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THE OCEAN OF WISDOM

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

EDITED BY

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VOL. I

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SAIVAISM,
THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS

A very interesting booklet in English by Mr. D. Gopaul Chetty the able exponent of Saiva Siddhanta and its close resemblance to Swedenborg's system of thought. In this new book small in size but great in substance, the author has brought together many wonderful facts long buried in oblivion relating to the history, the religion, and the philosophy of the early inhabitants of Britain. Though the statement that the Cymry the descendants of Noah's grandson Gomer, were identical with a branch of the Tamilian race who, after the submergence of the Lemurian Continent, migrated into the extreme west, may seem a startling assertion to many a historian of modern times, it can bring little surprise to those who watch with ever-increasing interest the archaeological finds that are being daily brought to light from Punjab, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mexico, Peru and elsewhere. The fact that the Lemurian continent which had, submerged under the Indian ocean formed the cradle of the human race is admitted by such great scientists as Prof. Haeckel and Sir John Lubbock. That the people who lived in that continent were none other than the ancestors of the present day Tamilians is clearly borne out by allusions in the ancient Tamil classics to the existence and submergence of that continent and to the original Tamils who inhabited there. When, in the words of Lubbock, that "immense tract of land or a chain of islands stretching from the eastern coast of Africa right across the Indian Ocean" (Pre-Historic Times, p. 363), was beginning to be swallowed up by the waters of the encroaching sea, the Tamil people went out of their homes in three directions in search of new and safe habitations as far as Mexico and Peru in the east, as far as Mesopotamia, Assyria, Egypt, and Britain in the west, and as far as the present Tamil districts, the Deccan, the Himalayas, Tibet and China in the north. Prof. Huxley seems, therefore, to be quite right when, in dividing mankind into four groups, he brings under the Austroloid type all the inhabitants of Australia, all the Dravidians and the ancient Egyptians. Unless this wide dispersion of the ancient Tamil people is taken into account, the following peculiarities, noted by Madame Blavatsky to exist alike among the different peoples of olden times who lived in different distant centres one separated from the other by thousands of miles, cannot be satisfactorily explained. The talented lady says: "The presence of the artificial lakes, and their peculiar disposition on the consecrated grounds, is also a fact of great

THE OCEAN OF WISDOM

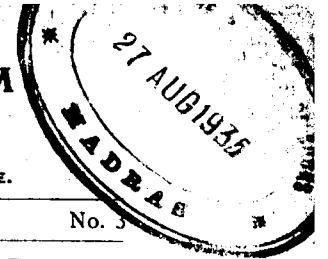
BI-MONTHLY

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

Vol. I

Pallavaram, May, 1935

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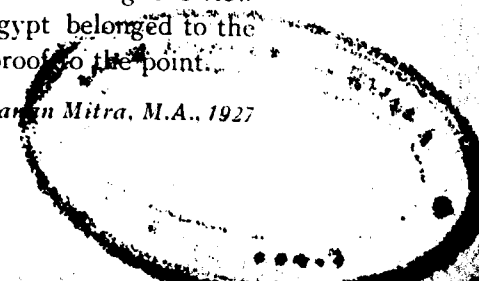
THE ART OF RAISING THE DEAD

(Continuation)

constitute the majority of the objects found at Adichanallur, do not appear to differ in any important respect from similar finds made in various other South Indian localities. Some of the smaller vessels, it may be remarked, closely resemble objects of prehistoric pottery found in Egypt and many exhibit a characteristic red and black polished surface which was the result of friction and not of a true fused glaze. Smaller articles consist for the most part of ordinary domestic utensils, together with stands of various kinds on which the vessels requiring support were placed. Comparatively little applied decoration is found and that practically confined to the large urns of a pyriform shape. The domestic utensils were found both in the interior of the urns and outside them and as many contained rice husks they were perhaps originally receptacles for grain intended to serve as food for spirits of the dead. The most interesting of the Tinnevelley finds are, however, the objects in metal, as they exist in great variety, a considerable amount of skill had been exercised in their manufacture, and many are of hitherto unknown design."*

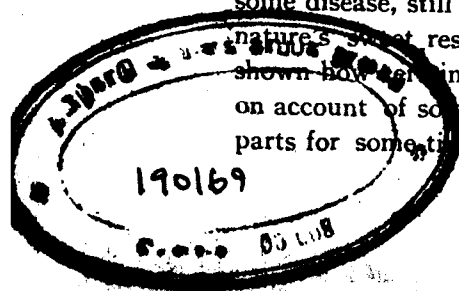
By the way, we wish to call the attention of our readers to the notable fact that has come to light in this interesting passage—the fact concerning the close and remarkable resemblance found to exist between the pottery of the ancient Tamil country and the prehistoric pottery of Egypt. We have been for long maintaining the view that the original immigrants into Egypt belonged to the Tamilian race and here is a strong proof to the point.

* "Prehistoric India" by Mr. Panchanan Mitra, M.A., 1927 ed., pp. 358-360.



The above extract affords also a clue as to the way in which the ancient Tamils viewed the dead. They did not believe that those who died, died once for all, but supposed that, under favourable conditons, they might come to life again. And hence it was that, when they laid the body of a dead person in an urn, they placed rice and grains also along with it as has been related in the above quotation, thinking that, in case they should revive, those things might serve to allay their hunger and give them sufficient strength to stir out. We cannot believe that such foodstuffs had been placed there simply for the use of the departed spirits of the dead, because so civilized and intelligent a people as the Tamils could not have imagined that the spirits which abandoned this earthly abode would return to it to partake of an earthly dish.

Here, it must be borne in mind that the spirits which had left this earthly body are not of the same nature with the spirits which have not left it but still remain in it, although their life-functions seem to have stopped completely. While the former class does not return to the body they left, the latter does make their appearance in it and resume their bodily functions as soon as hindrance to life is removed by some unknown cause. Just here lies the distinction between actual death and apparent death. In the deepest trance produced either by disease or by powerful hypnotic suggestions, apparent death supervenes and the physicians are mostly deceived by appearances that they are unable to distinguish between this and actual death. Such a profound trance condition is called "catalepsy" by the new psychologists, but the medical people not caring to go deeply into the matter simply call it a disease. Catalepsy may or may not have resulted from some disease, still it is not a disease in itself, but is "tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." We have already shown how even in actual cases of catalepsy had occurred on account of some bad disease that affected the vital parts for some time and how from that state, after the



disease-producing microbes had been starved to death for want of food which the patient could not take then, the suspended functions of life revived once more.

Now we will consider the cases of catalepsy produced by hypnotic suggestions. Hypnotic suggestions are of two kinds. The kind of suggestions given by one to his own self belongs to one class, while that given by another belongs to another class. The efficacy of suggestions depends more on the strength of the will-power and concentration of mind brought to bear upon them than on any thing else. The more one indulges himself in a good or bad thought, the more is he liable to express it in his features, functions, and external actions. By constantly dwelling on one idea to the exclusion of others, most of us allow that idea to take so strong a hold of our mind, that, after a time, it becomes almost impossible for us to get rid of it. Most of the troubles we undergo are created in this way, they being mainly imaginary.

By his very nature man is prone to think more of evil than of good. Unless he reason with himself strongly, unless he subdue the power of his imagination and bring it under the control of his intellect, he is apt at any moment to be carried away by the powerful current of imagination. Every imagined thought, every imagined idea is a suggestion at first, and increases in its strength as it repeats itself and becomes a habit. "A tendency to act" says Prof. William James "only becomes effectively ingrained in us in proportion to the uninterrupted frequency with which the actions actually occur, and the brain 'grows' to their use."* Since by such frequent indulgence imagined thoughts and ideas become the tenor of one's life, every one who wishes to make his or her existence endurable, must lose no time in understanding the power of self-suggestion and in cultivating only that kind of suggestions which would build up a virtuous and happy life.

* *Talks to Teachers on Psychology, p. 70.*

One's own suggestions may arise either consciously or unconsciously, either alone or backed up by will-power and concentration of mind. In any case no suggestion must be allowed to enter into the mind, before its nature and value have been carefully tested. For an evil thought warily or unwarily received into the mind implants itself there and, under favourable conditions, quickly springs up and occupies the whole area so that it becomes afterwards very difficult for a good thought even to slip in and stay there. But early in life when the mind is in a plastic condition it is not hard for great, good and noble thoughts to get in and take possession of it, mould and work it up into a structure of enduring spiritual strength.

This pliable nature of the human mind and the power which suggestions exercise over it, seem to have been assiduously studied by the Indian yogis as far back as 4000 B. C. This knowledge led them to make a profitable use of suggestions not only for increasing the powers of their own mind but also for exalting and strengthening the minds of others. To achieve this end certain formulas called "Mandirams" were also devised by them and these are nothing but effective compressions of thought conveyed in a few lively words, and intended to be repeated regularly at fixed intervals with concentrated will and attention. These suggestive formulas played and still play an important role in the yogic exercises and the results achieved by them are simply marvellous. The miracles wrought by the Indian yogis are mostly explainable by the law of suggestion, and, so far as our knowledge goes, we venture to say there is nothing in them that militates against the modern mental science.

In addition to the use to which the Indian yogis put the law of suggestion, they also control their breath to an extent that seems astonishing to our poor intellects. By holding in the breath completely the yogis sometimes allow themselves to be buried alive for days and months together without any inconvenience and come to life again

when after the promised period they are taken out of the pit. By means of such breath-control and self-suggestion, they enter at times into this state of self-absorption in which they appear to be completely dead to the world and remain in it as long as they desire. Instances of such self-absorbed conditions of the yogis have occurred from time immemorial and even now occur all over India, but we will quote here only a remarkable instance the veracity of which is vouched for by cool and clear-headed witnesses. The following is taken from that treasure-house of supreme scientific knowledge: Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, which no earnest student of religion, philosophy, science and ancient history ought to ignore. Madame Blavatsky writes:-

"According to Napier, Osborne, Major Lawes, Queno-uillet, Nikiforovitch, and many other modern witnesses, fakirs are now proved to be able, by a long course of diet, preparation, and repose, to bring their bodies into a condition which enables them to be buried six feet underground for an indefinite period. Sir Claude Wade was present at the court of Rundjit Singh, when the fakir mentioned by the Honorable Captain Osborne, was buried alive for six weeks, in a cell three feet below the floor of the room (Osborne: "Camp and Court of Rundjit Singh;" Braid: "On France"). To prevent the chance of deception a guard comprising two companies of soldiers had been detailed, and four sentries 'were furnished and relieved every two hours, night and day, to guard the building from intrusion...On opening it' says Sir Claude, 'we saw a figure enclosed in a bag of white linen fastened by a string over the head...the servant then began pouring warm water over the figure...the legs and arms of the body were shrivelled and stiff, the face full, the head reclining on the shoulder like that of a corpse. I then called to the medical gentleman who was attending me, to come down and inspect the body, which he did, but could discover no pulsation in the heart, the temples, or the arm.

There was, however, *a heat about the region of the brain*, which no other part of the body exhibited.'

"Regretting that the limits of our space forbid the quotation of the details of this interesting story, we will only add, that the process of resuscitation included bathing with hot water, friction, the removal of wax and cotton pledgets from the nostrils and ears, the rubbing of the eye-lids with ghee or clarified butter, and, what will appear most curious to many, the application of a hot wheaten cake, about an inch thick 'to the top of the head.' After the cake had been applied for the third time, the body was violently convulsed, the nostrils became inflated, respiration ensued, and the limbs assumed a natural fulness; but the pulsation was still faintly perceptible. 'The tongue was then anointed with ghee; the eyeballs became dilated and recovered their natural color, and the fakir recognized those present and spoke.' It should be noticed that not only had the nostrils and ears been plugged, but the tongue had been thrust back so as to close the gullet, thus effectually stopping the orifices against the admission of atmospheric air."*

This has been approvingly quoted again by that strict scientific psychologist Dr. T. J. Hudson as follows:

"One of the most clearly attested instances of the kind alluded to is the experiment of the Fakir of Lahore, who, at the instance of Runjeet Singh, suffered himself to be buried alive in an air-tight vault for a period of six weeks. This case was thoroughly authenticated by Sir Claude Wade, the then British Resident at the court of Loodhiana. The fakir's nostrils and ears were first filled with wax; he was then placed in a linen bag, then deposited in a wooden box which was securely locked, and the box was deposited in a brick vault which was carefully plastered up with mortar and sealed with the Rajah's seal. A guard of British soldiers was then detailed to watch the vault day and night. At the end of the prescribed time the

* *Isis Unveiled*, vol 1, pp. 477, 478.

vault was opened in the presence of Sir Claude and Runjeet Singh, and the fakir was restored to consciousness."

Professor A. A. Macdonell, author of 'A History of Sanscrit Literature' also approves the authenticity of this miraculous burial of the yogi and says:

"Such practices, in conjunction with the suppression of breath, were capable of producing a condition of trance. There is at least the one well-authenticated case of yogi named Haridas who in the thirties wandered about in Rijputana and Lahore, allowing himself to be buried for money when in the cataleptic condition. The burial of the Master of Ballantrae by the Indian Secundra Dass in Stevenson's novel was doubtless suggested by an account of this ascetic."*

In the same way as the yogis and fakirs throw themselves thus at will into the cataleptic state in which all life-functions completely stop and which even the ablest physicians are not able to distinguish from actual death, they, by the exercise of their will-power or by uttering certain formulas, send others also into similar states of profound catalepsy, and recall them to life after some time by uttering certain other formulas. This miraculous power of the yogis and other great men of the past is clearly referred to in the *Tholkappiam* a very ancient Tamil work on grammar and rhetoric, the composition of which could not have taken place later than 3500 B. C.† In the section on prosody of this great work the aphorism 179 clearly lays down the rule:

"Those formulas are called *mandiram* which were kept in secret but which were uttered in a commanding tone by persons owning words full of potency."

And the old commentator to this aphorism in illustrating its meaning states:

* *A History of Sanscrit Literature*, p. 399.

† For my arguments to fix the date of the composition of this ancient Tamil work in 3500 B. C., see my large work on "The Age of Manickavachakar" in Tamil.

"Nakkirar extemporized one verse blessing one man to live, and another verse cursing another man to die, for the sake of the poets who were refused admission into the academic hall in the south, the doors of which were kept closed."

This commentary and the aphorism which it illustrates thus clearly point to the fact that the ancient poets and saints had been in full possession of this marvellous power and used it whenever occasion necessarily required it. The saintly poet Nakkirar above referred to existed in the first century A. D. And in the sixth century A. D., St. Appar raised a young boy who died of snake-bite; and in the seventh century A. D., St. Thirujnanasambandha also revived a young man who too died of the same cause. The sacred hymns improvised by the two saints on the two occasions still exist in the collection of the Devara hymns which belong to the two.

These are only a few genuine cases recorded in the ancient Tamil works of high literary, religious and historical value. But there are innumerable other cases of revival which have actually occurred and even now occur all over India through the interposition of adepts trained in spiritual science but all such cases unfortunately go unrecorded, since nobody in this country cares to record them and leave them for the instruction of the posterity. Leaving, then, aside the unrecorded cases which many all over the country have a personal knowledge of, we may safely rely upon the few actual cases recorded, for proving the existence of this art among the psychics of the Tamil country from the remotest historic period up to the present. We have, therefore, seen nothing strange in what Mr. Oldham said: "Sanskrit writings ascribe to the Dravidian Asuras 'Luxury, the use of magic, superior architectural skill, and ability to restore the dead to life'."

In a subsequent paper we will show how this art and the yoga system belonged exclusively to the ancient Tamils and how from them the knowledge of both radiated to other peoples in other countries all over this globe.

we see in it different degrees of growth and different degrees of aesthetic sensibilities both higher and lower. At any rate all souls are imperfect in their original state. And it is the main object of creation, incarnation and reincarnation to make them attain perfection morally, intellectually and aesthetically. These views of matter and mind form the essence of ancient Tamil Philosophy. Witness the dictum of Saint Tholkappiar in sutram 29, of Poruliyal and sutram 1 of Kalaviyal:

"Not only to man but to all living beings
happiness constitutes the object of attainment"
"Of happiness, wealth and virtue
happiness is the result of pure love
having five fold functions"

The first natural manifestation of a man's determination to live his Life as his Maker had intended him to be is noticed in the concept and conduct of the family. That the family formed a highly developed institution among the Ancient Tamils is almost an axiomatic truth. A full and natural development of all human instincts can take place only in a harmonious union of the man and the woman. That the Tamils realised this and had experienced that a perfectly conceived relationship between man and wife would bring the inexpressible joy resulting therefrom is indicated in the innumerable references and descriptions given of it in the ancient Tamil poetry. A few examples should suffice. Paripadal glorifies only that as true Love which man and woman feel spontaneously towards each other and which

penetrates the very vitals of their heart and soul. A love that should bind man and wife together is of that type in which one reaches perfection in the other and together they make one harmonious whole. To the man she is the woman and to the woman he is the man. And this is beautifully illustrated in his inimitable style by Manikkavachagar in Tirukkovaiyar. Accosted and inquired by a matron whether they came across a young man and a woman on their way, the man who came with his wife over the way replies at first that he saw a man of unsurpassed beauty and courage, and then calls on his wife by his side to complete the reply as to the other companion. In translation, the beauty of the poetic concept is blurred and the inference has to be made by means of words instead of being left to the instinctive imagination. The idea is this: the man only sees his wife: no matter what woman passes before him she simply does not exist for him. And the same is the case for his beloved also. Suggestiveness is a characteristic of Tamil poetry and barring perhaps Kural that tells everything in a direct and straightforward way, most of the ideas in it are conveyed through inference. When this is remembered what a high state of domestic life and marital conduct Manikkavachagar portrays will be easily understood (Tirukovaiyar Verse: 244).

That this union has become so inseparable as to make it impossible either for the man or for the wife to survive the other's death is evidenced by the story of Ollaiyur Thantha Budap Pandian and his consort. On

the death of the former in battlefield the latter determined to end her life through fire. It should be noticed here that this was done not in accordance with the inhuman custom of 'Sati' prevalent among the Aryans, but in consequence of the unbearableness of the situation. The counsellors of the king and the royal relatives of the queen advise, as a matter of fact, against such self-immolation as offence against God, but the queen in a lyric of unsurpassable beauty and pathos convinces all that life has ceased for her on the death of her Lord and that it is but fair that her corpse should be consigned to fire. This lyric poem read in original will not only carry conviction even to the sceptic modern but firmly establish the existence of a highly developed state of monogamic civilisation among the ancient Tamils.

A high ideal of monogamy and a lofty conception of the relationship between man and wife are not all. It is not enough for you to live happily alone with your wife and family. Diffusing as much comfort as possible amongst others, helping the needy, relieving the distressed and all such modern altruistic sentiments appear to have their origins in those days. Purananuru, a Tamil anthology of great historic value records how a poor poet exhorts his wife to share with the needy the gifts which he has brought from his patron Kumanan. The poverty of this poet's family is depicted in unforgettable lines of lyric charm. The scene of their only child famished and ill-grown owing to undernourishment creeping along to the empty kitchen and raising a wail that draws tears

from the eyes of his dejected mother, is only surpassed by the simple dignity with which the poet adjures his wife to share the bounty he had been able to secure from his patron with those related and unrelated that may stand in need of succour. It is this spirit of charity, which does not, like the modernist expressive phrase, 'begin at home,' that should indicate to the individualist world the secret of 'community' happiness—a secret that evades the grasp of modern thinkers, and statesmen alike.

It is not a surprising thing to the Tamils, who are instinctively large-hearted to see a model of their culture sharing his gifts with the needy. What is noteworthy is the rare courage and dignity exhibited by these men of learning even in the act of seeking succour or favour. Two incidents in the life of the poet adverted to in the preceding paragraph are worth mention: on one occasion there was delay in honouring him and he in pungent words told the king point-blank that gifts delayed or grudged lose their charm and that he should not be treated as a beggar seeking alms. On another occasion the chief Veliman deputed his miserly brother to do the courtesies of the palace. What he offered was scanty. And the poet drawing up with dignity informed the miser that the world was not bankrupt of munificent princes and that beggars like him could even choose to be magnanimous. So saying the poet departed showing him the elephant given to him by Kumanan as gift. That learning and culture should be respected and that

such respect can be maintained only by those that are the repositories of such learning are well exemplified by this prince of the ancient Tamil poets.

There are still some more anecdotes in this poet's life that merit mention. They indicate a different aspect of his character worthy of emulation: Certain self-assertion in accepting gifts; and genuine sorrow at the death of a great patron of learning. King Athiaman Nedumananji was once too busy either to give audience to the poet or hear his poems but sent suitable gifts to him. To converse and enjoy the sweetness and charms of Tamil poems and then accept patronage from one who has the taste to appreciate them is the only proper thing to do but to accept some money as a hireling is an act which ancient Tamil poets scorned to do. The gifts were accordingly rejected with scant courtesy.

But it is not to be gathered from all these incidents that this poet was an embodiment of pride and rudeness often characteristic of half-learned persons. The pathetic lament in *Purananuru* over the death of Veliman is a standing monument not merely of lyric grief in literature but also of the natural large-heartedness and sense of gratitude felt by this poet towards his patron. The poet mourns over the irreparable loss sustained by him and his dependants, and concludes in lines of unsurpassably descriptive and tragic tone that life is at an end for him and the only course left is to cease to live.

Now, it is a fact to be borne in mind that in the Tamil Country learning was not pursued to earn profits.

Modern commercial interests or Government appointments were things alien to the Tamils and though kings patronised and appointed to posts of trust and responsibility men of deep learning, wisdom, and experience, none dreamt of pursuing education to make a living out of it. Education for education's sake was the unblurred ideal of the day.

And education for all irrespective of sex, caste, or creed. Indeed to any casual reader of Purananuru the number of women poets and savants drawn from every strata of society must be very striking. And more remarkable the respect shown to the learned as such. Purananuru, 183 records a verse by a Pandya ruler who states in it that precedence and respect should follow one's learning and culture but not birth, caste, or wealth, or age. This is not a single instance. On a different occasion, (Purananuru verse, 71) another young ruler mentions how he conducted his administration through the advice of the learned, the wise and the experienced, and how all savants had equal and respectful treatment in his territory.

Now, such treatment indicates clearly the high position accorded by kings to poets and is calculated to develop great and lasting friendship between kings and poets. It is easy to illustrate this. There is the story of Pisiranthaiyar and Kopperum Chola gleaned from Purananuru poems from 214 to 222. The king having become disgusted with the disloyalty and treachery of his sons, determined to go on a pilgrimage and end his life,

and as soon as this was heard his friend and poet Pisi-randaiyar hastened to join him and it is reported that both embraced death unseparated. A similar attachment to the same king by the poet Poththiar is also recorded in Purananuru, poem 222.

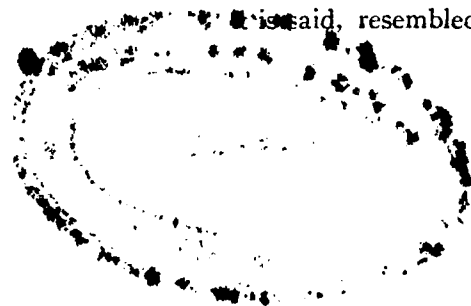
More than this self-immolation, there is another incident in Kopperum Chola's life that illustrates alike the great influence of the Tamil poets over their kings and how by their wise counsels they guided the affairs of State in those days. As indicated in the preceding paragraph the sons of this king rebelled against their father and led a hostile army. At first the king was roused to fury and prepared himself to rout the rebels. The result would have been a great misery to all and whoever won the battle, the Tamil Country would have had to bear the stain either of a parricidal or other war producing no benefit to either side. Realising this, the brave poet and counsellor Aerrianar interceded and argued with the irate king the pros and cons of the fight, checked his fury, and made him abandon the project.

Such incidents illustrating beyond doubt the beneficial influence of these men of light and wisdom are many. A few more of a different kind should be instructive. A great and courageous poet, Kovur Kilar by name, noted with shame and anger the cowardliness with which Cholan Nedungilli remained shut up within his palace when his city was besieged by his kindred neighbour Cholan Nalangilli. He exhorted him that it is not kingliness to look to one's own safety and comfort, when his

subjects surrounded by the enemy's army are starving and that either he should fight as a warrior or sue for honourable peace if he meant to prevent loss of life and property. On another occasion he interceded successfully in an internecine fight and averted aimless war. Again the same poet had occasion to be present just at the time when Cholan Killivalavan was preparing to sacrifice to his mad elephant the captured young princes of his enemy Malayaman. He interceded, reminded him that he is descended from a king who was prepared to lay down his life to save a hunted dove, chid his act as cowardly and inhuman, and finally dissuaded him from the cruel act. It was his courage and dignity, impartiality and strong moral fervour that exercised such enormous influence over these kings.

There are several other anecdotes to prove that the Tamil poets and men of learning had been the chief advisers to the then ruling chiefs and mighty monarchs. But what are shown above will suffice.

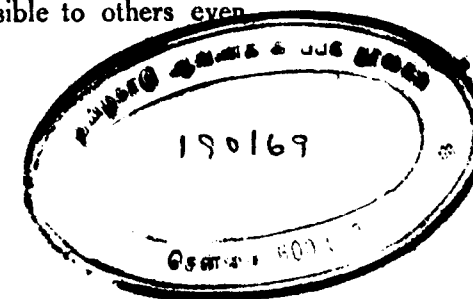
Many more occurrences of a wonderful and touching character are recorded in the Purananuru collection, in which kings and potentates treated the poets as if they were their masters and themselves as their servants. We shall mention here one such incident in illustration of this great fact. Among the ancient Tamil kings their war-drum was considered very sacred and a room was set apart for its safe keeping. Withing the room the drum was usually placed on a finely made bedstead the cushion of which, it is said, resembled the foam of the sesamum oil. Now,



as you make an intelligent and careful use of fire, it is very kindly towards you, for it cooks your food, it warms you against cold, it manufactures for you various articles of value, it drives steam-engines, steam-ships and what not, but when it gets beyond your control, or when it vomits flaming liquid matter through volcanic craters, what is more terrible, more destructive in its action than fire? It simply burns up all and reduces everything to mere ashes. Again, God creates, preserves and destroys all and so also does the fiery mass called the sun: for is it not a well-known fact that without the presence of solar light and solar heat no living thing can come into being nor can it exist? Why so far? For the very maintenance of life, we require a certain amount of heat in our body; when our temperature becomes abnormal, either by going up or by sinking down the utmost limit, the spark of life is instantly extinguished. God is the purest being imaginable and although he is present as closely in impure things as in pure, he is not in the least defiled by any impurities but cleanses them all of their filth and makes them as pure as himself; and fire also is the only element within our experience which is not tainted by its contact with any amount of filth, but which burns up all impurities and changes them all into pure white ashes; other elements: air, water, and earth get themselves defiled with dirt. God is both visible and invisible, visible only to devout souls in a form assumed in the twinkling of an eye like lightning-flash, but invisible to others even

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while existing everywhere; and fire also has the same characteristics, since it suddenly makes its appearance at a point where you kindle it successfully, while in its invisible state it exists everywhere, all through the world and its objects. Hence it is that when occasion arises for speaking of these two aspects of God simultaneously, the Upanishads such as Svetasvatara¹ and Kaivalya and the Tamil Saints such as Appar and Meikandan illustrate them by pointing out the two phases of fire which resemble them almost. Now it must be obvious the similarity that obtains between God and Fire is quite close in almost all respects so far shown.

And I may add that since all who speak of God speak of him as the supreme spiritual light, according to the law which makes substances of like nature combine together most intimately, God manifests himself to us through the physical light existing in it in the most intimate union conceivable. This fact must have originally impressed itself on the minds of ancient seers so vividly that they came to think of God ever after either as Fire (Agni) or as the God of fire. To the two conceptions, the Rig-Veda bears ample testimony, as is clear from the passages beginning with "Thou, Agni, art Rudra"², and with "The long-haired being sustains fire; he is called this light."³

¹ 1. 12-19.

² "Tvam Agne Rudra," ii. 1, 6.

³ Rig-Veda, "Kesi agnim Kesi Visham Kesi bibharti rodasi Kesi idam jyotir uchyati" X. 136, 1.

CHAPTER IV

FIRE WORSHIP AMONG OTHER ANCIENT RACES

Even much anterior to the compilation, if not the composition of the Rig-Vedic hymns, that this conception of God as the God of fire lay imbedded in the thoughts of all higher intelligent human beings which occupied the different centres of civilisation on this earth is becoming clearer and clearer, as the remarkable records left by them come to light by the indefatigable labours of antiquarians. In one of the early Egyptian inscriptions, the composition of which is stated to have taken place three thousand years before Christ, it is said, "The God of the world is in the light above the firmament; his emblems are upon earth; it is to them that worship is rendered daily."¹ The emblems of light alluded to in this inscription are, no doubt, the so-called phallic stones set up and worshipped all over the world. In the still earlier Accadian records we find the highly civilized Chaldeans worshipping God in the sun, the moon, and the fire and glorifying him in a hymn thus: "The firegod, the first-born supreme, unto heaven they pursued and no father did he knew"². They erected a very huge and magnificent temple for the moon-god at *Ur* not only a great central place of worship but also the famous capital of their

¹ Mahommedanism by G. T. Fechtany, M. A., p. 2.

² Ibid, p. 37; cp. this with Isavaasyopnishad, 4.

kingdom. They called the moon-god by the name of *Nannar*. They had similar temples, also for the sun-god, one of which was built at Sippara before 3800 B. C.; and in which they worshipped him under the name of Tammuz.¹ The Babylonians also were the worshippers of the Sun-god, as is manifest from an inscription on the stone-tablet which was deposited about the year 880 B. C., and on which was found written the following: "The image of Shamash, the great Lord, who dwells in the 'House of the sun' "². The name of this great Lord was 'Bel'; and a great temple was erected for him in Babylon. The very name 'Babylon' seems to be a corruption of 'Bel il,' which mean 'The House of Lord'; but Ragozin derives it from the Semitic name 'Babilu' which means 'The gate of God'.³ The principal divinity of the Phoenicians also was the Sun-god called 'Baal' whom they worshipped in both the aspects beneficent and maleficent—beneficent as giving life and light, maleficent as emitting fire and hot summer heat.⁴ When we turn to Hebrew scriptures we find the sun worshipped under a still earlier name 'El,' and the sun-god called 'El Shaddai.' When Jehovah appeared unto Moses, he said, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as El Shaddai (which is taken to be a Hebrew name

¹ Chaldaea by Z. A. Ragozin, p. 213.

² Ibid, p. 248.

³ Ibid, 249.

⁴ Mohammedanism by Bettany, p. 52.

meaning God Almighty), but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them"¹. And of God's appearance to Moses in the form of fire it is distinctly stated in Exodus (Ch. XIX, 16-18) thus: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, *because the Lord descended upon it in fire.*"

So far it is clear that not only was the conception of God as the God of fire commonly held by the Egyptians, the Accadians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians and the Hebrews of very ancient times but even the very word expressing that conception is found almost the same in all their religious writings. Concerning this common feature of their religions what Mr. Ragozin, a great and able historian of the ancient races, says, is very important and notable. He says: "It is to be noticed that the Semites gave the first place to the Sun, and not, like the Shumiro-Accads, to the Moon, possibly from a feeling akin to terror, experiencing as they did his destructive power, in the frequent droughts and consuming heat of the desert." "The Semitic language of Babylonia which we call 'Assyrian,' while adapting the ancient writing to its own needs, re-

¹ Exodus, vi, 3.

tained the use of the sign 'star,' and read it *ilu*, 'God.' The word—*Ilu* or *El*—we find in all Semitic languages, either ancient or modern, in the names they give to God, in the Arabic Allah as well as in the Hebrew Elohim"¹. This discloses the fact that the word 'Allah' is after all but a modified form of the oldest name of God 'El.' I wish you to remember this important old word, since I shall have to return to it when I come to discuss the affinity existing between some Semitic and Accadian words and Tamil words.

Leaving aside these ancient people of the old world for a while, let us turn our attention to some of the equally antique races that inhabited the new world. In central and south America, there existed in the remote past certain nations and kingdoms whose relics and remains—especially many palaces and temples in a sufficiently preserved condition, still stand to testify to the glorious height to which the civilisation of those people had risen. Amongst the oldest peoples of Mexico, the Maya race stands pre-eminent for its civilisation, as has been observed by Prof. Konrad Haebler, who says, "The peoples to whom Central America owes the peculiarly high development of its civilisation belong to the Maya race."² The grand temple of the sun built by them can still be seen in the ruins of the once-prosperous town called Palenque. The same authority

¹ Chaldea, p. 232.

² Harmsworth History of the World, p. 5728.

writes: "The worship of the sun occupied a foremost place in the Maya religious observances"³. And the Toltecs another civilized section of the ancient Mexicans, also paid their adoration only to the sun, the moon and the stars⁴. In the opinion of Prof. Haebler the age of these civilized races goes back to the oldest period in the Jewish chronology. Again, in still earlier ages there lived in Peru in South America still more civilized races among whom the natives of Chimu held the highest rank. Staunch worshippers they were of the sun-god as is evident from a terracotta image that was found by Mr. T. Hewitt Myring; and the manufacture of this image is computed to have taken place in 5000 B. C.⁵ Side by side with the sun-god they paid their homage to the moon-god also⁶.

Once more turn we now to the old world. Coming to later times, we find great thinkers in Greece, such as Heraclitus, Parmenides and Leucippus who lived in the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ, arguing to discover in fire the great moving principle of the world⁶. Mr. Bet-tany says that the idea of the greatest Greek God—Zeus, took its rise from the conception of the sun as the life and light-giving divinity of the world⁶. And as in the innermost sanctuary of the temple of Apollo they kept fire al-

³ Ibid, p. 5738.

⁴ The Story of Mexico by Susan Hale, p. 27.

⁵ Harmsworth History of the World, p. 5817.

⁶ Ibid, p. 5836.

⁶ Windleband's A History of Philosophy, p. 62.

⁶ Mohammedanism, p. 187.

ways burning on the altar in front of the image, the fact is undeniable that the olden day Greeks worshipped God in the form of fire only. That the Romans also adored only the god of fire is evident from the view they held of the highest god 'Jupiter' as 'the god of light'¹. Nor was the conception of the old Teutons who lived in the extreme north western corner of Europe, at variance with this universal conception of God, since they too contemplated their highest God 'Woden' as possessing the sun for his eye and their other god 'Thor' as ruling rain, lightning and thunder.²

Now these facts furnished by the history of the ancient civilized races and their religions would, I believe, suffice to throw light on the inborn tendency of the highly developed human mind to conceive of fire as the fittest embodiment of the spiritual light and heat of God. I need hardly say that the term 'fire' is used here to denote all luminous bodies, whether they possess a positive light like the sun, or only a reflected light as the moon.

It is to be further observed that in order to conceive God as the spiritual fire and view him as ever present in fire and fiery bodies, man must have attained to a certain high stage of mental development, as is evident from the historical facts quoted above; for in the accounts given of savages and their religious ideas, we do not meet with any

¹ Ibid, p. 259.

² Ibid, p. 286, 288.

to see, hear and talk and lose thereby the knowledge you can otherwise acquire. The more these deficiencies increase, the more the growth of your mind is hindered and the more the blinding power of darkness over soul increases. Now, then, a perfect organism—perfect in all its parts and adjustments constitutes an immediate and most important condition for the enlightenment of all individual souls.

Next to it come other conditions such as this world, its objects and other sentient beings as human, animal and vegetable. If all these had not remained ready-made, before the advent of the soul here in its earthly tenement, the very advent of it is rendered unthinkable and absolutely impossible. It follows, therefore, as an inevitable conclusion that this world and all objects of experience form a second great condition necessary to the evolution and enlightenment of individual minds. These two conditions, St. Meikandan would call as the effects of *Máya*, the first cause of matter. In the midst of these conditions are set all the finite selves for the sake of their development. In the language of Biology these two conditions are called as *Heredity* and *Environment*. Of these two, Prof. Henry Drummond, an original thinker and able expositor of Religion in the light of modern science, says, "Mr. Darwin, following Weismann, long ago pointed out that there are two main factors in all Evolution—the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions. * * * These two, Heredity and Environment, are the master-influences of the organic world. These have made all of us what we are. These forces are still ceaselessly playing upon all our

lives. And he who truly understands these influences; he who has decided how much to allow to each; he who can regulate new forces as they arise, or adjust them to the old, so directing them as at one moment to make them co-operate, at another to counteract one another, understands the rationale of personal development. To seize continuously the opportunity of more and more perfect adjustment to better and higher conditions, *to balance some inward evil* with some purer influence acting from without, in a world to make our environment at the same time that it is making us,—these are the secrets of well-ordered and successful life.”* Is not this statement of an eminent scientist but an echo of our Saint Meikandan’s voice which resounded all throughout this land of philosophy some six hundred years ago? “Every living thing” again in the words of Drummond, “normally requires for its development an Environment containing air, light, heat, and water. In addition to these, if vitality is to be prolonged for any length of time, and if it is to be accompanied with growth and the expenditure of energy, there must be a constant supply of food. When we simply remember how indispensable food is to growth and work, and when we further bear in mind that the food-supply is solely contributed by the Environment, we shall realise at once the meaning and the truth of the proposition that without Environment there can be no life.”† Holding the same view as he does, our Saint Meikandan goes a step forward and insists that not only for life but also for the enlighten-

* *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 69. † *Ibid*, p. 71.

ment of its understanding, environment, that is to say, a body and an external world with all objects of senses, are required as absolutely necessary conditions. This thoughtful teaching of our Saint, in addition to being a veritable fact of our experience, finds its corroboration in the works of our modern scientists as I have just now shown.

At this point I would like to warn you against being carried away by the opinions and sentiments of certain great names associated with the school of thinkers called neo-Vedantins who simply assert that this organism and all its surroundings are mere myths and false creations of a deluded mind, a deceptive product of gross ignorance. You must bear in mind that this assertion of neo-Vedantins is nothing more than a mere assertion devoid of all proof. To some, nay even to many, this may seem to be a workable hypothesis, but this hypothesis, not being demonstrable, leads to no positive and fruitful conclusion. Where all is ignorance or nescience there is no room for any kind of knowledge. See how emphatically this doctrine of nescience is rejected by so great a scientific thinker as Dr. James Ward who says, “But unless we are prepared to repudiate logic altogether, this sharp severance of known and unknown, knowable and unknowable must be abandoned, so radical are the contradictions that beset it. Where nescience is absolute, nothing can be said, neither that there is more to know nor that there is not. But if science were verily in itself complete, this could only mean that there was no more to know; and then there

could be and would be no talk of an environing nescience.”* If all that we think, will and do are the outcome of ignorance, why, then, strive after acquisition of knowledge? Why seek ye to know God? If all be ignorance, what is knowledge then? Is it not a fact that only after we have come to know who we are, and what our surroundings, that we are able to distinguish between knowledge and ignorance? Does not the very act of knowing what ignorance is, imply a knowing agent, his knowing intellect and the knowledge arising and resulting from the combination of the two? If ignorance be a fact, that fact cannot be known unless there be an intelligence to know it. For, as has been so well pointed out by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, “Facts must be interpreted by intelligence, but intelligence always operates upon the basis of previously established fact. The growth of knowledge is an *active assimilation* of the new by the old. Or in other words, our hypotheses are suggested by, and start from, the facts of already established knowledge, and then are tested by experience.”* From this you see, to know and interpret ignorance, you require a knowing intelligence and not another ignorance. And even this new progress of knowledge presupposes another old one, and that a still older one and so on, until we reach a tiny point where the faint glimmer of the light of intelligence gleams as in the first beginnings of a child’s life. Although we are unable to stretch our observation beyond this limit, we can confi-

* *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, p, 28. † *Axioms as Postulates, in Personal Idealism*, p, 107.

dently say, if the inferential process of proceeding from what is known to unknown can be relied upon, that the dark line of ignorance and the gleaming bright line of intelligence, observable not only in the human child but also in the very lowest types of life, must ever recede into an indefinite past running parallel to each other, just as they are seen to project into a similarly indefinite future, without the one ever merging in the other so as to become one inseparable thing. How truly said are the words of the profound psychologist Frederic Myers, relating to this parallel existence of ignorance and intelligence in the mental atmosphere of all living beings, may be seen from what he states in his great work on *Human Personality* that “Optical analysis splits up the white ray into the various coloured rays which compose it. Philosophical analysis in like manner splits up the vague consciousness of the child into many faculties;—into the various external senses, the various modes of thought within. This has been the task of descriptive and introspective psychology. Experimental psychology is adding a further refinement. In the sun’s spectrum, and in stellar spectra, are many dark lines or bands, due to the absorption of certain vapours in the atmosphere of sun or stars or earth. And similarly in the range of spectrum of our own sensation and faculty there are many inequalities—permanent and temporary, of brightness and definition. Our mental atmosphere is clouded by vapours and illumined by fires, and is clouded and illumined differently at different times.”* So, then,

* *Human Personality*. vol, 1, p, 17.

although it be an undeniable factor in the constitution of our mental phenomena, ignorance is not the be-all and end-all of our existence. Side by side with it, yet quite distinct from it, sparkles our intelligence ever aspiring to overcome it and get rid of its evil influence. Would any one of us here or elsewhere like to remain in ignorance all throughout his life? Should we like to be called ignorant men, idiots, fools and blockheads? No; certainly not. On the other hand, we feel an ever-growing desire to become wiser and wiser, so deeply implanted in us that prompted by it we work hard day and night to acquire knowledge and dispel by its supreme light the huge darkness that enwraps our soul. Had this principle of darkness and evil been an essential part of ourselves, an inseparable property of our soul, would we like to part company with it, would we like to become wise and good souls? But the innate and noble aspiration felt in every one of us towards an attainment of the highest wisdom and the fullest goodness must itself be sufficient to show that evil ignorance, though co-exists with all individual souls from time beyond limit hindering their development and enlightenment, is not a property of their mind as intelligence is a property, that it remains not as the prevailing condition of our existence but shows clear signs of its being vanquished in the great battle* that is being

* Compare what Dr. F. C. S. Schiller says in his *Riddles of the Sphinx*, p. 366: "Evil and imperfection is that which is ever vanishing away. It is impermanent itself and the cause of impermanence in the imperfect, the lawless and acosmic factor, which must be continually transcended and ultimately eliminated in the process towards perfect Being."

waged untiringly by the reasoning minds with the invaluable assistance of Maya or environment, under the guidance of a Supreme Intelligence, and that the hypothesis held by the neo-Vedantins that this organism and its surroundings are the mythical and deceptive creations of pure ignorance, must, therefore, be abandoned as quite untenable.

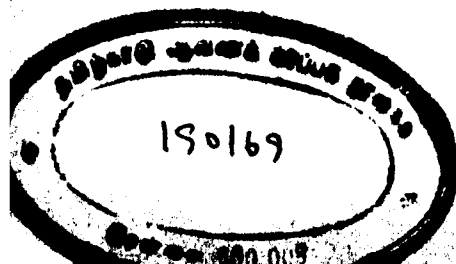
Now, it must also be very clear to you how the position of our Saint Meikandan becomes stronger and stronger as we approach nearer and nearer to a careful and penetrating study of the simple verities of our life and its growth. With Meikandan we must bid good-bye to the mere phantasies and chimerical ravings of certain imaginative thinkers—great though they seem in the eyes of certain class of people, and go direct to the actual conditions of life to get a clear and true comprehension of their setting and ultimate purpose. This practical point of view inculcated by St. Meikandan in the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta is in substantial agreement with the pragmatic view of such great modern thinkers as William James, Bergson, Eucken, Schiller, James Ward and others.

So far we have seen, by observing the beginnings of life, this body and its environment to be veritable instruments of thought and the souls placed in their midst to make use of them with a view to rid themselves of the evil influence which the dark principle eternally co-existing with it exercises and to obtain power over it by enlightening their own understanding into perfection. This interaction between mind and matter is going on, we



should say, for indefinite ages, for we know not when it began or how long it took to come to its present stage or when it will end.

Had there been but one individual soul instead of many, its evolution would not have taken so long and unlimited a period to complete it. But such is not the fact. There are countless individual souls ranging from the simplest and the minutest organic beings such as monerion, amoeba and protoplasm to the highest and the most complex organic beings called human. While maintaining a surface resemblance and a superficial law of unity to its species or group, every organism and every ego that dwells within it, possesses unique characteristics which other members of its class do not share. The more the knowledge of science advances, the more the classification of groups and sub groups multiply. Instead of homogeneity being the law of nature, heterogeneity is becoming its determind law. This has been well pointed out by Dr. Schiller in his *Formal Logic* thus: "Darwin conclusively showed it to be conceivable that one species might develop into another by the accumulation of individual differences under natural selection. Thus a species is really nothing but a temporary grouping of individuals, all of whom are indefinitely variable and capable of developing in various directions." He continues: "Species, therefore, ceases to exist as an ontological reality. The individual alone is real. He alone bears the burden of the whole past, and contains the promise and potentialities of all future development. We conclude, therefore, that science



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importance. The lakes inside the precincts of Karnack, and those enclosed in the grounds of Nagkon-wat, and around the temples in the Mexican Copan and Santa Cruz del Quiche, will be found to present the same peculiarities. Besides possessing other significances the whole area was laid out with reference to cyclic calculations. In the Druidical structures the same sacred and mysterious numbers will be found. The circle of stones generally consists of either twelve, or twentyone, or thirtysix. In these circles the centre place belongs to Assar, Azon, or the god in the circle, by whatever other name he might have been known. The thirteen Mexican serpent-gods bear a distant relationship to the thirteen stones of the Druidical ruins." (Isis Unveiled, vol. 1, p. 572).

In a short review like this we are unable to adduce further proofs to establish this fact of the Tamilian dispersion in all the three directions as far as the extreme habitable corners of this earth. In the first chapter of this book the author has given for this important proofs drawn from reliable sources.

That the ancient Britons and their priests the Druids attained to such a high stage of culture in all branches of knowledge that even Pythagoras the father of Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle went to them to learn the ultimate truths of religion and philosophy forms the theme of the second chapter. But the author has not given here sufficient proofs for this assertion.

The third and the fourth chapters show the remarkable coincidences existing between the principles of the Druidic religion and Saivism. The belief in the triune nature of God is shown to enter as an important element into the faiths of the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Hindus, the Chinese, and the Buddhists, but it has not been shown to be so in the Druidic religion the leading subject of the book. The fourth chapter devoted to Swedenborg's explanation of the spread of religious ideas common to all ancient religions is not at all convincing to our mind. The fifth chapter discusses the indigenous theory and the Elamite theory concerning the original home of the Dravidians but has not arrived at any conclusion as to which is correct and which is incorrect. In our view the indigenous theory alone is correct being supported by facts mentioned in ancient Tamil literature. The other is built upon mere conjectures.

The sixth chapter is more important than the three preceding ones, since it deals with certain features common to the religious

observances of the Druids and the Saivites. The worship of both was offered to a pillar of stone or wood erected either on a mountain top or under the shade of a spreading tree. In later times these places were converted into temples. Further the Druidic circles and stone-henge import the same spiritual meanings as the circles around the Hindu temples do; and the Druids wore around their neck certain beads in the same way as the Saiva priests do. (To continue)

**Some of the opinions expressed by some eminent
Subscribers on receiving the 1st 2nos. of The Ocean of Wisdom**

Mr. D. Gopaul chetty, author of the famous book 'New Light Upon the Philosophy of India' and others and translator of Swedenborg's works into Tamil:—

"You have already laid the Tamil world under a deep debt of gratitude to you by your publications. Your additional publication of the "Ocean of Wisdom" will increase that indebtedness a thousand fold. Some of the English-educated Tamilians have been misled for want of such magazines to believe in the pantheism of Sankara and other false philosophies of the Brahmins. Having no time or inclination to go deep into any philosophy, they simply read some newspaper articles and superficial books of the Ramakrishna Mission and conclude that Sankara's philosophy is the best. They do not know that Saiva Siddhanta is the only true philosophy of India that is based on Science. It is a pity that owing to ignorance they are so misled even in politics. I hope your magazine will remove all that ignorance."

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."