

THE OCEAN OF WISDOM

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

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TO THE SUBSCRIBERS OF THE OCEAN OF WISDOM

The editor and author of the Ocean of wisdom has at last succeeded in bringing out this the 6th no. of its 1st vol. and completing it. It has taken nearly two years for him to bring this to completion. The delay was inevitable in the unfavourable conditions under which he carries on his noble, instructive, and highly beneficial work for more than 35 years. He is not only a deep scholar in Tamil, English and Sanscrit but is also a fastidious critic and writer who is not easily satisfied until he attains perfection in the manner of treating a subject and in writing it out attractively. This is one of the causes for the protracted publication of his works.

Secondly, want of pecuniary aid due to the apathy of the rich Tamils who know next to nothing in Tamil and in English too possess little of high learning, renders it impossible for him to obtain the help of able hands for his great work. And so he himself has to attend to the printing and publishing work of his writings. In addition to these he has to go out often to conduct annual celebrations of Societies and deliver lectures in response to the invitations coming from near and distant places. Still with his slow, but steady work he has been able all alone to bring out within the past 35 years seventeen volumes of his Tamil magazine "The Jnanasagaram" and produce in its pages forty Tamil prose works all written by himself. His Tamil works dealing with a variety of subjects very useful to mankind are eagerly sought out and read all over Southern India, Ceylon, Burma, Malay States, South Africa and wherever the Tamils are found.

To reach a wider circle, he also edited some 26 years ago an English magazine called "The Oriental Mystic Myna" and published 10 nos. of it but owing to pressure of official work (for he was then a lecturer in Tamil in the Madras Christian College) and financial difficulties he had to stop its publication. How much and how eagerly his English articles that appeared in its pages were read and appreciated, became evident when deep regret was expressed by its readers at its discontinuance. It is at the renewed request of his readers, that he has ventured again to bring out this English magazine and publish in its pages his English writings.

The serials: Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets, The Conception of God as Rudra, The Saiva Siddhanta as a Philosophy of Practical Knowledge, and Tholkappiam and Marriage, will, it is hoped, be completed in the second vol. and will form into four whole and separate treatises.

The serial: Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets, is an English rendering of the Tamil work published by the author in the 17th vol. of his Tamil magazine Jnanasagaram. The English rendering so far published was done by that able scholar Mr. T. Sivaramasethu Pillai, M. A., B. L. But unfortunately pressure of his official work has made it impossible for him to continue the work. Some other good English scholars were requested to continue it but they declined saying it a very difficult task. But one great man has promised to undertake it early in January, 1937, when he hopes to recover his

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WHO THE ORIGINATORS OF YOGA?

"The Sutras of the yoga-philosophy are ascribed to Patanjali, who is also called Phanin or Sesa, the divine serpent. He may have been the author or the representative of the yoga-philosophy without being necessarily the author of the Sutras." Prof. Max Muller, in his Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 410.

I

From the above quotation taken from the last great work of an accomplished exponent of the Sanscrit language, religion and philosophy, we get a clue as to who, of the two ancient peoples the Aryan and the Tamilian, could have been the originators of the system of philosophy called the yoga. To this point we shall come a little later on.

The first systematic treatise that gives a clear exposition of the principles and practice of yoga is the Sutras of Patanjali in Sanscrit. And in Tamil there is the Thirumandiram of Thirumoolar which is considerably larger and fuller than the above. The Patanjali's work contains only 194 short aphorisms in all, whereas Thirumoolar's Thirumandiram consists of 3000 verses, each verse having four lines of four feet each. Further, all that pertains to the higher aspects and practices of yoga and its mysteries is not so exhaustively treated in any other work either in Sanscrit or Tamil as in the Thirumandiram of St. Thirumoolar. But here we are concerned more with the work of Patanjali than with the other.

That the principles and practices of yoga had been in existence long before the time of Patanjali and his treatise is testified to by explicit mention made of them in such ancient upanishads as Katha, Svetasvatara, Maitrayaniya, Chandogya and a few others. Prof Deussen

observes: "In post-Vedic times the practice of yoga was developed into a formal system with its own text-book (the Sutras of Patanjali). The rise of this system, as its first beginnings in Kath. 3 and 6, Svet. 2 and Maitr. 6 show, belongs to the time when the original idealism of the Upanishad teaching began already to harden into the realistic philosophy of the Sankhya. On this foundation, which was far from being adapted to its original conception, the later yoga system was raised"* So it is obvious that the ideas of yoga and its practice were in vogue much anterior to the time of Patanjali and that Patanjali only brought their essential points together, arranging them coherently and giving them a definite and distinct shape. Into the vexed question as regards the date of Patanjali I do not wish to enter, since the great Sanscrit scholar Prof. Max Muller himself leaves it in doubt., although he suggests the second century B. C. as his probable date;† while an eminent American scholar Mr. W. J. Flagg, who made a comparative study of the different systems of yoga that belonged to the Hindus, the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Accadians, the Mohammadans, and the Hebrews in his excellent manual on yoga, brings Patanjali's work down to the seventh century A. D.‡ Whatever be the date which further research may assign to the composition of the yoga Sutras of Patanjali, there can be no doubt that it was Patanjali who founded the yoga philosophy and, in the words of Dr. A.A. Macdonell, "elaborated the doctrine, describing at length the means of attaining concentration and carrying it to the highest pitch."

At this very beginning of his translation and eloquent exposition of the yoga Sutras, Swami Vivekananda rightly rendered "Atha yoganusasanam" into "Now concentration

* *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 384.

† *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 411.

‡ *Yoga or Transformation*, p. 178.

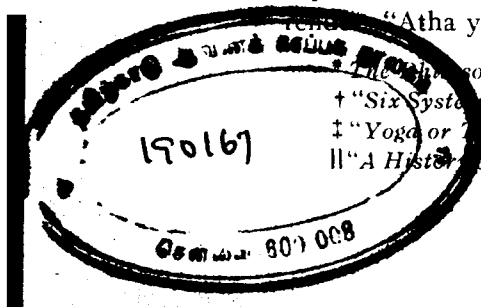
|| *A History of Sanscrit Literature*, p. 397.

is explained." And Mr. Ramaprasad, who has also translated into English the yoga Sutras of Patanjali with the commentaries of Vyasa and Vachaspati Misra, in the same way renders the term yoga into "concentration" or "contemplation."*

Now, concentration of what, on what? To the first, the answer may be given as the concentration of one's own mind or attention on something. In our daily experience, it is a matter well known that, without one-pointedness of the mind, without an undivided attention, nothing can be known, nothing can be done, nay the very growth of intellect will be dwarfed, and even more the formation of memory power will be checked. The man who acquires the rich stores of knowledge, who achieves most in this brief span of life, is only he who has learnt to exercise his mind in the great art of concentration. While one child takes a number of hours, or days or weeks or even months to get his lesson by heart, another picks it up in a minute or at a rapid glance. Whether a man aims at obtaining happiness in this world or in that which is to come, he cannot obtain it unless he concentrate his thought on the means of obtaining it and does it with a singleness of mind. Even those who care for nothing but the enjoyment of earthly pleasures, have to bestow a certain amount of attention on it at the time of their enjoyment. Otherwise, it loses its efficacy, attraction, and pleasure. When one is engaged in enjoying the finest delicacies at table, he enjoys them most to the degree he checks the straying of his mind and settles it on the act of enjoying them. Similarly every successful or unsuccessful operation of the mind results either from an intensity of concentration or the lack of it.

Now, the ancient sages of India, especially those who lived in the south, having their daily bodily wants easily supplied by luscious fruits, roots, nuts, leaves and grains

* *"The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali"* published by the Panini Office, Allahabad.



which plenteously grow there, were naturally led to reflect on the fleeting character of the earthly pleasures and the futility of devoting one's valuable time and energy wholly to an eager pursuit of such a mirage. Consequently they applied themselves strenuously to seek for an object which is permanently enjoyable, which is beyond birth, death and disease, which is untainted by sin and crime, which purges of the impurities of those who cling to it tenaciously and discovered at last, after long and laborious search, its existence within their own selves and in the core of all substances that lie outside their mind and body. And on thinking deeply as to the means of getting into an intimate touch with such a being whose existence can only be felt but whose person is beyond the reach of human vision, they sought further for an object in which or through which not only can it be felt but it can also be seen. After searching one by one all substances that fall under the four categories as fire, air, earth and water, they discovered at last fire as constituting the fitting vehicle for manifesting the supreme being called God by mankind rather vaguely. For a rational explanation of how a supreme spiritual principle can be manifested in fire or light which is palpably physical, the reader is referred to my treatise on "The Conception of God as Rudra."

Now, even after the grand discovery had been made, the sages could not rest content, since light, though it forms a fitting vehicle for manifesting God, in itself remains void of consciousness, feeling, will and intelligence. Their longing for a being who can understand their wants and desires, who can sympathise with them in their sufferings, who can help them to come out of those sufferings and can set them in a state of eternal happiness, took possession of their mind so completely that they could not but imagine in the light the presence of a being who in some respects bore resemblance to the person of a human being. Actuated by love and mercy for the suffering humanity, the incomprehensible being, they thought, manifested himself

in light, so that he might become readily comprehensible by the finite mind of man. Not only to his finite mind but to his finite perception also did he seem to appear in the form of man. While speculating thus on the nature and character of the form which God was thought to have assumed for the sake of man, the sages were extremely careful to distinguish the divine constitution from the constitution of man. God's thought-form expressing itself in light was all light through and through and spiritual; but human form was all flesh and blood and grossly material; the former was beyond birth, death, and disease, whereas the latter was subject to all the three. He who was called God in his infinite and incomprehensible aspect was by the sages called Siva in his apparently finite and comprehensible aspect. Still his person was conceived to be quite different from the physical bodily form of man. It is a conspicuous feature of the Saiva religion that even unto this day it cannot bring itself to any compromise with any religion which ascribes births and deaths and disease to that which it takes to be its god.

The sages were far from being wrong in conceiving god as a person, simply because he is a spiritual being like man. All spiritual beings possess thought, will and feeling, and thought implies the presence of mental images formed inwardly in correspondence with outer material images and impressed indelibly upon memory. He alone is a thoughtful man who possesses abundant memory images and forgets them not; whereas he is thoughtless who possesses no such images and forgets even the few he negligently had. It is clear, therefore, that personality consists in the richness of thought-forms which it stores, whether that personality be either divine or human. Still a great many who cannot understand what personality really means, take it to be an attribute of an embodied spirit like man. That that was not what the great thinkers meant by the term personality, may be pointed out by what Dr. James Ward has said of it in his famous Gifford lectures on

"Pluralism and Theism." He says: "As to God from the point of view of man; then, we can only regard him as Spirit, as possessing intelligence and will, and so as personal."* And Dr. J. R. Illingworth has explained it still more clearly as follows: "Looked at analytically, then, the fundamental characteristic of personality is self-consciousness, the quality in a subject of becoming an object to itself, or in Locke's language, 'considering itself as itself' and saying. 'I am I.' But as in the very act of becoming thus self-conscious I discover in myself desires, and a will, the quality of self-consciousness immediately involves that of self-determination, the power of making my desires an object of my will, and saying 'I will do what I desire.'"+

Simply because the self-consciousness of man and along with it his personality, evolve themselves, only after his being clothed in a corporal form, we are not justified in attributing corporeality to the personality of God also. Being perfect in all his intrinsic qualities, God needs no corporal form for manifesting his personality. But such is not the case with man and other individual souls. For these lie, from time out of mind, buried in darkness that for evolving their self-consciousness they stand in absolute need of corporal forms created so finely by God for the purpose. How necessary is the physical body for evolving and developing consciousness in man and other living beings, may not strike any one so long as he remains indifferent or inattentive to the fact; and in this state of heedlessness, he may even go the length of decrying it as a fetter and burden and express a wish to be freed from it as early as possible, as some pious people have done. But no sooner has a part or the whole of his body been affected with a bad disease, than he feels deeply the necessity and usefulness of a healthy body. Without a

* "Pluralism and Theism," pp. 442, 443.

† "Personality Human and Divine," pp. 22, 23.

sound body there can be no sound mind. This law applies only to the finite souls inasmuch as they are plunged in darkness and require the aid of an organised matter to get out of it and see the light of consciousness.

But God is eternally conscious and stands therefore ever so independent of the aid of matter that his personality could not be said to have manifested itself through his contact with matter. It is true that we cannot conceive of our personality except with the aid of our physical body and under the limitation it imposes on us; but from that it does not follow, as has been pointed out by Prof. William Knight, "that personality cannot exist, or be consciously realised, except under the condition of a limiting *non-ego*." He pertinently asks: "Is it not conceivable that the sense of a limiting *non-ego* would vanish, in the case of a being that was transcendent, and a life that was all-pervasive?"*

Though God thus remains untouched by matter, he, as a being full of thought and intelligence, creates in his mind an infinite variety of thought-forms and impresses them on the uncreated matter and brings all these seen multitudinous bodies into existence for the use of finite souls. From the most simple to the most complex organic structures all must have been created in strict correspondence to the thought-forms which must have existed in God's mind as their prototypes. So, no material form which serves as an indispensable means of evoking the consciousness of a soul that dwells within it, can be looked upon as mean and contemptible, however much it may look unseemly and however much the soul within it may seem sappy. Every body and every soul carry within them not only the mark of divine purpose but also the divine mind itself, if deeply looked into. Still, the figure of man constitutes the climax of creation so far as our present knowledge goes and he must, therefore, represent the exact image of God's supreme thought-image as has been

* "Aspects of Theism," p. 163.

told in the first chapter of Genesis. It, therefore, seems highly reasonable that for concentrating his mind on God, the yogi sets up not only before his eyes but also before his mind an image that looks like human.

The above considerations have brought us down to the point which suggests the right kind of answer to the second question 'concentration on what?' raised at the beginning of this essay; and the answer is this plainly: the concentration of one's mind on the person of God the almighty. Patanjali the author of the yoga sutras clearly tells us that Samadhi or complete concentration or meditation can result only from "Devotion to Isvara" (Isvara pranidhanat. I, 23); and in the second chapter, he again lays stress on this point by saying "Perfect contemplation can be attained only by devoting oneself wholly to Isvara" (Samadhi siddhirisvara pranidhanat, II, 45). Here the fact must be noted that Patanjali mentions no deity of the Vedic pantheon as the object of one's intense concentration. On the contrary he calls that which is worthy of such concentration, Isvara, by which term he means the supreme principle of intelligence itself "that has never been touched by sufferings, actions, rewards, or consequent dispositions."* What he calls Isvara thus, he further carefully distinguishes from individual souls by one more special quality peculiar to it but not to others, namely, the quality of omniscience which has its seat only in Isvara (Ch. I, 25). It is evident from this that not only had Patanjali been a strict monotheist but his ideas of God and finite souls, and of souls' emancipation through an exclusive devotion to God had also been quite unique in ancient Sanscrit literature, these being totally foreign to the worship of the Vedic deities, and the rites and observances that are found so prominently in the Vedas and the Brahmanas.

* Prof. Max Muller's English rendering of the Patanjali yoga Sutra 24 in Ch. II in his "Six Systems of Indian Philosophy," p. 419.

submitted his valuable treatise to the unsparing criticism of a great linguist and teacher called *Athangottasan* and, when this erudite and just critic questioned every now and then the correctness of the arrangement and treatment of the subject-matter as well as the accuracy of the rules and principles laid down in it, he explained them all in an adequate manner and maintained his position so coolly, consistently and reasonably that the formidable critic was led at last to approve the book and permit its circulation.

The Proem has noted further the most important fact—important as serving to fix the date of Tholkappiar, that he acquired a full knowledge of the Sanscrit grammar Aindra also. Our author seems to have had at that early age an instinct for a comparative knowledge of linguistic science and had, therefore, added to his deep and wide study of the Tamil language, an equally profound knowledge of Sanscrit and its first grammar. In the *Taittiriya Samhita* (vi, 4, 7, 3) of the Krishna Yajur Veda, it is stated that the first grammarian of the Sanscrit language was Indra. As has been already pointed out, the Vedic period, according to Dutt, extended from 2000 B. C. to 1400 B. C. It is, therefore, clear that the Aindra grammar must have been in existence between the times of the two Vedas. If this date may be admitted for the Aindra grammar, then our Saint Tholkappiar who studied it must have been either a contemporary of the grammarian Indra, or must have lived some time after him. If, on the other hand, Tholkappiar lived either at the time of the later Sanscrit grammarian Panini or subsequent to it, he should have preferred, as is almost the case with all who came after Panini, the grammar of Panini to the more ancient and antiquated Vedic grammar the Aindra. Further, if Tholkappiar had been proficient in the Paninian grammar alone, that fact could not have been overlooked by his fellow-student Panambaranar but must have been

noted in this prefatory piece. On the contrary, he only notes that Tholkappiar possessed a profound knowledge of Aindra.

Finding this striking fact a stumbling block to their endeavour to drag down Tholkappiar to a time later than Panini, or even later than the time of Katantra of the first century A. D. or even still later than the time of Jainendra of the fifth century A. D.; Mr. T. R. Sesha Iyengar, Mr. V. V. Ramanan and other brahmins of their ilk had tried their best to interpret the term Aindra in different fanciful ways of their own not supported by a particle of solid evidence. I have exploded their fanciful theories and shown the shallowness and untenability of their arguments in my work "The Life and Times of St. Manickavachakar."*

It may, however, be asked why should Tholkappiar be placed in 1700 B.C. and why should he not be assigned to a time much below that? But the facts go against assigning such a low time-limit to his existence. For it is noted by Dr. A. A. Macdonell that sixty four grammarians came after Indra in succession up to the time of Panini.† Therefore Tholkappiar who is nowhere said to have studied any Sanscrit grammar other than the Aindra, could not have lived at, or subsequent to, the time of any one of the sixty four grammarians who came after Indra in succession. If he had been conversant also with other treatises, that fact could not have escaped the notice of his class-mate Panambaranar. And it is, therefore, not unreasonable to suppose that Tholkappiar must have lived in an age which preceded the times of all the sixty four grammarians and Panini and which was, on that account, must have been either contemporaneous with, or a little subsequent to, the time of Indra which goes back to 2000 B. C.

* *Vide pages 554 to 564.*

† *Sanscrit Literature, p. 430.*

According to Dr. S. K. Belvalkar, Panini lived on or before 700 B. C.* Allowing one thousand years for all the sixty four grammarians who went before the time of Panini, it is not extravagant to place Tholkappiar at about 1700 B. C. at the least.

And the last, but not the least, important information which the prefatory piece gives us, relates to the personal history of Tholkappiar. This great soul who was engaged in measuring the whole extent of both the Tamil and Aryan languages, and in noting the laws which govern the formation, the growth and the decay of the two tongues, did not stop with the study of mere language but went deeper into an inquiry of the relations into which the human beings are brought either in an unfriendly or in a friendly spirit, classified them under the terms *war* and *love*, analysed them into actions which in manifesting themselves signify the elements of the two and treated them all most minutely and exhaustively. The most notable point in the life of Tholkappiar comes into view when this short prefatory poem has fortunately taken care to mention the fact that, while he was thus engaged in studying the nature of words and the relationship in which those who spoke them stood, he never, for an instant, lost sight of the purpose of creation but was ever intent on it detaching his thought from the world by ascetic practices and resting it on the noblest, the happiest, and the most benevolent infinite intelligence and spiritual power that dwells within and without Nature and finite selves.

With this the introductory verse of the Tholkappiam closes and we have in it not even the slightest or the faintest hint as regards the Aryan sage Agastiya or his supposed grammar in Tamil as has been already pointed out. Further, in the whole range of Tamil literature that was produced from the time of Tholkappiar, i.e, from 1700 B. C., to the beginning of the Christian era—although all the entire works which it comprised were irretrievably lost,

* *Systems of Sanscrit Grammar, p. 18.*

third century A. D.,* and he too has nowhere in these two great and sacred works alluded either to Agastiya or to his alleged grammar in Tamil.

But as we pass on to the fifth century A.D. we come across a rare and singular but clear reference to Agastiya and his disciples among whom St. Tholkappiar is counted as the first and the most illustrious. The place where this reference occurs is in the prefatory verse affixed to the collection called the *Purapporul venbamalai*, a compilation of Tamil songs recounting for the most part the various forms of military activities evinced by the contending parties in the ancient Tamil land. The learned scholar who made this interesting collection of old Tamil songs could not have lived before the fifth century A. D., since he invokes at the beginning the aid of Ganesa the elephant-headed god and Sarasvati the goddess of learning who were quite unknown to the Tamil literature preceding the fourth century A. D., but who in later times came to occupy an important place in the worship paid by the Hindus. It must, however, be observed that, though the reference to Agastiya and his so-called disciples and to a Tamil work called the *Panniru padalam* which is supposed to have been the joint product of his twelve disciples, does occur in the prefatory verse, yet we meet with no such reference anywhere within the body of the treatise the *Purapporulvenbamalai* itself. It is, therefore, open to doubt whether the prefatory piece in which the reference occurs, could have been the genuine composition of a contemporary of the author, or at most, the compiler of the collection. That the prefatory poem of a treatise should not be composed by the author of the treatise itself is an invariable rule with all the learned people of the Tamil language. Containing as it does the eulogy on the author, it cannot be composed by the author but must be composed only by his preceptor, or by his fellow-student, or by his student

* For an exhaustive treatment of his age see my large work "The Life & Times of St. Manickavachakar" in Tamil.

or by the commentator of his work. Who composed the preface to the work under discussion, is not noted anywhere or by any body either in the printed copy or in the palm leaf manuscripts. We cannot be far wrong in ascribing the prefatory verse to the commentator of this collection who must have existed at a time later than the ninth century A. D. For the mythical account of Agastiya seems to have been invented only after the story of the Ramayana came to be recited in the Tamil country by the brahmins who brought it from the north and enlarged it by incorporating in it certain folk-tales of the south in order to make it intensely attractive to the imagination of the people.

From the sixth century A.D. down to the ninth, there lived three of the four great Saiva saints, as the St. Sambandha, St. Appar and St. Sundarar visiting all the sacred Siva temples in the south and preaching to the people the principles of Saiva religion, but it is memorable that not even once is the legend of Agastiya referred to in any of their voluminous hymns. When St. Sambandha of the early seventh century visited the Siva temple at Ahattiyampalli near Point Calimere and composed a hymn in praise of Siva, he had a fitting opportunity to refer to Agastiya and his legend in the hymn, if there actually had existed an Aryan sage of that name in that place and if, as the place name would seem to suggest, he actually founded a temple there in his name. But from that hymn all allusion to Agastiya and the circumstances of his coming are completely absent. Does it not look strange and unaccountable that such an important allusion should be omitted in his hymn, especially by such a brahmin saint as Thirujnanasambandha who, whenever an opportunity presented itself, never failed to avail of it and glorify the Vedic rites and Vedic sacrifices as well as the brahmin priests who performed them? Is it not manifest from this that, even at the time of St. Sambandha, i.e. in the seventh century A. D. the legend of Agastiya was not invented in all its fulness?

I have shown in my work on "The Life & Times of St. Manickavachakar" clear proofs for fixing the date of Ilambooranar the first commentator on the Tholkappiam in the sixth or seventh century A. D. He too in his comments on the prefatory verse to that work simply mentions Agastiya as one of the ancient authors but nothing more.

It is, therefore, clear that about the sixth century A.D. it was the Aryan settlers, or most probably, the Tamil priests themselves who embraced the Aryan cult for the purpose of raising themselves high in the estimation of the people, that started the idea of an Aryan sage taking a prominent part in the cultivation of the Tamil language. The idea thus germinated took nearly four or five centuries to attain to its full development as is manifest from Nachchinarkiniyar's commentary on the Tholkappiam, for in the midst of learned Tamils its rapid growth received a strong check.

Nachchinarkiniyar notes some strange incidents pertaining to the relationship of Agastiya and Tholkappiar, for which we get no any warrantable proof either in Sanscrit literature or in Tamil. The incidents narrated by him are as follows: While Agastiya was coming to the south he went at first to the river Ganges and took from her the river Kaviri; next he repaired to the sage Jamadagni and received from him his son Trunadoomagni otherwise called Tholkappiar in Tamil; he went then to the sage Pulastiya and married his daughter Lopamudra but left her there with her father; he went thereafter to Dvaraka and brought from there eighteen kings, one hundred and eighteen millions of Velir, and Aruvalar all descended from the line of Vishnu; and at last he settled himself in the mount Pothia clearing the land of forests, rendering it fit for cultivation and habitation and by his musical skill keeping off the Rakshasas and Ravana from intruding into the new country. After a while Agastiya called his disciple Tholkappiar and bade him bring his wife Lopamudra. But Tholkappiar

point. Sad to relate the vast Tamil literature which was produced in the millenniums preceding the Christian era has almost perished in the Noah's deluge and in one or two other cataclysms that followed it at long intervals and swallowed up a very large portion of the ancient Tamil country called 'Kumari nadu.' Of that varied and extensive literature, only a few lyrics, some idylls, and some love poems have been left by the will of Providence as remnants to testify to the once prosperous condition of the Tamil language and the people who spoke it. These literary remnants are fortunately preserved to us in the collections: Purananooru, Ahananooru, Paripadal, Kalithokai, Narrinai, Iyngurunooru, Kurunthokai, and Pathirruppathu, made in the early centuries of the Christian era by poets under the patronage of their learned kings. Apart from these fragments, a great and entire work of rare linguistic value has also outlived the accidents and it is called the *Tholkappiam*.

CHAPTER VII

GOD IN TAMIL LITERATURE

'Tholkappiam' the oldest and the completest work extant in Tamil which treats exhaustively of all grammatical subjects and rhetoric, was composed at a time when the ancient Tamil land called 'Kumarinadu' or 'Lemuria' had not been swallowed up by Noah's deluge. All the great commentators beginning with Nakkirar, the poet-critic and president of the third Tamil Academy in the first century B. C., hold it to have been the greatest work of the antediluvian period. And there are proofs furnished from the treatise itself which go to establish it as the composition of a very high antiquity. That it must have been written prior to the Paninian grammar in Sanscrit I have shown elsewhere¹ and therefore do not enter into a discussion of its age here. Anyhow, by taking it as an antediluvian work, that is to say, as a work produced two thousand and four hundred years before Christ, I believe I am not laying an extravagant claim to its antiquity.

In this valuable treatise we find mention made, among others, of two deities 'Mayon' and 'Seyon'² which are being worshipped all over India from ancient times down

¹ See my Tamil work on 'The Ancient Tamilian and Aryan.'

² Tholkappiam, Poruladhikaram, 5.

to the present. 'Mayon' means 'The Blue Being' and 'Seyon' means 'The Red Being' and it is to be noted that both are in the masculine gender. Mayon was in later times identified with the Puranic 'Narayana' and 'Seyon' with 'Karttikeya.' It is significant that the term 'Narayana' also means in Sanscrit 'a watery being,' although this conception of a watery being was unknown to the Rig-Veda in which the word 'Narayana' was never used as an appellation of Vishnu. There the term 'Vishnu' represents only a solar deity. I believe the word 'Narayana' was coined in the Tamil country, with a view to indicate the cooling principle of the Godhead and was afterwards introduced into northern parts and into later Sanscrit works where it came to be used as another name of Vishnu. Still it must not be forgotten that the senses of the two terms are quite distinct and so should on no account be confounded together in a scientific study of this great subject. It is a point worthy of note that just as in the chief sacred mantra of the Saivites the term 'Siva' stands pre-eminent, so in the sacred mantra of the Vaishnavites it is the word 'Narayana' that stands supreme and not 'Vishnu.'

The other deity which is red was considered by the ancient Tamils to be perpetually young, and hence the word 'Murugan' which means 'a young person' came to be used as his proper name. And this conception of God as an eternally young person was not an alien one to the Rig-Veda, since Lord Rudra too was, as pointed out at the

beginning, regarded as ever young and immortal. Still, when compared to the young Lord Muruga, Rudra looks like an adult person, although both are described as red in all the literary and religious writings that have come down to us from the hoary past. But in the whole range of the Tholkappiam nowhere is to be found any reference either to Rudra or Siva, abundant as are the allusions and invocations to him in almost all the Tamil works that came in ages subsequent to the Tholkappiam. This simply proves that the composition of the Tholkappiam must have taken place at a time when the conception of God as Rudra was quite unknown to the Tamil people. From this you see the conception of God as the young and ruddy Lord Muruga preceded the conception of it as Rudra at least in the land of the ancient Tamils. By the way I call your attention to a remarkable coincidence in the religious history of the very ancient Chaldeans and the Tamilians, that is, the coincidence of the name of their celebrated God 'Muru' with the first part of the name of the equally famous Tamil God 'Muruga.'¹ But in after ages when God came to be viewed, probably by the grown-up and serious-minded people, as an adult person Rudra, the young Muruga was led to occupy a subordinate position and was finally made the son of Rudra. Apart from this trivial difference, the two Gods, I believe, are quite identical in every other respect. When you dive deep into the bottom of all

¹ Bettany's Mohammedanism, p. 43.

allegorical representations given of the two gods in the Puranas, you will find them to be fundamentally the same.

Now, let us pass on to inquire into the conception of God as 'Mayon' at some length. He is no doubt a blue being and a cold principle inasmuch as his Tamil name 'Mayon' and Sanscrit name 'Narayana' signify only such a being. This blue being, however, does not seem to have been regarded at first as a female principle. Further, no reference to Goddess Uma or Prisni is to be met with in the whole range of the Tholkappiam, except a single and solitary reference to a terrible goddess of war called 'Korravai'. Of course, it is true that this female deity came in subsequent ages to be identified with Uma and even called the mother of Lord Muruga², but in the Tholkappiam itself there is no evidence for such an identification. From the total absence of all allusions to a benign female deity in the Tholkappiam, I am led to conclude that seers in those primitive times did not attain to such a high degree of mental and spiritual development as would enable them to discriminate between the real male principle and the female in the Godhead.

Since fire can generate a mechanical force only through the medium of water, so too God the supreme principle of spiritual fire could effect the creation of the material world only through the spiritual cold principle Uma.

¹ Poruladhikaram, 62.

² Thirumurugarruppadai.

When she was thus actively engaged in the creative work, she was mistaken perhaps for a male, and the seers themselves were not then in as suitable a mental condition as would enable them to get a clear vision of her spiritual form. The red light, being brighter and for that reason clearer than the blue, makes itself easier to be seen distinctly than the blue. It was because of this difficulty in the perception of spiritual colours that the original seers confused the blue colour of the Supreme Being sometimes with the black colour and some other times with the green. In both the old and new hymns addressed to Narayana, we frequently meet with expressions which represent him in one place as a blue being, in another a black, and in a third a green. In the fire itself, if you look through it acutely, you will see a pale blue light. Just as this pale blue cannot be seen as easily as the bright light of fire, so also the blue spiritual form of the Divine Mother cannot be seen so easily as the brilliant ruddy form of the Father. But in the succeeding ages, the more the spiritual vision of the seers increased in clearness, the more they came to recognise in the blue principle its feminine character.

When in this manner the motherhood of God became clearer, it was substituted for the original but mistaken notion of it as the male Narayana, and the lord Narayana himself having already become an object of great devotion, was assigned to a separate sphere and allotted a distinct

function as of preserving the created worlds. That the conception of the Divine Mother came after that of Narayana is proved also by the Puranic legends which speak of her as his younger sister. In spite of the repeated attempts made by his worshippers to give stability to the original misconception of Narayana as the male, there have not been wanting accounts which reveal his feminine character by telling us that he begot Brahma the creator from his navel-point, and that he assumed at times the form of a bewitching female called Mohini. If any additional proof be required, that may be supplied by the very names of these gods. For instance, the word Narayana, if declined into feminine gender, would stand as 'Narayani' which designates not his consort 'Lakshmi,' but only 'Uma.' If Narayana be a real male, his name in the feminine gender ought to indicate his consort, but such is not the case. But the names of Rudra, when declined into feminine gender, invariably stand for his consort Uma. This fact, I believe, would be enough to bear an additional testimony to the truth that Narayana is none other than the benign female principle called Prisni in the Rig-Veda. All the Puranas in Sanscrit and all the sacred scriptures in Tamil unite in attributing to the spiritual form of both Narayana and Uma a blue colour, and this undoubtedly serves to corroborate the truth of my statement that they are not two distinct individualities but one and the same Supreme Being which possesses the character of a feminine principle.

It seems that, when the motherhood of God came to be recognized by the advanced seership of highly developed minds, the numerous worshippers of Narayana, finding it not agreeable to their mind to give up their original conception of God and thinking it also beneath the dignity of their God to consider him a female (perhaps this might have been due to the contemptuous view generally entertained of the female sex), separated themselves from the earliest cult and formed a new church of their own. Thus was created a schism in the ancient Hindu church which was otherwise one single body, one inseparable unit.

Before the time of this split in the religious observance, there was only one religion and all paid their adoration as well to Lord Siva as to Narayana and Uma. Even after the creation of the schism, those who belonged to the original cult, still continued to worship all the three, without making any enviable distinction between the one and the other, as is manifest even to-day from the rites and observances prescribed in the old Siva temples all over India. For in all the Siva temples you will find not only the images of Lord Siva and Uma but also that of Lord Narayana set up in separate compartments and duly worshipped, whereas in the Vishnu temples you will find no image of any god except those of Narayana and his consorts. This clearly establishes the fact that the schism in the old Hindu church was created not by the Saivites but by the worshippers of Lord Narayana.

constitution from the brain which, by being a mere material organ, is rendered powerless to exercise of itself any such function of thought. Unless there be in the sleeping and trance conditions a resting soul which has temporarily relinquished its hold on the brain, there can be no reason for our belief that life still exists there, even after the brain has ceased to act. Unless there be in the waking hours an animating self which awakens in the brain, or rather transmits to it, its own activities, how a mass of matter that has once become inactive, can resume its activity without being actuated by another, must for ever remain an insoluble problem. As has been shown above, all matter being destitute of voluntary movement, the brain too which is simply a form of organic matter, can never pass from an active into an inactive state and *vice versa*, without an intermediary principle of mind to bring it about. Nay, our very existence would become a sheer impossibility, had there been no such intelligent self distinct from the two states and yet passing through them from one to the other in due and inverse order.

In addition to this difficulty St. Meikandan points out another and still greater difficulty which presents itself in the phenomenon of consciousness and renders the physiological theory inadmissible. Eminent physiologists themselves are in a fix when they come to consider impartially the question of consciousness and its manifestation in the brain. While it is patent that the elements that enter into the structure and composition of the brain are purely physical, those that constitute consciousness have

never been proved to be such; on the contrary, the two are always observed to be intrinsically opposed to each other. When flame radiates light, when water gives off vapour, when flowers emit fragrance, we know that the light, the vapour and the fragrance could be none other than the finer emanations of their respective substances; in other words, they are proved to be the same as the things themselves but with this difference: while the things that produce them are tangible, the emanations are intangible, inasmuch as the finer particles that constituted the things separate themselves from them and enter into that impalpable condition. Similarly can consciousness be said to be a finer emanation of the brain, and be nothing else but an intangible state of the minutest particles of the very same organ? No. For, from a careful study of the two phenomena we come to know that the nature of the one is so different from that of the other that it baffles all attempts to derive the one from the other or trace even a remote resemblance between the two. In the words of Prof. James the two are "heterogeneous natures altogether"*.

If consciousness and the brain had been really identical substances, so long as the brain exists, consciousness too must exist without undergoing any change in its manifestation, just as a burning candle gives us light until it is wholly consumed in the process. Whereas the flow of consciousness is not so continuous but is frequently interrupted by intervals of mental darkness as in dreamless sleep and profound trance and comes to a complete stop

* *Human Immortality*, P. 45.

at death, even when the brain is whole in all these different states.

In fact, consciousness could be neither a finer emanation nor a specific function of the brain but must be the vital expression of the essence of the finite selves or *monads* in the language of Leibnitz, which take their seat in this mechanism of flesh and blood and propel it in accordance with their needs and requirements. Although it is true that a serious hurt caused to the brain deprives a man of his consciousness, yet it must not be forgotten that, in most cases, it is only a temporary suspension of its activity brought on by the breakdown of the mechanism. That consciousness is never destroyed by a disruption of the brain but exists there persisting in its work of making it serve its purpose, may be seen from the restoration after sometime of the injured part to its previous sound condition. This restorative function cannot be imagined to take place in a living organism unless there be a conscious self silently to effect it. Another noticeable feature in this restorative process is that, when the injured part of the brain is wrecked beyond scope of repair, the self seizes some other part near to it and so plies it that it ultimately assumes the function of the injured part. This fact relating to the assumption by one part of the brain of the function of another through the intervention of a conscious self, had long ago been brought to light by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller and we shall do well to quote here his very words. "If e. g., a man" he says, "loses consciousness as soon as his brain is injured, it is clearly as good an explanation to

say the injury to the brain destroyed the mechanism by which the manifestation of consciousness was rendered possible, as to say that it destroyed the seat of consciousness. On the other hand, there are facts which the former theory suits far better. If, e. g., as sometimes happens, the man after a time more or less recovers the faculties of which the injury to his brain had deprived him, and that not in consequence of a renewal of the injured part, but in consequence of the inhibited functions being performed by the vicarious action of other parts, the easiest explanation certainly is that after a time consciousness constitutes the remaining parts into a mechanism capable of acting as a substitute for the lost parts". Between this view of an eminent modern thinker and the argument put forward by St. Meikandan to prove the exact relation subsisting between the brain and consciousness, how close is the agreement!

Now as a last point in our discussion of this important subject, we would pick out one more argument from those set forth by Meikandan in his treatise Sivajnana-bodham and would bring this topic to a close. The all-important faculty of memory which makes individual life what it has come to be, brings before our mind another difficulty that cannot be explained away on the physiological theory of the materialists. That the brain is made up of cells, that it loses old cells every moment and gets newer ones in their stead, are facts quite familiar to all physiologists. If, according to them, memory be the simple

* *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 2nd edition, p. 296.

result of a certain spontaneous disposition of brain-cells, then the old contents of memory must perish every instant that the old brain-cells perish and newer details must accumulate in proportion to the entry of newer cells, these again in their turn to be driven out to make room for the subsequent influx of still newer items, and so on *ad infinitum*, and we should have in consequence no memory at all, no recollection of our own past experiences, nay even of the very identity of our own past and present selves. Should this theory of the physiologists be true, fortunately it is not so, all human existence must end in utter wreck and ruin. In spite of the unwarrantable assertion of such materialists, our memory persists all through the infinite changes which the brain-cells undergo, and maintains its existence independently of their birth and death. That none of the events that once happened within the range of our experience could ever be forgotten, is proved beyond doubt by cases recorded of hypnotic subjects in the great book of Myers, by a reference to which one can easily know with what marvellous accuracy the details of a past occurrence, supposed to have been long ago forgotten by the waking brain, are called up when the subject is in profound hypnotic sleep, his brain and all reasoning faculties being then set at complete rest.

Besides this distinct quality of memory, its quantity too, if quantity we may call its capacity, presents another insuperable difficulty to an admission of the physiological theory. From the time of our childhood when we began

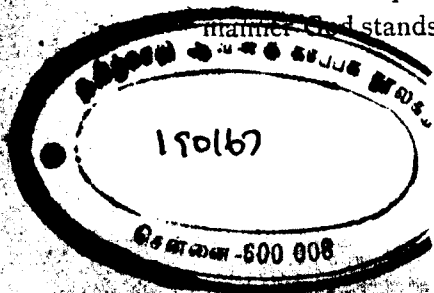
first to exercise our memory we have been storing it up with an infinite multitude of ideas which exceeds our power of computation and which, if actually had been the functions of our constantly accumulating brain-cells, must also have a brain correspondingly increasing in size. But, as a matter of fact, such is not the case, inasmuch as the development of our brain is not proportionate to the development of our memory and all of us, whether great in memory or not, whether learned or unlearned, have brains almost equal in size, although in point of quality there may be much difference between one brain and another. This disproportionateness of the brain to the limitless growth of memory makes it quite clear that memory could be neither a function of the brain nor a mere material element increasing in size concomitantly to the growth of the brain, but must be a principle immaterial since it occupies no space, independent since it depends not on brain as in hypnotic subjects, and spiritual since it is the very essence of individual selves. Dr. Schiller truly observes: "On a materialist hypothesis the memory of a certain arrangement of certain particles of brain tissue, and in the case of complex facts, the memory would evidently require a very complex system of particles. Now as the contents of the brain are limited, it is clear that there can only be a limited number of facts remembered. It would be physically impossible that the brain could be charged with memories beyond a certain point. And if we consider the number of impressions and ideas which daily enter into our consciousness, it is clear that even in youth the

brain must soon reach the *saturation* point of memory, and that the struggle for existence in our memory must be very severe. If therefore we receive unexpected proofs of the survival in memory of the facts most unlikely to be remembered, we have evidently reached a phenomenon which it is exceedingly difficult for materialism to explain."* So then, memory, existing only as a spiritual faculty of souls, and not as any other belonging to the physical brain, is itself sufficient conclusively to prove the falsity of the physiological theory and establish that mind and brain are two distinct principles, though their existence on this plane is coëval and most intimate up to a certain point of time.

These inquiries brief and humble as they are, being conducted in strict conformity with the teachings of St. Meikandan, into the conditions and existence of life and life-struggles, disclose to us these facts: individual soul is an eternal unit of intelligence which exists in its primitive state enshrouded by a dark and evil principle called *malam*, for the removal of which and for the enlightenment of the soul's understanding various organisms and environments are being constantly moulded out from an ever-existing material cause called *maya*. Every individual soul dwelling in every body is not only distinct from that body but is also eternally different from every other ego. So, we have, instead of one, a numberless multitude of souls each shaping its destiny according

* *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 2nd edition, pp. 296, 297.

Having obtained these results, I now pass on to give a succinct account of the efficient cause of this creation, for without which this brief sketch of Saiva Siddhanta would be incomplete. As already pointed out, all the individual souls, being primarily immersed in ignorance, cannot, for the sake of setting themselves free from its influence, create for themselves this body and all its surroundings. Nor can *maya* the original and material cause of these organisms and worlds originate them from itself, since it is devoid of intelligence and therefore of all voluntary movements. As has been proved by Prof. Bergson that all original movements must have proceeded solely from an intelligent cause, to set *maya* in motion and bring into being these wonderful adjustments of microcosm and macrocosm for the benefit of all individual souls, the existence of a Supreme Being of an ever-resplendent intelligence naturally follows as an inevitable consequence. St Meikandan argues that this Supreme Being could be neither a material nor an instrumental cause but must solely be an efficient cause. To illustrate this he takes a potter and his pots. In the process of making pots, he requires a lump of fine clay as the material cause which is always inseparable from the pots produced out of it; he then uses a spinning wheel and a rod and moves them as the instrumental cause; while he himself remains all the time as an efficient cause quite distinct from the other two. In like manner God stands as an efficient cause, *maya* as the ma-



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health. In case this too should fail, the author has determined to do it himself.

All the other serials and short articles are originals in English and I need hardly say they are marked by profound learning, broad research and deep thinking. The facts brought out in them are quite new to the world in the sphere of religion, philosophy and ancient history.

The subscribers who have been benefited by the study of this first vol. will, it is expected, subscribe to the second vol. also either by sending in advance Rs 8-4 as for its subscription and postage or by receiving the 1st no. of the 2nd vol. by V. P. P. for Rs 8-7 as in India and for Rs 8-9 as in Ceylon. To foreign countries it cannot be sent by V. P. P. The subscribers there are requested to remit Rs 8-4 as by British Postal Order. Manimoli.

The 1st Annual celebration of the Auvvai Manaver

Tamil Association at Thiruvothoor

On the 16th & 17th May, 1936, the 1st annual celebration of the above association took place at Thiruvothoor from 4 p. m. to 8 p. m. and Swami Vedachalam presided. Addresses were read by the secretaries of the association and Vakeesa Sabha. Verses composed by Pandit Oolakaooliar in praise of the services rendered by the Swami, were also read. On the 1st day after the illuminating lecture on 'The Necessity of Religion' delivered by the president, Mr. A. S. Venugopal Pillai, Vidvan & asst. Tamil Pandit in Voorhese College, Vellore, Thiru Karmegaswami of Kanchi, and Mrs. K. Thiripurasundari ammai spoke excellently on 'Tamil Country,' 'Mangai-yarkkarasi,' and 'Tamil & Tamil women' respectively.

On the 2nd day in the morning session, after the summary and critical review of yesterday's lectures from the chair, Mr. K. Balasundara Nayakar, Vidvan and asst. Tamil Pandit in the Board High School at Thiruvothoor, spoke on 'St. Pattinathar, his life and work' exceedingly well & the president dwelt on the notable points in the lecture. And in the evening session, Mr. C. S. Raja Pillai, Hd. Tamil Pandit, Voorhese College, Mr. K. Vajravel Mudaliar, B.A..L.T., Eng. Teacher, Pachayappa's High School, Kanchi, Pandit A. Varadananjaya Pillai, and Mr. Auvvai. Duraisami Pillai, Hd. Tamil Pandit, Board High School, Thiruvothoor, spoke impressively on 'Karaikkal Ammaiyaar,' 'Thiruneelakandar,' 'Sekkilar & other Poets' & 'Tamil grammars & their commentaries' respectively. And the President in his concluding speech critically reviewed the lectures and brought the meeting to a close at 10 p. m. All were thanked and garlanded.

A Lecture at Conjeevaran by Swami Vedachalam

A heated controversy about the relative merits of the Aryan Veda and the Tamil Veda among the literary lights of Conjeevaram, induced the people to invite the Swami for a lecture on the disputed point. Mr. K. Vajravel Mudaliar, B. A., L. V. arranged for the lecture, and the swami went to Conjeevaram and delivered on the 26th May, 1935 his very able and discriminating lecture for full 2 hours in the Pachayappa's High School Hall, showing clearly while the

Aryan Vedas were occupied with hero-worship and bloody sacrifices, the Tamil Vedas, i.e., Thiruvachakam and Devaram, were strictly monotheistic and enjoined the sacrifice of self and selfish desires and the service to God and all living beings in pure love. Manimoli.

Greetings and Gifts to Swami Vedachalam
On his 60th Birth Day

On the 15th July, 1936, the 60th birth day celebrations of Swami Vedachalam took place all over Southern India and in Rangoon. At the request of our friends from various quarters, my brothers, my brother-in-law Pandit V. Kunchithapatham Pillai and myself wished to commence the celebration at our residence at Pallavaram but our father Swami Vedachalam strongly objected to it, saying that it would be self-flattery and presumption on one's part to allow his own relations to celebrate it for the little service he rendered to the Tamil people. If what he did, benefited the people in any way, it was they that should do it, he said and even forbade us to take any part in any measures concerted by others for which purpose. And it is his opinion that what good one can do to humanity must be done silently and unostentatiously without having in his mind any selfish motive or end. And so we all kept quiet and he himself very much desired that his 60th birth day should pass unnoticed.

But God willed it otherwise. For the people themselves all over the south and in Rangoon convened meetings, spoke highly of the literary, religious and social services rendered by the Swami and sent wires and letters heartily congratulating him on his 60th birthday and praying for his still longer, healthier and active life. To all of them the Swami conveys his best wishes and prays for their long and happy life.

And it is also highly gratifying to note that some people in some notable places resting not content with sending mere congratulations, signalled their appreciation of his services by contributing individually and collectively whatever they can in the shape of money towards the printing expenses of his valuable writings in Tamil and English. The names of such and their contributions are mentioned below. To all those benefactors the Swami expresses his heart-felt gratitude and prays also for their long, healthy, and prosperous life.

Mr. SP. K. A. Kasivisvanathan, Zigon, Tharrawaddy Dt.,

L. Burma sent Rs 31 collected from his friends, 25-8-1936.

Mr. S. Lingesvaran, c/o R.M.L.K.P., Kyonpyan, Bassein Dt., sent Rs 5 as his own gift, 25-8-1936.

Mr. V. M. Somasundaram Pillai, Tamil Pandit, R. C. T. H. School, Chidambaram, sent Rs 35 collected from his friends.

Mr. ST. Kannappan, the chief secretary of the Chettiar young Men's Tamil Association, at Paganeri, sent Rs 66-4 as collected from the people, 23-10-1936.

Mr. M. Somasundaram Chettiar, secretary of the Kanbe Dhana Vaisya Education Trust, Rangoon, sent Rs 376-4-3 ps contributed by the well-wishers from various places in Burma.

Manimoli.