spirit) heareth my voice" (i.e., is a witness to my doctrines). John xviii 37

observes that the contention that the mind uses the body as its instrument "assumes for mind a separate existence, a power of living apart, an option of working with or without a body. Actuated by the desire of making itself known, and of playing a part in the sphere of matter, the mind uses its bodily ally to gratify this desire; but if it choose to be self-contained, to live satisfied with its own contemplations, like the gods as conceived by Aristotle, it need not enter into co-operation with any physical process, with brain, senses, or muscular organs. I will not reiterate the groundlessness of this supposition. The physical alliance is the very law of our mental being; it is not contrived purely for the purpose of making our mental states known; without it we should not have mental states at all." (*Ib.*, p. 132.)

The learned Professor's criticisms abound with difficulties of his own creation, which however do not affect the truths of spiritual experience. By the light of this experience, the soul (or the I that knows) is found to be very different from the faculty that thinks. It will be readily admitted that it is not the senses (*Jnanendriyas*), but the internal faculties of thought (*antahkaranas*), that think. The *Jnanis* of Agamic India\* declare that the invisible organ of thought and the other invisible organs of breath, nutrition, and action which in correlation form the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) of the soul, are in the nature of a covering or integument (*kosha*) of the soul, being "bound" to it by the "worldliness," or obscuring evil, which is inherent in the soul. For the merciful purpose of liberating the soul from this pitiful state of darkness or nescience, God endowed the soul with thought,—with certain "rudiments," (*tatvas* or *karavis*), called shortly "the mind-and-breath mechanism,"—and so brought it into relation with the outer world. Nescience

\* Those *Jnanis* who expound the *Agamas*, or the Scriptures which treat of the science and art of healing the Soul of its impurities. There are twenty-eight orthodox *Agamas*, none of which has been translated, nor even printed, in any European language, and of which there seems to be as much misapprehension among European savants as there is of the Bible among non-Christian Asiatics.

thus became (through the "subtle body", the desires of touch, taste, hearing, sight, and smell, and the desires of the intellect. The mind-and-breath organism has, therefore, been called a "lamp," or instrument of illumination to the obscured soul. As the light of sound knowledge let into the soul, through the channels of thought and the senses, dispels the density of the worldly taint inherent in the soul, thought and the senses find themselves urged with a proportionately decreasing vigor in the field of carnality. It is within our every-day experience that, with the gradual decline of desire for anything, our thoughts on that subject become fewer and less active, and it is only natural that, when all desires are eschewed, thoughts should run down to a complete calm. This truth is expressed in the formula *nirasa* (or non-desire) is *samadhi* (levelling of the mind). All "enlightened" men, that is, men who are consciously admitting light, and are thus actively wearing off, atom by atom, the density of their cravings, are on the high road to *samadhi*. They are destined to speedily enter the spiritual kingdom, the holy and blissful region of pure consciousness.

The converse proposition, that the practice of the art of levelling thoughts leads to attainment of *nirasa*, is found to be equally true. Without tarrying on this phase of the question, it is needful only to say that, as the effacement of all desire causes thought to disappear, leaving the soul serene and limitlessly conscious, Mr. Bain's question, whether the mind may have a separate existence, and in that state of independence possess an option of working with or without the body, admits of a ready answer. If all desires have been permanently expunged from the soul, the mind becomes separated from it, like the kernel from the shell of a coconut, and has no power over the body (which may be compared with the husk of the coconut), nor even over itself. It is quite inert.

Such a contingency occurs only in the case of that class of *Jnanis* known as *Brahma Varishta*, who have emancipated themselves from desire so completely that it never rises from the expanse

Four degrees of "sanctification" or death unto the world.



of consciousness in any form whatever. Consequently the *Brahma Varishta* are motionless, dead in the worldly sense, but not dead in the spiritual sense, because though they know nothing in particular, they yet know (being light itself, bliss itself, without a particle of darkness or sorrow in their consciousness), and live on from week to week, month to month, and year to year without food or drink.

A less advanced *Jnani* is the *Brahma Variyan*, in whom desire is not completely annihilated. Therefore he is able to rest in *samadhi* only for limited periods, emerging therefrom for a short while, during which devotees revive his recollection of earthly affairs and pray for blessings. Granting them, he again relapses into the peaceful state. The late Raja Rajendralala Mitra, one of the most distinguished sons of India said that in 1842 he saw a *Jnani*, whom some wood-choppers had brought up to Calcutta from the forests of the Sunderbunds. The saint was found sitting cross-legged under a lofty tree, amidst a wild profusion of heavy roots, which in course of growth had entwined themselves round his limbs. The "fools and blind" cleared the wood and carried the sage, dead as he was to the world, to Calcutta, where he was taken possession of by two men even more ignorant than the wood choppers, for, unable to rouse him "by shouting, pushing, and beating, they put fire into his hand and plunged him into deep water in the Ganges with a rope about his neck, as though he were a ship's anchor, and twice kept him there all night. They pried his tetanus jaws apart, put beef into his month, and poured brandy down his throat. Finally, to prove their own shamelessness, and to make their memory hateful for ever, this Hindu Rajah and this Englishman set upon the poor saint an abandoned creature of the other sex, to pollute him with her unholy touch!" (Lecture at the Town Hall of Calcutta in 1882.) At last by violent methods they awoke him, and all he said was: "O Sirs, why did you disturb me? I have done you no harm." Shortly afterwards he attained *Videha Mukti*, or liberation from the *Sthula* and *Sukshma* bodies.

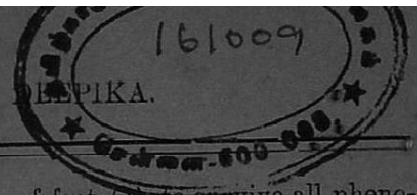
A third class of *Jnanis* is represented by the *Brahma Varan*, who suspends mind and breath for a few days at a time, returning to the ways of life readily at the close of the *Samadhi*.

By far the largest number of *Jnanis*, however, belong to the class of the *Brahma Vid*, who isolate himself only for a few hours each day, not necessarily every

day. These are the saints who are most useful to the world, because all their thoughts run with amazing fruitfulness in the groove of *paropakaram*, or service to others.

A careful study of the life of Jesus shows him to be a brilliant example of this type of saint,\* for, in addition to the knowledge of God, he possessed *siddhis* (or spiritual powers) of a very high order. When drawn too much into the vortex of worldly life, he sought solitude for the purpose of re-establishing himself in the progress of peace. "He went up into a mountain apart, to pray.....He was there alone" (Matt. xiv. 23), is often said of Jesus. He is also said to have been fast asleep on board a ship when a great storm was blowing and covering the craft with tremendous waves (Matt viii. 24). Even a drunken man would have returned to his sober senses by such rolling and pitching, creaking and roaring, "but Jesus was asleep." He was no doubt, in *samadhi*, "free from the world" of thought and the senses. His disciples were unable to move him out of that peaceful state, his desire to serve others, being still undisturbed and set the mind and breath in motion, as demonstrated in the case of the treated saint of the Sunderbunds. They declare that even the best of desires are a burden; that the bliss of rest is infinitely superior to unrest, however and that rest is absolutely good, while all is unrest, from the highest to the lowest, as related to rest. We are now able to understand the saying of Jesus on a memorable occasion, "Why do you wish me good? There is no one good but one, God" (Matt. xix. 16). He seems to have felt the desecration of unrest. Therefore also those who are known to have tasted of Rest, are inclined to go back to it, as to a haven, from the perturbations of thought, from the troubles and of life.

\*Cf. John x. 24-36: "Jesus answered.....Say ye of your Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou because I said I am the Son of God?"



The experiences of *Jnanis* of the different degrees of rest, or "death unto the world," as above described, ought to make it clear to learned materialists that the mind and the senses are but instruments of the soul, and that, if desire were wholly eliminated from the mind and the sense organs would fall prostrate on the bosom of the soul, even as a spinning top would fall on the ground no sooner its force is exhausted. This is one of the most certain facts known in *samadhi*.

When the mind, ceasing to whirl, falls like a top which has spent its force,—

Just then, the gloom of nescience dispelled,

Did I know Myself, independent, like unto space, devoid of light and shade?

Did I then, joining Myself with the infinite Peace which lies within Me, pass into the transcendingly blissful state?

—*Tayumanavar : Tejomayanandam*, § 4.

A few more words may be added in explanation of

Effects of the practice of the art of knowing the soul through

the practice of the art of knowing the soul through the soul. We know as a fact that we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell, and we know also that we

The expressions "I know that I feel," "I know, desire," "I know that I think," mean only that conscious of those states of being, namely, the feeling, of desiring, of thinking. Consciousness, is the Be-ing which knows, and must not be mixed with the states or sensibilities induced in consciousness through the excitation of the senses and

When such sensibilities are discarded, what is conscious pure, which soon over flows in regions, boundlessly, like the rays of the sun in space. The experience is known as *anmamatam*, meaning, literally in the words of St. Paul, "fullness of the spirit." This is the liberated soul (in *moksha*), the Be-ing, the "I Am," which is the "glory" of God : known as *Saccitanandam* that is *sat*, eternal unchangeable existence ; *chit*, pure consciousness, infinitely expanded ; *anandam*, undifferentiated bliss or absolute rest. In plain words, when consciousness, is purified to the requisite degree, it

is found as a matter of fact (1) to survive all phenomena and remain unchangeable ; (2) to possess the power of knowing, untrammelled by time, distance, or other obstacle ; and (3) to overflow with an unspeakable repose and love for all living beings, the like of which is unknown in any other state.

European science admits the world of the senses (the "sensible" world, as it is called), and the world of thought (the "extra-sensible" world), and is quite familiar with their laws and conditions ; but it refuses to acknowledge the world—I would rather say the region—of pure consciousness (the "supra-sensible" world). "We cannot say," wrote the late Mr. G. H. Lewes, "that a supra-sensible world is impossible ; we can only say that if it exists, it is to us inaccessible." (*Problems of Life and Mind*, vol. I, p. 270.) And Professor Bain declares that in the senses and thoughts "we have an alphabet of the knowable...but we cannot by any effort pass out of the compass of the primitive sensibilities." (Section 19 of the chapter on the *Physiological Data of Logic*.) The denial of the region of pure consciousness (*Jnana Bhumi*), because of its fancied inaccessibility to experience, is a notoriously false argument ; Mr. Lewes himself having pointed out, elsewhere, that "before a fact could be discredited by its variance from one's notion, the absolute accuracy of the notion itself needed demonstration." (*Problems of Life and Mind*, vol. I, p. 353.)

No further emphasis is now required to bring home the fact that the existence of the region of pure consciousness is not a matter of theory or speculation. The state of *godliness* is indeed a "mystery" in the sense of being beyond human comprehension until it is explained and realized. It is within the actual experience (*svanubhavam*) of *Jnanis*, being known to them as *Sivanubhuti*, *Siva-padavi*, *chitam-bhavam*, *chitakasa* the blessed state, the spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of God, the region of infinite consciousness or light. It is the most real of all regions, because, when it is reached, it is found to be further irrefragable, hence unchangeable, that is, everlasting. It is moreover, strictly *verifiable in experience*, that is, attainable by the others, provided that, by native disposition and previous culture, one is sympathetic enough to persevere in all earnestness and faith in the way marked by the Master.

ment of  
fulness,  
four,  
spirit,  
the un-  
of the  
or