

Ocean & Wisdom: Bi monthly

Vol 1. No. 2, March 1935.

SL

m 211, N 350W

N 35

190164

THE OCEAN OF WISDOM

An English bi-monthly devoted to a comparative study of
Religion, Philosophy, Psychology, Ethics and Social History.

EDITED BY

Swami Vedacharya

Master of the Sacred Order of Love, Pallavaram, &
Formerly Lecturer in Tamil in the Madras Christian College.

VOL. I

MARCH, 1935

No. 2

Contents

The Art of Raising the Dead (to continue)
Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets (Serial)
The Conception of God as Rudra (Serial)
The Saiva Siddhanta as a Philosophy of Practical
Knowledge (Serial)



Printed and Published at
THE T. M. PRESS, PALLAVARAM,

4th June, 1935

Price for a volume: Three Rupees or 4 sh. 6d.

All Rights Reserved

m 21, N 35 OW

N 38

90164

THIRUVALLUVAR DAY

Celebrations In The City

The Thiruvalluvar Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm on Saturday the 18th May, 1935 evening at the Pachaiyappa's Hall. The Pachaiyappa's College was gaily decorated befitting the occasion. There was a large gathering and the hall was packed to its full capacity. Sri La Sri Swami Vedachalam, Editor, "The Ocean of Wisdom," presided.

The function began with a prayer in Tamil by the Manavar Manram.

Mr. C. R. Namasivaya Mudaliar, President of the celebration Committee in proposing the Swamiji to the chair referred in glowing terms to the greatness of Thiruvalluvar and the Kural. He then referred to the scholarship of the Swamiji in Tamil and English and said that there was no one to equal him in South India in Tamil culture and literature. His vast knowledge in English philosophy was well known. He felt glad that they were able to secure the services of the Swamiji for the celebration.

Mr. T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, in seconding the proposition, said that the Swamiji was the pioneer in the field of service to the country and the people. His original research work and his able literary contributions towards the improvement of Tamil language had been remarkable and it was he who had done immense work for the language than any one else.

Mr. T. P. Menakshisunilaram Pillai in supporting his predecessors, said that while Vaishnavites had been giving due prominence to the Tamil language by having Tamil names instead of Sanskrit names it was deplorable that Saivites did not show such devotion and patriotism for the language.

Mr. M. S. Koteeswaran pointed out how the need for the organisation had risen as it was the desire of many people interested in Tamil to bring all people together under one common banner and for that purpose there could not be any other kahagam than Thiruvalluvar Kahagam because the immortal work of Saint Thiruvalluvar had been universally accepted as common to all people. Unfortunately, efforts made in the past to bring all people under one organisation to work for the improvement of the language had failed and he appealed to them to sink their personal differences and work for the common good.

THE OCEAN OF WISDOM

BI-MONTHLY

EDITED BY SWAMI VEDACHALAM,
MASTER OF THE SACRED ORDER OF LOVE.

Vol. I

Pallavaram, March, 1935

No. 2

THE ART OF RAISING THE DEAD

From the remote past the art of raising the dead had been practised occasionally all over the Tamil country not only by saints and sages and religious priests but also by poets. They practised it as much for the sake of benefiting the good and useful people who had died prematurely, as for increasing the powers of their own mind and enabling it to receive the infinite power of God and realize its presence within itself.

But in a sceptic age like the present this may sound a strange and incredible thing to deal with. Yes, strange and incredible only to those who cannot bear to think any thing beyond eating, sleeping, and enjoying carnally. But to those ever-thirsting and never-resting intellects who could dive deep into the deepest oceanic beds, who could fly high into the highest heavens, who could explore the whole extent of this earth to the very outskirts of polar regions, who could catch hold of steam and electricity and turn them to manifold uses, who could penetrate into the inmost recesses of the human mind and bring into light rare and mysterious facts that had for centuries been treated as myths,—to such the subject of this essay cannot but appear to open up wonderful possibilities that are in store for human well-being and human progress.

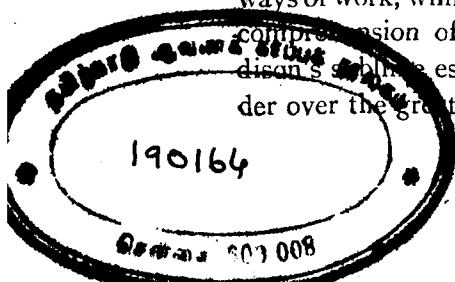
God created man in his image not for making him mortal but for making him immortal like himself. If he become mortal sooner or later, the very purpose of creation will be thwarted. Nevertheless, the purpose of an Almighty power cannot be so thwarted, but it must be fulfilled anyhow. The all-merciful and gracious power cannot rest quiet until it has rendered all living beings happy like itself; for it cannot suffer miserable and un-

happy beings to exist in living and conscious contact with itself. Just as fire transmits its heat and light to substances that lie near to it, just as sugar communicates its sweetness to a glassful of water which it touches, just as magnet induces its attractive power in a piece of iron, just as a noble and virtuous person inspires all who come under his influence with the good qualities he possesses, so also the supreme power that dwells in the heart of every being suffuses it with its light and makes it luminous like itself.

A close and careful observation of creation discloses the fact that the supreme being communicates its light to all living beings solely through the medium of matter; in other words, God achieves his object of rendering the finite selves happy by giving each a material body consisting of sensing, thinking and acting organs and a world comprising within itself various substances that appeal to those organs and call forth the intellectual and aesthetic faculties of the individual selves into active play. Except from the intimate union of the body and soul, the latter is not seen to get any light from any other source, nor does it know of its own nature itself as distinct from the nature of its body. To put the thing in the scientific language, friction between mind and matter is as necessary as between two pieces of matter, namely flint and steel, for the production of understanding in the one and fire in the other. Those who speak lightly or contemptuously of matter and material products, will do well to pause and think a little dispassionately whether they can so underrate them, if they had no brain, no tongue, no eyes, no hands all which are mere material structures moulded so finely and wonderfully not by any known finite self but by a power whose ways of work, while they are palpable, still pass beyond the comprehension of all. Let such flippant people read Addison's essay on "Wonders of Creation" and ponder over the great thoughts that it brings before our mind.

Now, the body thus graciously given to each soul cannot of itself perish suddenly and leave its inhabitant in the lurch, before it has served the purpose of enlightening its understanding. The causes leading to its untimely destruction arise either from one's own wilful and idle ignorance and thoughtlessness, or from indulging oneself in the satisfaction of unrestrained desires. To live long and healthy, the body must be kept active in the right direction and to a permissible extent; and all its organs must be rightly exercised to let in only so much pleasure as they can conveniently receive and transmit. Anything taken that goes beyond its capacity to receive and assimilate, or anything done that overstrains its nerves brings on its breakdown quite unexpectedly. A morsel of food disagreeing with one's stomach or taken in at a time when it could not easily be digested, has been known to cause the instantaneous death of many persons. Or an action done beyond the limit in which the bodily organs can bear the strain, has also been known to cause the death of many. Besides these two causes, there are many others due to ignorance or thoughtlessness, such as exposures to extreme cold and extreme heat, and to dangers coming from wild animals, venomous creatures and undesirable persons. All these and similar others bring about a premature end of one's life. If those who died of these causes had taken a little precaution by controlling their passions and appetites, by avoiding perilous places, persons and adventures, and by leading a plain, simple and righteous life, they might have escaped premature death and lived long.

Nevertheless, it is a lamentable fact that many shut their eyes to the visible dangers that lie in wait to pounce upon their life at a fitting moment. Yet, some great saints, sages and priests, full with the mercy and grace of God, perceive the evil causes that thus interfere with the creative purpose of God, raise their voice against them and after time, and set the people on guard. Still these ad-



JL
M211, N350W
N35

monitions and warnings conveyed thus not only through living voices, but also through voices long silent but expressed permanently in their writings, are neglected, and many die prematurely losing the inestimable scope afforded by a long healthy life for a free and unfettered development of mental powers.

Such early deaths excite pity and pain in the hearts of saintly persons, whenever they happen to come across the scene and they, then, endeavour to resuscitate the dead man if the cause of his death were not of a kind that would baffie their efforts. Except when the bodily organs are crushed out of shape or eaten away by disease-producing germs, they do not think the premature deaths as given up cases. Especially cases of drowning, of heart-disease, of indigestion, of snake-bite and so on, are amenable to their powers of suggestion and manipulation and the dead man revives as if he awoke from sleep and the dead man thereafter. Cases of this character are studied carefully by the new psychologists and brought under the category of "Suspended Animation" or "Catalepsy." In the words of the able psychic thinker Dr. T. J. Hudson "It is purely a sleep of the objective senses, a suspension of the vital functions, a rest of all the vital organs. It can be induced in perfectly healthy persons by the hypnotic processes on the one hand, or, on the other, it may supervene after a long period of illness or nervous exhaustion." "Suspended animation is nearly always followed by the recovery of the patient from illness. The cataleptic condition marks the crisis in many diseases, especially those of the nerves. If the patient is properly managed during that crisis, his convalescence is assured"* This careful investigator of psychic facts was invited to the funeral of a young lady who died fourteen days ago and had seen with his own eyes the young lady reviving from her apparently dead condition. He describes it thus:

* *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, pp. 314, 315.

"The first case is that of a young lady, near Indianapolis, who came to life after fourteen days of suspended animation. Six doctors had applied the usual tests, and pronounced her dead. Her little brother clung to her, against the opinion of the doctors and the will of the parents, and frantically declared that she was not dead. In the excitement the bandage which held her jaw in place was accidentally pushed aside. The jaw fell, and the brother fancied that he saw his sister's tongue moving slowly. 'What do you want, sister?' cried the little fellow. 'Water' was the faint answer from the supposed corpse. Water was administered, the patient revived, and is yet living."

Two other cases cited by him being equally important for a clear understanding of this fact, we shall quote them here from his famous work *'The Law of Psychic Phenomena.'**

"A lady who is now at the head of one of the largest orphan asylums of a western city has been twice pronounced dead by attending physicians, twice prepared for the grave, and twice resuscitated by her friends. On the last occasion extraordinary precautions were taken, in view of her former experience. All the tests known to her physicians were applied, and all doubts were set at rest. She was a second time professionally declared to be dead, and the physicians left the house. In preparing the body for burial it was accidentally pricked by a pin. Soon afterwards it was discovered that a small drop of blood marked the spot where the pin entered. This once more roused the hope of the family, and vigorous treatment soon restored her to consciousness. She is living to-day, a vigorous, useful woman. It is proper to note here that upon being restored, the lady declared that she had never for a moment lost consciousness, that she knew all that went on around her, perfectly comprehended the significance of all the tests which were applied, but felt the utmost indiff-

* *Pp. 310, 311.*

underground rooms constructed for the purpose. That this custom of burying their dead in large earthen urns belonged only to the ancient Tamils and not to the Aryans, has been shown by eminent historians who inquired into the matter carefully and impartially. Dr. Vincent A. Smith the reputed historian of India says: "Many prehistoric cemeteries exist in the Tinnevelly District along the course of the Tamraparni river, the most ancient seat of the pearl and chank or conch-shell fishery. The largest covers an area of 114 acres, a fact which implies the former existence of a dense population. The bodies were interred in great earthenware jars. The peculiarities of the Tinnevelly interments suggest many problems as yet unsolved.

"Burial preceded cremation or burning of the dead in most countries, and India appears to conform to that general rule. The Hindu preference for cremation, which has been established for many centuries, seems to be a result of Indo-Aryan brahmanical influence."*

Mr. Panchanan Mitra of the Calcutta University gives in his interesting work: "Prehistoric India" fuller details of the urn burial that was prevalent in South India, especially in the Tinnevelly district, long before the dawn of the historic period. He writes: "Mr. A. Rea, formerly Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, Southern circle, has brought out the existence of extensive burial grounds at Adichanallur in the Tinnevelly district in Madras. The site at Adichanallur which covers an area of 114 acres is the most extensive yet discovered in South India and stands on the right bank of the Tambaraparni river. It was first brought to notice in 1876 by Dr. Jagor of Berlin. The funeral urns are deposited either singly or more rarely in pairs, in pits excavated in the solid rock or in the gravelly soil. In most cases only a selection of bones appears to have been interred. The burial urns and other articles of pottery which

* *The Oxford History of India*, p. 3.

able resemblance to the heads of the renowned mercantile community of the Tamil Nadu at the present day—the Nattukkottai Chettyars—all these clearly establish the fact that the Panis mentioned in the Rig Veda could have been no other than the ancient enterprising Tamil people who, as testified by the dates inscribed at the bottom of the Telloh statues, had carried on a brisk maritime trade with the people of the west between 4000 B. C. and 3000 B. C.

11. It seems a reasonable inference that these Panis or Panigars could be none other than the Tamils and were probably the ancestors of the modern Nattukkottai Nagarathars. It is a significant piece of evidence that the Rig Veda refers to them by a pure Tamil term as "Panigar."

12. But it might be asked whether the term 'Panigar' is a pure Tamil word. That it is so can be easily shown. The first syllable of this term is 'Pan' which means in Tamil primarily "to do; to work," and subsequently to do a business or carry on trade. And so deriving their name from their trade profession, they came to be called 'Panigars.' According to the law of interchange obtaining among certain consonants, similar to Grimm's law, the first letter P in 'Panigar' changes into V in 'Vanigar.' Such modification of 'P' into 'V' is common in Tamil: as for example, 'Paguppu' changes into 'Vaguppu'; 'Panri' into 'Vanri.' It is his ignorance of the Tamil language and the simple facts mentioned above that has led astray Mr. A. B. Das to arrive at wrong conclusions with regard to the antiquity and greatness of Ancient Dravidian Civilisation.

Aryan tongue which contains the four Vedas, is it too much to say that ye are the first-born and eternal speech?"

POETS AND SCHOLARS—THE REAL FOUNDERS
OF CIVILISATION.

15. Now, it is time we try to get at an idea of the factors that have contributed to the building up of such a civilisation. In prehistoric times, most of the peoples were nomads, with few animal wants, moving from place to place, tending sheep and oxen, and chiefly concerned with finding food for themselves and for their beasts. Gradually some groups discovering the fertility of the Tamil land proceeded there, tilled the land and established themselves round about in a sort of fixed life. It is the dawn of this cultivation period that opened the vista of cultural possibilities, and indeed, as though to commemorate this, Poet Tiruvalluvar immortalised the profession of the tillers of the soil in the following poetic lines: "Round the plough the world centres unawares." "Cultivators are the pillars of the world." "The tillers will find under their shelter all those who have the world under their rule."

16. This cultivation in its turn led to trade, and trade to constant interchange of thoughts and increasing prosperity. Prosperity in its turn brought leisure for a fine cultivation and development of all the arts. Temples and schools flooded the land and poets, scholars and philosophers found patrons in plenty.

17. A large increase in the number of such scholars and poets and the conditions of the times that facilitated their prosperity by imparting to them evernewer and newer impulses, formed the important causes for the vigorous growth of the Tamilian civilisation. A curious and inquiring spirit of the young people using an incomparably flexible tongue—Tamil—led to a marvellous development of knowledge.

18. A growing civilisation might conceivably be ill-directed by the gifted seers of the times if they do not prudently use their God given talents. A good thinker analyses the world and its phenomena and all the wonders of creation and gives a true and unbiassed account of all that is knowable to man. He fears not to tell what is true even though it may seem unpleasant to some while he encourages healthy growth and metes out praise where it is due.

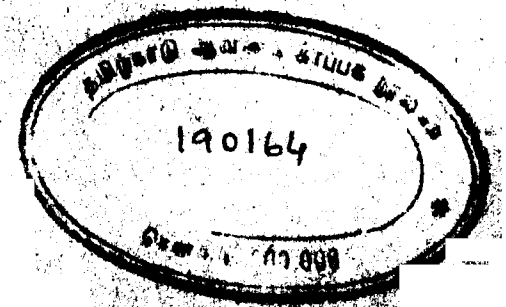
19. It is the peculiar good fortune of the Tamils that those halcyon days produced among them thinkers and writers of the right type, differing in this respect from their brethren of such contemporary Western Civilised Nations as the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Chaldean, the Aryan, etc. It is because of this vital difference that the Tamil civilisation endures against odds while others remain merely as archaeological curiosities. The language used by the Tamils continues alive and grows while the rest are all respectable dead languages. To those who deeply consider all these facts it must be obvious that this enduring characteristic of the Tamil Civilisation is not a

aeval classics like Silappadhikaram, Manimekhalai, Tiruvachakam, etc., cannot notice more than from 3% to 7% of Sanskrit words in them, while even later works like Nalavenba, Moodurai etc., reveal not more than 7 to 8% foreign words. It is striking that this zeal for nursing the inherent genius of our mother tongue keeps even the religious and philosophical treatises of the times that should of necessity treat of ideas prevalent in Sanskrit literature, well within 10% of exotic words.

POETS AND THE THREE IDEALS OF LIFE:
HAPPINESS, WEALTH AND VIRTUE.

Now we pass on from the subject dealing with poets' fostering care of their mother tongue and the development it underwent under their care to that dealing with the view they took of the three rules of conduct or ideals of life: Happiness, Wealth, and Virtue. To a keen inquirer and observer of the animate and the inanimate, it will be obvious that the inanimate remains not only in intimate union with the animate but it also serves the animate to grow and develop both physically and intellectually. This intimate relation between the two seems to have been brought about for the purpose of removing the gloom that envelops the mind of animate beings, and kindling their intellectual activities and of setting them in joy and everlasting blessedness. When we make a careful study of the nature of human mind from the time of its manifestation in the new-born child to its maturity in the ripe old age,

mortal forms and perform human functions imperfect, erroneous and vengeful? When a man has risen once to the highest and the noblest conception of a being, it is unthinkable that the same man will descend down to the lowest and the meanest notion of the same being. So much opposed to each other are the Divine and human natures that one cannot say without contradiction that the very same seers who rose once to the height of the Divine conception of Rudra, sank down afterwards to the lowest level of thought, and ascribed to him the human character also. In fact the seers in question were not so hopelessly inconsistent; what they said of the intrinsic nature of Rudra will, on a careful examination, be found to be in perfect harmony with what they declared of his form and functions. But, all along, the kind of interpretation that has been brought to bear upon his form and functions has been incorrect and misleading. To my knowledge, even highly accomplished scholars both Hindu and European, whose patient labours in the field of ancient Vedic literature kindle the mingled feelings of wonder, admiration and gratitude in the hearts of all Vedic students, have not correctly interpreted the seemingly contradictory characters of Rudra, nor have they perceived the truth that underlies the conception of his personality. If this truth can be properly understood and grasped, it will, I believe, lead to an ultimate solution of the vexed problems of religion and set at rest all sectarian wrangles. That a clear comprehension of this important truth was reserved for the seers and saints of the old Tamil literature, will become apparent as we proceed on.



TL
M21, 1504
N2

CHAPTER II

EXPLANATIONS

Why was the common and impersonal heavenly Father of mankind individualized as Rudra? Why Was he described as possessing a form of light glowing with red or gold colour? And why was he said to remain in an inseparable union with a female deity called Prisni, Aditi or Uma? These are questions, correct answers to which will, I hope, unravel the mystery that encircles his individuality and will render the universal conception of God distinctly intelligible, simple and immensely useful. I will, therefore, make an attempt to find out an answer for every one of them.

In the first place, let us consider why God was individualized as Rudra. The common consent of man tends to take God as all-gracious and all-beneficent; and the Rig-Veda too speaks of Rudra as all-gracious and all-beneficent. Why should God be gracious and beneficent? As all living beings are buried in mental darkness, as they all suffer greatly on that account, in order to release them from that darkness and from that suffering, a supreme being who is all light, love and happiness must necessarily exist; and unless he be gracious and merciful he cannot be said to be sensible of their pains and sufferings, nor can he be regarded as inclined to help and free them from such sufferings. These invaluable qualities: grace, and mercy it

is that bring him into vital, active and intimate relation with man and other living things. As has been pointed out by Prof. William James,¹ his immateriality, his infinitude, his absoluteness and transcendence have no interest for man, since they do not serve to bring him directly near to his suffering children. No doubt, philosophers from Xenophanes, Parmenides and Plato of the old Greek school down to our own Sankaracharya and Spinoza, Berkeley and Kant, all held that there existed but one true substance, a colourless, formless, impalpable and incomprehensible Absolute transcending the limits of time and space and abstracted from all material and mental phenomena which, according to them, have no existence of their own but are supposed to be mere null and void. But "to think of it in this way," says Walter Pater, the eminent critic, thinker and model prose-writer of modern age, "was in reality not to think of it at all:—That in short Being so pure as this is pure nothing."² And the same writer again wisely observes: "Thereafter, in every age, some will be found to start a fresh quixotically, *through what waste of words!* in search of that true substance, the One, *the Absolute, which to the majority of acute people is after all but zero, and a mere algebraic symbol for nothingness.*"³ Thus the human instincts and intellect can never be satisfied with a dispass-

¹ The Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 445—447.

² Plato and Platonism, p. 34.

³ Ibid, p. 40. Italics are mine.

ionate and unsympathetic Absolute which is held by some to exist out of all relation with man and the world. Indeed, his daily wants, cares and sufferings create in man an ever persistent desire to seek a remedy for all these evils and to picture God as the greatest physician who keeps all healing medicines in his hands. That is why the Rig-Veda calls Rudra the physician of physicians—the modern Vaidyanath. Nor has man erred in putting his trust in God believing him to be his gracious father and beneficent friend who is ever nearer to him than even his own soul and body, since there are clear indications in the provisions of nature which exhibit beyond doubt God's love and care for all living beings. Wherefore it is that Lord Rudra is called the father of the world in the Rig-Veda.¹ While setting up hard life-struggles in the lower animal kingdom for calling forth the energy and intelligence of its denizens, has not Nature provided the weaker ones with a foreknowledge of dangers, with colours hardly distinguishable from their habitat, with swift feet and steel-like horns? And is not man himself above all endowed with superior intelligence and reasoning faculties, a careful, timely and judicious exercise of which may enable him to overcome almost all difficulties and maintain a happy life? An intelligent study of Biology will disclose the fact that in all its dealings with life and life-adjustments Nature is always just and gracious.

¹ "Bhuvanasya pitaram," vi. 49, 10.

Where this love-nature exists, there all that have life can never live one apart from the other. Love is the bond of union but its opposite hate cuts it asunder. If God be a being animated with love, then he cannot stand away from the suffering souls the objects of his love. As God is love, so too are all living beings, especially the human, constituted of love. Man can never live without discovering this love nature of God, without discovering from the core of his heart his own unquenchable love of God. The veriest savages whom we think lowest in the scale of human intelligence and civilisation are nevertheless shown by Andrew Lang¹ to possess the highest conception of the Supreme Being, of a kind and loving Heavenly Father whom they worship with all the love and humility they are capable of. Just as he sees his children everywhere, so also must his children see him, meet him and mingle with him. Being a spirit of infinite power, he can see them as well through mind as through matter, but they of finite mental powers cannot, at this stage of evolution, see him through the mind's eye as they can through the physical. Until they reach that highest stage in which their mental eye will open to see him face to face in all his pristine glory and dazzling splendour, will he leave them to grope after him in darkness? No; he will not, he cannot, for he is all love for his children; it is because of this love that he willingly condescends to show a little of himself even through the physical matter, so that

¹ The Making of Religion, Ch. IX, X, XI and XII.

we may see him even with our physical eyes, meet him and mingle with him to a permitted degree. When in this way the Supreme Lord of the universe shows us a little of himself he is supposed to have individualized himself for our sake and is, on that account, spoken of as Rudra. But in fact, he does not become finite thereby. Just as from our point of view the immense body of the sun looks like a tiny circular plate of polished gold, so too the infinite God of the world looks to our feeble physical and mental eyes as if he were but a finite little person like ourselves. Yet his finitude is simply apparent and not wholly true. In fact his seeming littleness is the effect of two causes. The first of which is, as shown above, the soul's incapacity to perceive his boundless nature and extent, while the second is the limited nature of the physical matter itself which can but serve to manifest only a part of his glory, standing as it does, mid-way between himself and ourselves as a meeting point.

CHAPTER III

THE INTERMEDIATE PART OF MATTER

Well, what part of the physical matter, then, does stand as a meeting-point at which the Supreme being and the individual selves come together and by means of which the latter are enabled to see the former, enjoy the glorious sight and offer to it their humble prayers and forms of worship? This important question leads us on to a consideration of our second question also, namely, why is Lord Rudra is spoken of as having a form of light glowing with the red or gold colour?

That God is immanent everywhere in this physical matter is an undisputed fact, but what part of it serves to show him to us is the most momentous question to be settled. For, that which is susceptible of receiving the finest spiritual light of God and that which can transmit that light to our eye, must itself possess a nature analogous to that of God to a permissible extent; otherwise its mediumistic function cannot take place. Let us, therefore, turn to matter to inquire which part of it possesses that rare intermediate character in itself.

For all practical purposes the whole material world is, as we all know, resolvable into five primary elements as fire, air, earth, water and ether. Of these air and ether are invisible and as such cannot relate themselves to our

sight; earth is an opaque body of matter though it contains here and there some bright substances and crystalline bodies; water is, no doubt, a transparent substance but it has no light of its own; and so the only thing left for us to consider is fire alone. Not only is fire self-luminous but it also possesses heat and many other properties which make it a fitting receptacle for taking in god's spiritual light. Whether fire is a substance as was held by Helmholtz,¹ or only a form of energy as is held by other scientists, is a subject immaterial for our present purpose. It is a veritable fact in nature which appeals to our senses of touch and sight and we shall, therefore, treat it with Helmholtz as a physical element. Nevertheless, the truth must not be overlooked that fire lies half-way between spirit and matter; otherwise it could not serve as a medium for transmitting to us the spiritual light of the Supreme Being.

Having shown the fact that fire constitutes, by its very nature, a medium or-meeting point for God and individual souls, to come together, let me proceed to consider its other properties which serve to render it a principle approaching God in its character and function. God possesses a spiritual light which dispels mental darkness and enlightens soul's understanding; even so fire emits light which drives away outer darkness and illumines our eyes. God is beneficent in his creative and preservative functions but fierce when performing the destructive; and so too is fire. So long

¹ Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects, Vol. 1, P. 151.

prove that life is not another material substance but an immaterial and imponderable something which has not been found to add to its weight when it remains one with it nor has it been to lessen it when it leaves that body. Nor again, can this something be a form of blind energy such as heat, light, and electricity, since it is conscious of itself and its actions, since it performs its functions not according to blind and uniform mechanical laws but according to its own free-will and fancy which cannot be brought out by any known agency under any fixed laws. How markedly this contrast between the material body and that something which dwells inside of it, is set forth by Prof. William James, may be seen clearly from what he says in his larger work on Psychology. "If some iron filings", he writes, "be sprinkled on a table and a magnet brought near them, they will fly through the air for a certain distance and stick to its surface. A savage seeing the phenomenon explains it as the result of an attraction or love between the magnet and the filings. But let a card cover the poles of the magnet, and the filings will press forever against its surface without its ever occurring to them to pass around its sides and thus come into more direct contact with the object of their love. Blow bubbles through a tube into the bottom of a pail of water, they will rise to the surface and mingle with the air. Their action may again be poetically interpreted as due to a longing to recombine with the mother-atmosphere above the surface. But if you invert a jar full of water over the pail, they will rise and remain lodged beneath its bottom, shut in from the outer

is dependent on matter for its phenomenal appearance—for its manifestation to us here and now, and for all its terrestrial activities; but otherwise, I conceive that it is independent, that its essential existence is continuous and permanent, though its interactions with matter are discontinuous and temporary; and I conjecture that it is subject to a law of evolution—that a linear advance is open to it—whether it be in its phenomenal or in its occult state.”* In another place of the same book he observes, “We do not know to generate life without the action of antecedent life at present, though that may be a discovery lying ready for us in the future; but even if we did, it would still be true (as I think) that the life was in some sense pre-existent, that it was not really created *de novo*, that it was brought into actual practical every-day existence doubtless, but that it had pre-existed in some sense too.”† Again in the concluding pages of that book, he states, “So far, however, all effort at spontaneous generation has been a failure; possibly because some essential ingredient or condition was omitted, possibly because great lapse of time was necessary. But suppose it was successful; what then? We should then be reproducing in the laboratory a process that must at some past age have occurred on the earth; for at one time the earth was certainly hot and molten and inorganic, whereas now it swarms with life. Does that show that the earth generated life? By no means; no more than it need necessarily have generated all the gases of its atmosphere, or the meteoric dust which lies upon its

* *Life and Matter*, pp. 136—137. † *Ibid*, p. 149.

snows.”* These extracts from a living scientist’s work will suffice to represent the attitude of modern science towards the solution arrived at by Tyndall and Meikandan concerning the problem of life and matter. Not only by experiments but even under our own daily observations, we find in the core of every living material body, set in the sharpest contrast to it, an immaterial, conscious and intelligent principle which you may call by whatever name you choose such as mind, life, self, soul, ego, spirit, *atma* and *uyir*.

Though the soul is thus naturally distinct from matter, we see it here only in an intimate union with a material body. Why this intimacy between the two was brought about, has also been explained by our St. Meikandan not from any assumed, unfounded and fanciful theory but from the same and simple practical point of view as is within the easy reach of all reflective minds. The purpose of this union, he says, is to bring enlightenment to the individual soul which lies immersed in mental gloom. For a clear comprehension of this fact we must again turn to our old example. Watch the condition of the new-born infant. For some days since her birth, she remains for the most part in deep sleep, except at stated intervals when pinched by hunger and thirst, she opens her eyes and cries. Immediately the gracious and loving mother takes her to her breast and suckles her. Thus satisfied, the child remains for a while awake and then goes again to sleep. In these dim beginnings of child-life, only a feeble ray of

* *Ibid*, p. 197.

mental light peeps through for a short time and thereafter all is again deep and thick gloom. Observe here how the provision of benign nature, without permitting the child to sleep away all her time in darkness, through hunger and thirst, taps at her like her gentle mother and brings her back, every now and then, to consciousness and activity. Here, then, we see clearly two opposite principles at work, both in close connexion with the child's mental life, one seeking to draw the child's consciousness off from the other's grip, while the other easily drags it back to its empty cellar of pitchy darkness. The child's body is so constituted as to call forth and disengage her consciousness little by little from the possession of mental darkness, while this darkness itself works all the time against it and regains its influence over the soul in every next moment. To this earliest struggle that is going on in the life of every human offspring, might be traced all the later and more complicated contests both in the individual and social lives of mankind. So far, it is as clear as day light that three principles, considerably diversified in nature and character, co-exist in one inseparable unity, each interpenetrating the other in a mysterious manner. Of these three, one is an individual mind, the other a darkening and limiting cause which we may call as a subtle and peculiar kind of matter, if the term matter may be so extended as to include in its meaning that which is imponderable and non-intelligent but has a certain manifest power of direct action, and the third a tangible, visible and extremely complex organic body which by degrees

serves to evoke the consciousness of the indwelling spirit and enables it to develop and display all the infinite potentialities of its mind.

In the terminology of Saiva Siddhanta these three are called Pasu, Pásam and Maya. Here it is necessary to distinguish between the meaning of the term Maya as used in the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta and that used in the modern Vedanta. We do not find this word Maya anywhere either in the ancient Vedas or in the earliest Upanishads. It makes its first appearance only in a later Upanishad called Svetasvatara; even there it is used not as a name for some deceptive phenomenon but as a synonym for the term Prakriti which signifies the primordial cause of matter and all its products, such as this world and all its objects. The doctrine of illusion is quite unknown to the Svetasvatara and still older works of the Aryan tongue. In the Saiva Siddhanta too, this term Maya is invariably employed to signify the substratum of all the material worlds and their contents. The meaning of deception which it has acquired in the neo-Vedanta is of comparatively modern date and as such it finds no place in the ancient Vedanta, as has been conclusively shown by the profound Vedic scholar Mr. Behari Lal Sastri. He says in his *Thesaurus of Vedic Knowledge*, "The Mayavada or illusion theory of later Vedantism appears in some of the modern commentaries of the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutas."* To Saiva Siddhanta, treasuring as it does the golden thoughts of ancient Indian

* Page, 185.

Saints and Sages, this illusion-theory of neo-Vedanta is quite foreign, it being throughout concerned with the hard realities of life and strict in using, consistently to its principle, the term Maya to denote the real basic element of matter and its appearances.

From these few and simple observations of the beginnings of child's life, it is plain how this complex body comes into this world bearing within its womb a blind, sleepy and undeveloped soul, how it afterwards tends to awaken it from its torpor and stimulate it to respond to the summons made from without and how as time advances it forms itself as a medium of unequal importance to bring its activities into vital relations with the objects of an external world. If this body be not given, or if it be cut off prematurely, what the state of this finite soul would be is easy to imagine. Surely it must lie in the same blinding darkness as it is found to be when it comes into this world, it would have no consciousness either of itself or of its surroundings, it would have no means of getting out of this imprisonment, nor would it have a knowledge of other finite souls or be known by them if all including myself and yourselves had remained deep buried in that impenetrable gloom. It is only after we are sent into this world clothed in this wonderfully constructed body with all its internal and external organs made and adjusted in faultless perfection, that we are able to see each other, mingle with one another physically, morally and intellectually. If there be any defect in this organism, if you are born blind, deaf, or mute, you are made unable

WELCOME ADDRESS

Vidwan P. Kannappa Mudaliar, Secretary read the welcome address and presented it to the Swamiji. The address was enclosed in an elegant silver casket. The address enumerated the valuable services rendered by Swamiji on the platform and research works.

Mr. P. Balasubramania Mudaliar presented the report of the Kazhagam.

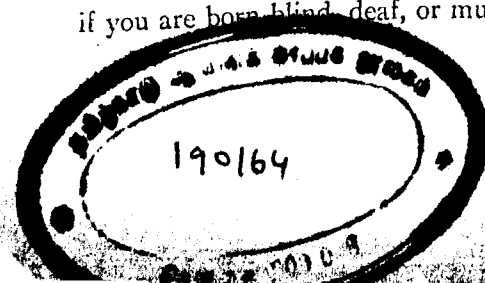
Mr. Kannuswami Pillai read the messages received from certain persons and organisations throughout Madras Presidency. The important personages who had sent their messages, are:—His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakotipeetam, Mr. Kingsbury of Colombo, The Rev. Popley, Mahamahopadhyaya, V. Swaminatha Iyer, Mr. M. Venkatasami Nattar of Annamalai University, Dr. P. Subbarayan, Mr. P. T. Swami of Rangoon, Rao Bahadur Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, Mr. Karunakara of Madura and Mr. P. S. Subramanya Sastri.

Swami Vadachalam's Address

The following is an English version of the text of the Tamil address delivered by Sr. La Sri Swami Vedachalam of Pallavaram on Saturday last at the Pachaiyappa's Hall on the occasion of the celebration of the Thiruvalluvar Day:—

"I thank the organisers of the celebration for according me the privilege of presiding over this function. Scholars of old have laid down that one can find in Thirukkural all one desires to know. Practically speaking there is no contrivance by which one can measure the waters of the deep sea. All the different measures that are in use at present cannot accomplish such a feat. So also with all our knowledge. We cannot adequately understand and appreciate what all is contained in the Kural. Even if the vast expanse of water of a big sea if we were to dip an o'clock to its brim one can hope to get only one o'clock of water and not more. Similarly into the deep ocean of wisdom of the Kural I shall dip in and try to intimate to you what little I have learnt.

"Two thousand years ago there existed six different religious sects. Each one of them claimed superiority over the other and never even agreed to differ. But all these six varied and warring religious sects united together once to pay homage to the supreme work Thiruk-



3L
M 211/1/35 BW
1935

kural, though each one of them claimed it as an ornament of their own sect. So described a contemporary poet of Sage Thiruvalluvar. Another contemporary said that the Kural was divided into three parts Virtue, Wealth and Love and all the different religious sects that existed then accepted what was promulgated therein. Still a third contemporary scholar discovered that Thirukkural not only treated of the three-fold subjects—Virtue, Wealth and Love—but also of the fourth transcendental thing the 'Moksha' or 'Vee lu.'

(to continue)

Some of the opinions expressed by some eminent
Subscribers on receiving the 1st no. of The Ocean of Wisdom

Mr. K. M. Chellappah, District Court, Jaffna:—"I have received your post card, also the copy of The Ocean of Wisdom by V. P. P. which I have duly honored. I have finished reading your paper including the cover. I congratulate you on your noble and bold attempt. This should have been attempted long ago. No harm. At least you have started it now. The subjects chosen already indicate our superiority over all others. I have been able to understand the matter through English better. Several writers merely copy what the westerners say and force on us. This ought not to be. I am glad your presence in the field will purify the stuff and keep the field clean."

Mr. R. Sabhanayakam, National Bank of India Ltd., Colombo:—"I am in receipt of the first copy of The Ocean of wisdom, for which please accept my grateful thanks. I shall mention your paper to the friends who might be interested."

Mr. A. Navaratnarajah, Office of the Divisional Superintendent of Post Offices, Kandy, Ceylon:—"I am thankful that my name is still in your records and that I am enabled to contribute in my own little way towards a cause so worthy and admirable."

Mr. V. Kandiah, Audit Office, Colombo:—"Thanks very much for your kind card. Before I could read through your magazine it was snatched from my hands and it is still in circulation. Admittedly your field is in Ceylon. Even Indians are stunned at the sway you hold here."