

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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CAUSE OF DELAY

Owing to severe tooth and headache caused by excessive brainwork the Editor Swami Vedachalam could not bring out this number in time. And the 11th and 12th numbers of the Tamil edition Jnanasagaram are also delayed on account of this circumstance. He could not also go to Thiruvattipuram to preside at the annual celebration of Auvvai Tamil Manavar Kalagam which was arranged to be held on the 2nd & 3rd May but which is now postponed to some future date which will be announced in due course. The subscribers and the public are requested to wait till the recovery of the Swami.

*K. Thiripurasundari.

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BI-MONTHLY

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Vol. I

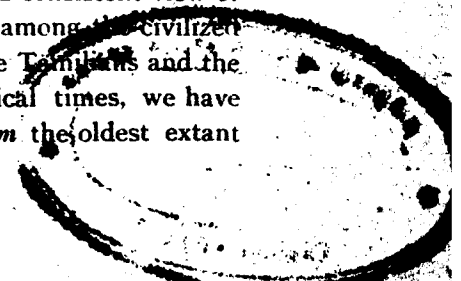
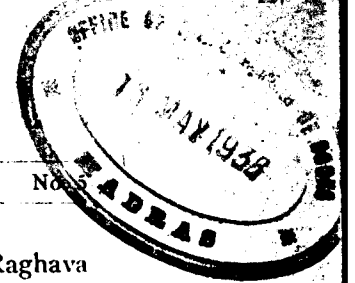
Pallavaram, September, 1935

No. 5

THOLKAPPIAM AND MARRIAGE

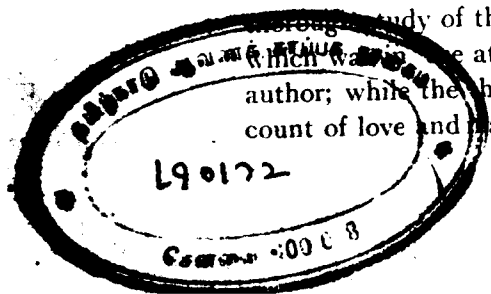
The calumnious remarks made by Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar in his Tamil treatise called the "Tholkappiapporul Adhikara Araichi" or 'The Critical study of the Tholkappiapporul Adhikaram,' on the institution of marriage and marriage rites among the Tamils have occasioned a hot controversy between the non-brahmin Tamil scholars and Mr. Iyengar and his brahmin community. It was by Mr. Somasundara Bharati, M. A., B. L., the head professor of Tamil in the Annamalai University that the strictures passed by the Pandit on the very fundamental elements of the life and character of the ancient Tamil people were first brought to the notice of the learned Tamils and were ably examined and criticised by him in a series of articles contributed to the papers. And other able non-brahmin pandits have thereafter entered the arena of this contest and maintained their position most boldly and honourably. Great credit is, therefore, due to Mr. Bharati and others for meeting the insult on open field and dealing with it in an appropriate manner. As I was also called upon by my friends to take part in the controversy and help to bring it to an issue just and legitimate in the light of facts afforded by a historical study of the two literatures Sanscrit and Tamil, I betook myself to inquire into this important subject as carefully, impartially, and deeply as I can and offer the methods and results of my inquiry for the consideration of all seekers after truth. Now let me proceed to the treatment of the subject.

For acquiring a clear, correct and consistent view of the forms of marriage that prevailed among the civilized sections of the two ancient races: the Tamils and the Aryans, from the very earliest historical times, we have as authentic records the *Tholkappiam* the oldest extant



In the first place we shall take the *Tholkappiam* in Tamil. As regards the high antiquity of this monumental work of Tamil genius, except a few Aryan fanatics who do not like the very idea of ascribing to any Tamil work an age higher or equal to that of any Sanscrit work, almost all including the author of the treatise under discussion, are agreed upon that it is as old, if not older, in Tamil as the Vedas in Sanscrit. That, in point of time, it cannot be brought down but must be placed much anterior to the time of the Sanscrit grammarian Panini, has been sufficiently proved in my Tamil works: "The Ancient Tamilians and Aryans" and "The Age of St. Manickavachakar." For a detailed treatment of the exact age in which the composition of this work must have taken place, the reader is referred to these two books.

The Tholkappiam consists of three parts; the first part treats of orthography, the second of etymology, and the third the themes of poetry and rhetoric, metre and idiom. The first two parts exhibit a vast, minute and thorough study of the whole range of the Tamil language which was made at and before the time of the talented author; while the third gives at first a full analytical account of love and marriage affairs and secondly an account

**THOLKAPPIAR**

Before entering into a discussion of the subject of love and marriage union as treated of in the third part of this ancient Tamil work, a brief account of its author, especially whether he was an Aryan or a Tamilian, would seem to be necessary at the outset, since the brahmins claim him as an Aryan while the non-brahmins take him to be a pure Tamilian. The brahmins say that he was one of the twelve disciples of the Aryan sage Agastiya and bore the Sanscrit name 'Trunadhoomagni' and produce in support of their statement the prefatory verse affixed to a later Tamil poetics called "Purapporul venba malai;" as well as the commentary of Nachinarkkiniar on the introductory piece to the Tholkappiam, for in both of which indeed it is clearly stated that he was one of the twelve

disciples of Agastiya and in the latter that he was known by the name of "Trunadhoomagni."

On the other hand, a few learned non-brahmin Tamils who inquired into the matter in the light of recent historical criticism hold that the Puranic account of Agastiya and his immigration into the Tamil country with a horde of his Aryan kinsfolk for the purpose of civilizing the Tamils, their language and religion is a pure myth fabricated by the brahmins to bring the already civilized Tamils under their influence and render them serviceable to gaining their own ends. When one sees how tenaciously the galaxy of Tamil Pandits both brahmin and even non-brahmin cling to this Puranic account without questioning its veracity, the unusual strength with which the myths of the Puranas hold the mind of the people whether literate or illiterate can be easily imagined. It would be a melancholy sight to behold a non-brahmin Tamil listening with a meek and humble heart to the incidents of this story whenever a brahmin seizes an opportunity to relate them for establishing the supremacy and the civilizing power of the Aryan race with which he has completely identified himself.

Pandit Raghava Iyengar who, like his brahmin kindred, is ever vigilant either in seeking for an opportunity or in creating one, for displaying the intellectual feats performed by his Aryan ancestors in this country, has not failed, at this instance, in the very beginning of his treatise on Tholkappiam, to relate this Puranic story about Agastiya and make our ancient and illustrious grammarian St Tholkappiar one of the twelve disciples of Agastiya. This statement of his at the outset he devised, I believe, as a prelude to another statement which he was shortly to make as regards the matrimonial felicity conferred, according to him, by his Aryan sages on the ancient Tamils. Strongly biased by his unquestioned belief in the above story the Pandit has not cared to go deeper into the matter. Whether the tale about Agastiya has any historical

foundation, whether any Aryan who bore that name ever came to the south, whether any ancient Tamil work records such a gracious advent of this Aryan sage into the south, whether there is in it any remotest hint as to the beneficial light of learning and civilisation which is said to have been brought by him and his people to this land of the Tamils, whether Tholkappiar has, anywhere in his own work or in the works of other old Tamil poets, been alluded to as the disciple of Agastiya, whether he is ever mentioned in any old Tamil work as being known by the Sanscrit name "Trunadhoomagni"—these and other vital questions bearing most intimately on the subject Mr. Iyengar has shown no inclination to take even the slightest notice of. But Mr. Iyengar is really a very good Tamil scholar of the ancient Tamil classics and I take it, therefore, that it was with a set purpose that he passed over these highly important points in his study of the Tholkappiam. What that set purpose of his might be, will become apparent in the sequel.

THE ARYAN SAGE AGASTIYA

Now let us proceed to investigate these points one by one in the order in which we have set them down above. It is in the Rig Veda that we for the first time meet with the origin and name of an Aryan sage Agastiya. In his commentary on the 11th verse in the hymn 33 of the 7th book of the Rig Veda, Sayana quotes a passage from Brihaddevata which Dr. John Muir translates thus:—

"When these two Adityas (Mitra and Varuna) beheld the Apsaras Urvasi at a sacrifice their seed fell from them into the sacrificial jar Vasativara. At that very moment the two energetic and austere rishis Agastiya and Vasistha were produced there. The seed fell on many places, into the jar, into water, and on ground. The muni Vasistha, most excellent of rishis was produced on the ground; while Agastiya was born in the jar, a fish of great lustre. The austere Agastiya

sprang thence of the size of a samya (i. e. the pin of a yoke). Since he was measured by a certain standard (mana) he is called (manya). Or, the rishi, having sprung from a jar (kumbha), is also measured by a jar, as the word kumbha is also designated as the name of a measure."

Divested of the strange, indecent and monstrous elements that have entered into its composition, the above story declares the plain and simple fact that Agastiya and Vasishtha were the sons of a courtesan successively produced on her by her paramours Mitra and Varuna, and that Agastiya the elder was shorter than Vasishtha the younger in stature. He is said to have composed 26 hymns in the first book of the Rig Veda from the hymn 166 to the hymn 191 in praise of the deities: Maruts, Indra, Asvins, Heaven and Earth, Visvedevas, Food, Apris, Agni, Brihaspathi, Water, Grass and Sun. At one time, he seems to have been infected with the poison of some venomous creature or plant, or some substance and composed the hymn 191 to counteract the effects of that poison. So much only is known of the Aryan sage Agastiya from the Rig Veda and other productions of the Vedic age.

As regards Agastiya's migration to the south and the colonisation of the Aryans who accompanied him here, we could glean nothing from the literature of the Vedic period which, according to the sane and sober-minded oriental scholars like R. C. Dutt, extends from 2000 B.C. to 1400 B. C. The strangeness that attaches to the event of his birth and the identification made between him and the star Canopus which shines brilliantly in the sky in the extreme south of India and which is worshipped there even unto this day near Cape Comorin has led the celebrated Dravidian scholar Dr. Caldwell to observe justly as follows:

"It is very doubtful whether Agastiya (if there ever were such a person) was really the leader of the Brahman immigration; more probably he is to be considered as its

mythological embodiment."* And Principal Griffith the famous translator of the four Vedas, and the Ramayana of Valmiki also corroborates the above view,

"He (Agastiya) is," he says "one of those indefinable mythic personages who are found in the ancient traditions of many nations, and in whom Cosmogonical and astronomical notions are generally figured. Thus it is related of Agastiya that the Vindhya mountains prostrated themselves before him; and yet the same Agastiya is believed to be the regent of the star Canopus."†

From these careful observations of the two distinguished scholars eminent in the Tamilian and Aryan culture, it may rightly be concluded that Agastiya is not at all a historical personage but he is only a created type of one of the families of the Aryan priests who bore that name in correspondence with the seven stars seen in the Great Polar Bear. Touching on this curious point Prof. A. A. Macdonell says,

"A numerically definite group of ancestral priests, rarely mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, are the seven Rishis or seers. In the Brahmanas they came to be regarded as the seven stars in the constellation of the Great Bear, and are said to have been bears in the beginning. This curious identification was doubtless brought about partly by the sameness of the number in the two cases, and partly by the similarity of sound between *rishi*, 'seer,' and *riksha*, which in the Rig Veda means both 'star' and 'bear'."‡

Even if we take the Agastiya of the Rig Veda to be a real historical individual, there is not the slightest hint in the whole range of the Vedic literature as to his crossing the Vindhya mountains and settling down in the south of the Tamil country. It is, therefore, quite clear

* *Dravidian Comparative Grammar*, p. 114.

† *Foot-note to the Rig Vedic hymn 166 of the first book.*

‡ *A History of Sanscrit Literature*, p. 109.

that, at the time of the Rig Veda and other Vedic works which were composed till 1400 B. C., no Aryan called by the name of Agastiya came to the south and settled here permanently.

Now, descend we down from 1400 B. C., to 200 B. C., that is to a time later by one thousand and two hundred years, to meet with another person who was called Agastiya and who figures in the post Vedic period as a worker of miracles. It is in the Mahabharata that such a person makes his appearance first of all. But this great epic underwent three revisions in each of which considerable alterations and additions had been made at different intervals of time not by one hand but by many. The third revision, according to our able historian of Epic India Mr. C. V. Vaidya, "assumed its present form between three to one hundred B. C."* In this rich store-house of the brahmanic legends, the story of Agastiya takes a new turn, but even then it does not mention that he migrated to the south with the express object of reforming the Tamils, their language and religion. All that it tells us about him is this:-

"Agastiya saw his ancestors suspended by their heels in a pit, and was told by them that they could be rescued only by his begetting a son. Thereupon he formed a girl out of the most graceful parts of different animals and passed her secretly into the palace of the king of Vidarbha. There the child grew up as a daughter of the king, and was demanded in marriage by Agastiya. Much against his will the king was constrained to consent, and she became the wife of the sage. She was named Lopamudra, because the animals had been subjected to loss (*lopa*) by her engrossing their distinctive beauties, as the eyes of the deer, etc. She was also called Kausitaki and Varaprada. The same poem also tells a story exhibiting his

* *The Mahabharata a Criticism*, P. 21.

superhuman power, by which he turned King Nahusha into a serpent and afterwards restored him to his proper form."*

From what has been stated thus in the Mahabharata one can clearly understand that the Agastiya of the Rig Veda is not the same as the Agastiya of the great epic but must have been a person who lived long anterior to the other; in other words, a thousand years at least must have elapsed before another of that name came into existence—whether that existence be real or imaginary. And it is this second Agastiya that is said in this epic to have crossed the Vindhya mountains and gone to the southern country. The verses relating to this incident are in the English translation of Mr. Manmatha Nath Dutt as follows:—

"Then the assembled celestials all went to the Rishi living in his hermitage, that ascetic, that foremost of virtuous men, the wonderfully powerful Agastiya; and they told him all.

The celestials said 'The King of mountains Vindhya, giving way to anger, is obstructing the path of the sun and the moon, and the course of the stars.

O best of Brahmanas, O greatly exalted one, except you there is none who can prevent him from doing it. Lomasha said, 'Having heard the words of the celestials, the Brahmana went to the mountain. Going there with his wife, he spoke thus to Vindhya.

'O foremost of mountains, I wish to have a path given to me by you, as *I intend to go to the southern country for some purpose.* (Italics ours)

O king of mountains, wait till I return; you can then increase your bulk as much as you like.'

O chastiser of foes, having made this agreement with Vindhya, (he went away), and up to the present day the son of Varuna (Agastiya) has not returned from the southern country." (Vana Parva, vv 8-14).

* Prof. J. Dowson's 'A Classical Dictionary,' P. 5.

Here too it must be noted that the epic says no more than that Agastiya crossed the Vindhya mountains and went into the southern country for some specific purpose. But what that country was in the south and what his purpose was for going there could not in the least be gathered from the epic the Mahabharata. These momentous points are left in the dark, simply because the redactor who interpolated this mythical account of Agastiya in the third recension of the epic was quite ignorant of the geographical details of the south, or because the small colony of the Aryans who went in search of food and shelter in the warm fertile regions of the south could have had no other motive for their peregrinations than that of settling there peacefully and comfortably.

But as we proceed to investigate the point as stated in the Ramayana of Valmiki, the object for which the Aryans migrated to the south gains much in clearness. For, there, it is distinctly stated that it was the Aryan family which bore the name of Agastiya that first went into the south and established settlements in various quarters that were wholesome, pleasant and fertile. What the legend implied, therefore, could be nothing more than this first Aryan colonisation, is quite obvious from mention made in the Ramayana of four Agastiyas and four hermitages that belonged to them in four different places one widely distant from the other. For instance, one such hermitage is said to have been in the vicinity of the river Vedaśruti which flows through the Kosala Country (Valmiki Ramayana, 2, 49). This family which passed by the name of Agastiya does not seem to have crossed the Vindhya mountains, but remained permanently in the north. But another which crossed the Vindhya is mentioned to have settled on the bank of the river Godavari (Ibid, 3, 13). Again a third Agastiya is alluded to as living in the Pothia mount in the extreme south (Ibid, 4, 49). And a fourth is said to have taken his abode in the Kunjara hill which is situated in the island of Ceylon (Ibid, 4, 41).

In the Agastiya Jataka of the Buddhist Jataka tales another Agastiya is referred to as having gone to the island of Kara, aspiring to solitude. "That island is situated in the southern Ocean."*

Do not such explicit references to five Agastiyas and their hermitages in several places widely distant from each other, clearly point to the colonization of Aryan families which took place all over India and Ceylon at or a little before the time of the composition of the two epics and the Jataka tales? We need hardly say that a single man who was called Agastiya could not have had five different habitations in five different and distant localities in the north and the south living in one and all at the same time. Especially at a time when such facilities for travel and communication as exist at the present day could not be thought of, it would be absurd to take all the five Agastiyas as one and the same person. When one thinks of the absurdity of taking all these separate individuals as a single person, he cannot but admit the fact that in the Vedic and epic periods the term Agastiya had been used not as the proper name of a particular person but as the class-name of a group of individuals who possessed common interests and who therefore lived together in specific places to safeguard such interests of theirs. The following quotation taken from the scholarly work of a learned Indian gentleman will render this fact quite clear to our readers:-

"The early Aryans were divided into numerous clans and tribes. The early name of a clan is *gotra* which etymologically means 'a place for the protection of cows.' My conjecture is that those families that possessed a common place for the protection of cows, i. e. a common cow-stall, belonged to the same *gotra*. We must remember that in the nomadic and even a later stage of Aryan civilisation, cattle formed the

* Prof. Speyer's English translation of *Jatakamala*, pp. 16, 17.

principal property of the people. * * * * So a group of families entered into an agreement or mutual understanding with one another to erect a common enclosure or stall for their cattle and guard it against wolves and robbers at night. There was a leader among them, who took the initiative in the matter, and issued directions to all. This man was called the *gotra-pati* or lord of the *gotra* or cattle-enclosure, and all the families that shared the same enclosure and acted under the direction of their common leader belonged to the same *gotra*.”*

The fact that such clans and tribes existed under the guidance of their patriarchs almost among all primitive peoples will get additional support from the evidence furnished by the following extract taken from the very learned, able and brilliant critical and exegetical commentary of Dr. John Skinner on Genesis:-

“The names in the Table are throughout eponymous: that is to say, each nation is represented by an imaginary personage bearing its name, who is called into existence for the purpose of expressing its unity, but is at the same time conceived as its real progenitor. From this it was an easy step to translate the supposed affinities of the various peoples into the family relations of father, son, brother, etc., between the eponymous ancestors; while the origin of the existing ethnic groups was held to be accounted for by the expansion and partition of the family. This vivid and concrete mode of representation, though it was prevalent in antiquity, was inevitably suggested by one of the commonest idioms of Semitic speech, according to which the individual members of a tribe or people were spoken of as ‘sons’ or ‘daughters’ of the collective entity to which they belonged. It may be added that (as in the case of the Arabian tribal genealogies) the usage could only have sprung up in

* ‘*Rig Vedic Culture*’ by Dr. Abinas Chandra Das, pp.109,110.

an age when the patriarchal type of the family and the rule of male descent were firmly established.”*

Hence the five Agastiyas noticed above could not have been five separate individuals who bore that name commonly but they represent the several petty Aryan communities who migrated to the south and settled themselves in various spots each under the guidance of an elderly man. At any rate, it is plain that, of the numerous Aryan tribes that were headed and led by different patriarchs, only those who were united under the name of Agastiya were the pioneers of the Aryan colonisation in the south. That is why the later Puranic legends associate the first Aryan advent to the south with the name of Agastiya.

Now, from the time of the Rig Veda although we hear the name of Agastiya borne by many an individual at different and distant intervals of time, we have no evidence whatever to believe that the Agastiya of the Rig Veda ever came to the south and gave the light of learning and civilisation to the Tamils.

Again, with reference to the Agastiya of the Mahabharata, we know only so much as his crossing the Vindhya mountains and going to the south but not anything more.

As regards the Agastiya of the Ramayana and the Jataka tales, we certainly know a little more and that is that there were several Aryan sages who were called by that name and who had hermitages both in the north and the south, and assisted Rama in his formidable combat with Ravana the great king of Lanka. Beyond this information we get absolutely nothing about his learning Tamil, his composing an elaborate grammar in Tamil and teaching it to his disciples or about his exercising his influence in civilising the Tamil people in any other way.

From these facts afforded by the ancient Sanscrit works themselves, it would be evident that the story which

* A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis by Dr. John Skinner, p. 189.

connects Agastiya with the ancient Tamil literature and assigns to him the first and foremost part in the composition of a great grammatical work in it could not have arisen even at the time of the Ramayana of Valmiki.

Now, what could be the age of this Ramayana? After making a searching analysis of the evidences both internal and external, Mr. C. V. Vaidya affirms this: "It appears, therefore, clear that the persent edition of the Ramayana is subsequent to the present edition of the Mahabharata and its date must be somewhere about the first centuary B.C."*Then it is beyond doubt that the tale which ascribes the production of the first Tamil grammar to the Aryan sage Agastiya could not have been brought into being even at the time of the Ramayana of Valmiki, that is, in the first century B. C.

AGASTIYA AND TAMIL LITERATURE

It that be the case, when was the tale given birth to? who gave birth to it? and what could be the object of giving birth to it? are the questions to which every sincere student of the ancient Tamil literature could not but seek true and pertinent answers.

Now, let us turn to the ancient Tamil works to see whether there is in them any explicit or implicit mention of the story of Agastiya which not only credits him with the composition of the first great grammatical treatise in Tamil but also posits him as the venerable teacher of St. Tholkappiar the reputed author of the Tholkappiam which still exists in all its completeness even after three thousand years and which is regarded by one and all as the glory of Tamil literature. If Tholkappiar had really been the first disciple of Agastiya, if he had sat at his feet and learnt the first grammatical work Agastiya is supposed to have produced, it is Tholkappiar himself that should have referred to his master in his book in full recognition of his profound indebtedness to him. Even if he failed to

* *The Riddle of the Ramayana*, p. 24.

do so—the total absence of any reference to Agastiya or his work in the whole range of the Tholkappiam does not seem to argue any such failure on his part, Panambaranar the fellow-student of Tholkappiar who prefixed an introductory verse to the Tholkappiam could not, as a matter of course, have failed to note the significant fact of his being the first and foremost disciple of Agastiya. This introductory piece of Panambaranar rendered into English runs as follows:—

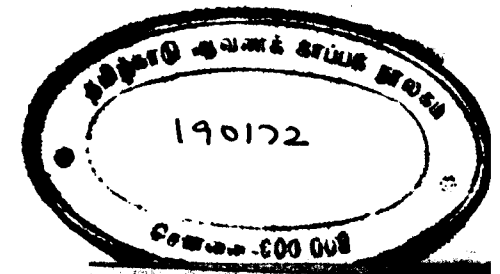
"Venkata mount on the north, Kumari on the south,
Within these bounds the Tamil prose and poetic usage
As sanctioned by great teachers,
He learnt and searched into letters, words and matters,
As much as old works of pure Tamil land,
And then ranged this treatise faultless,
And in the court of the Pandia who won many a land
To the Master of Athangod who ever avers what is
true and just

He explained the matter scatheless and classified
The letters and others in orderly sequence;
He with his knowledge full of Aindra,
He of ascetic practices famed in many ways
Set his name Tholkappian shining everlastingly
In the world bound by expanse of water."

That this piece was recognised as forming the introductory part of the Tholkappiam as early as the first century A. D., is evident from reference made to it in the great commentary written on "Iraiyanar Ahapporul" by Nak-kirar the pre-éminent poet of the age.* Further, in all the full and systematic commentaries written in succession on the Tholkappiam itself by Ilambooranar in the sixth century A.D., by Perasiriar in the tenth, and by Nachinarkkiniar in the twelfth, this is spoken of unquestionably as the preliminary piece of Panambaranar composed and prefixed by him to the Tholkappiam.

* See his *Paira urai*.

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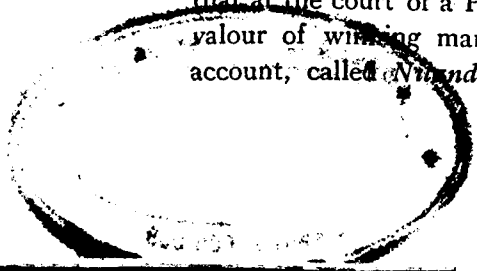


This introductory verse states at first that at the time of its composition the Tamil language was spoken in the part of southern India that was bounded on the north by the Venkata or the modern Thiruppathi hills and on the south the Kumari. It is not clear from the verse itself whether by Kumari the modern cape Comorin, or as interpreted by the commentators Ilambooranar and others, the ancient river Kumari which is now submerged, was meant. But another thing is clear from the omission of western and eastern boundaries that at the time only Tamil was spoken all through the country that lies between the eastern and western coasts, Malayalam not coming into existence then.

Next it says that Tamil attained to a marked refinement in the hands of great thinkers and teachers who stamped its usage in pure and polished prose and poetic compositions.

Then it affirms how Tholkappiar made a deep study not only of the elements of the Tamil language but also of other ancient works then existing and of matters that, by their worth and fitness, ought to form the theme of compositions in Tamil, and how by that scientific study he qualified himself to compose a faultless and comprehensive grammar and poetics called by his name the Tholkappiam. From this it would be obvious that at the time of Tholkappiar there was a vast, varied and highly refined Tamil literature which consisted of works produced in the preceding ages. A glance at the Tholkappiam itself will suffice to convince any one of the existence of such a vast literature which must have been older than the Tholkappiam and from which the rules and principles of this great scientific work on language and literature must have been deduced.

The next item of information which it gives indicates that at the court of a Pandia king who was noted for the valour of winning many a land and who was, on that account, called *Nindaruthiruvirpandian*, Tholkappiar



as identical.¹ When intense heat makes its appearance with light, it glows with a red colour; similarly when cold bursts into our view it shines blue. For instance, look at the burning fire, it is red; then look at the sea, it is blue; and the sky also looks blue owing to the presence in it of watery vapour. Much more strongly may the truth of my statement be brought home to your mind, if you notice the experiments made in Chemical Science. Watch the functions of the two gases called oxygen and hydrogen. It is said that oxygen is a fiery gas, for without which fire cannot burn nor can life be maintained and that hydrogen is a watery gas, for without which no water can be obtained nor life prolonged. What are the colours of these two gases? Let us watch the experiments. By means of electric currents the chemist at first decomposes a quantity of water into these two gases and afterwards collects them in two glass tubes. Soon after he brings a red-hot splinter of wood and holds it above the up-turned mouth of the oxygen-tube and you see the splinter at once bursting into a red or yellow flame and burning; but when the same splinter is brought near the down-turned mouth of the hydrogen-tube, instead of the splinter, the gas itself within the tube is lighted and burns with a pale blue flame. Now from this you see it conclusively proved that the fiery element is always red and the watery always blue.

¹ Helmholtz's Popular Lectures, Vol. I. p. 210.

Let us see next what more is signified by the two colours. Inasmuch as fire is fierce and strong on account of its heat and burning power, it was thought by all the ancients to be a masculine element. And the red colour also by its inseparable association with fire came to be looked upon as a mark of the masculine principle. In the same way, water being cool and pleasant to touch was regarded as feminine and its blue colour as symbolizing the feminine principle. This fact was perceived long ago by Prof. William James and expressed by him in a terse but pregnant sentence. "We find" he says, "something masculine in the colour red and something feminine in the colour pale blue."¹

But the fiery and watery elements are inanimate things and consequently they can neither move of their own accord nor can they move the things different from themselves; still less can they so combine together as to bring forth these worlds and the wonderful variety of organisms. And it is impossible that animate beings which are finite in power and intelligence should achieve such an arduous, unwieldy and immeasurable task as the creation of the universe. Consequently, there must be within them all a central will-power imbued with unlimited intelligence to unite and disunite them, to combine and re-combine them in such due proportions as will tend to bring them into existence and set them in motion.

¹ Talks To Teachers, pp. 81 & 82.

It is this will-power that we call God. As he is all love and intelligence, as he has no touch of corporeality in him, he cannot have any corporal form for any purpose; his form must therefore be purely spiritual. How is this possible? you may ask; but reflect a little. You see a white lily in a valley and admire its beauty very much; but when you leave the valley and go home, you desire to tell your people what all you have seen about it. In the first place, you make a mental picture of the lily within you, and then give a vivid description of its striking qualities. What you saw before in the valley is a physical lily but that which you now have in your mind is a spiritual lily. The two lilies are equally real though quite distinct in that the one seen outside perishes in a few days whereas the other perceived inside your mind persists for ever. From this it is plain that, while the form is common to both the physical and psychical images, the substances of which they are made are totally different. In the same way, for every physical substance of which you are sensible there is a metaphysical counterpart within your mind. Now apply this as an analogy to the Divine mind, for in point of mental quality it cannot but be analogous to the human mind, of course, with necessary differences for its boundless power and perfect intelligence. I have shown above that the whole material universe is resolvable into two general categories as fire and water; now therefore under fire and water, we may classify all forces into heat and cold, all colours into red

and blue, and all organisms into male and female. I have also shown that God is immanent in all inanimate things as well as in animate and sets them all in motion. According to the psychological law explained just now, all these physical forms must be concluded to have as their psychical counterparts in the Divine mind spiritual forms greatly idealized by the nature of the Supreme principle in which they inhere. If God be a principle of thought—such it actually is, then it cannot but have thought-forms. For, the very development of thought, nay its very existence, consists in the increasing number of thought-forms which it acquires and accumulates. Without form, without mental images, we cannot understand what thought is. What are they: learning and knowledge and experience, except being a mental store-house of distinct ideal images formed in correspondence to outer and inner objects? Can you imagine a mind which is quite blank? An empty mind, as in the case of a new-born child, can exist only in darkness and ignorance, but not in light and intelligence. As in the instance of the human mind all excellence consists in the storing-up of ideal images, so also in the case of the Divine mind its infinite greatness consists in the glory of its ideal forms. And yet, the parallel between the two minds should not be stretched too far; because the human mind remains, in its primitive state, completely enveloped in darkness; and only after being set in an exquisitely organized frame as this body of ours, does it come out of the gloom, only after

that does it discern objects and form mental images, having all along those very objects for their prototypes; whereas the Divine mind not only exists free from the contact of such blinding darkness, but it also shines ever with its own brilliant light. Therefore the Divine mind could not have derived its ideal forms from the created matter, since, previous to creation, matter itself had no form of its own in its subtle original condition. It was the form of the Divine thought itself that impressed the formless matter and shaped it into its present forms.

That thought has forms, that it has power to impress matter and produce in it forms corresponding to its own, have been proved experimentally by Dr. Baraduc, an eminent and original French scientist. Relative to Dr. Baraduc's discovery of thought-photography, Dr. James Coates remarks as follows: "Dr. Baraduc, a well-known *savant*, made a communication to the Academie de Medecine in May, 1896, in which he detailed a variety of experiments, and affirmed that he had succeeded in photographing thought. He exhibited numerous photographs in proof. His usual mode of procedure was simple enough. The person whose thought was to be photographed entered into a dark room, placed his hand on a photographic plate, and thought intently of the object to be produced. It is stated by those who have examined Dr. Baraduc's photographs that some of them looked very cloudy, but a few of them were comparatively distinct, and represented the

features of persons and the outlines of things. Dr. Baraduc went further: he declared that it was possible to produce a photographic image at a great distance."¹ This may be corroborated by what Mr. C. W. Leadbeater states of his interview with the great French scientist. "The recent experiments of Dr. Baraduc of Paris," he says, "seem to show quite conclusively the possibility of photographing these invisible vibrations. When last I was there he showed me a large series of photographs in which he had succeeded in reproducing the effects of emotion and of thought."² Seeing that science itself proves the existence and potency of thought-forms, I think we are on safe solid ground when we attribute thought-forms to the Divine mind and affirm that the entire creation both the organic and the inorganic bear the clear impress of its thought and purpose. It is quite obvious, then, that what we see in creation is nothing but the objective counterpart of what exists in God's mind rather in a subjective form. Hence it is plain that to a study of the nature and constitution of the Supreme principle of intelligence, we get a clue from the creation itself.

Just as matter is analysable into fiery and watery elements, into red and blue colours, and into male and female organisms, God also can be thought of as thermal and aqueous, red and blue, male and female, all, of course,

¹ Seeing the Invisible, pp. 189-190.

² Some Glimpses of Occultism, p. 132.

rather spiritually, without the slightest tinge of corporeality. Why God should be taken thus as the repository of such opposite qualities, we shall consider a little. If God be a purely fiery being creation cannot take place; for, we see whenever intense heat comes into contact with any visible and tangible body of matter, it simply transforms it into a finer and invisible state of matter. See, for instance, how by applying heat, we change ice into water, water into vapour and vapour into steam. Similarly all material substances, however hard they might be, can be melted and changed into an invisible and intangible condition merely by applying to them a sufficient amount of heat. But creation occurs only when invisible and intangible matter is made to assume visible and tangible forms. If God existed only in the form of intense spiritual heat, matter would be going on endlessly subtilized by its contact and no creation would have become possible. In the words of Prof. Helmholtz, "Only when heat passes from a warmer to a colder body, and even then only partially, can it be converted into mechanical work. The heat of a body which we cannot cool further, cannot be changed into another form of force—into electric or chemical force for example. Thus in our steam-engines we convert a portion of the heat of the glowing coal into work, by permitting it to pass to the less warm water of the boiler."¹ So of necessity there must exist another principle spiritually cold for interpenetrating the spiritual heat

¹ Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects, vol. I, p. 153.

energy of God and transmitting it to subtle matter, in order to freeze it and bring it into tangible existence and make it habitable to all animate beings. Our ancient Hindu Saints and Seers called the fiery spirit the Almighty God Rudra and the cooling spirit the Almighty Goddess Uma. And in accordance with this divine law Lord Rudra stood as a male principle having a spiritual form glowing with a red colour, while Goddess Uma remained by his side as a female principle having a similar spiritual form shining with a pale blue. The two principles remain for ever as two distinct individualities, and will never become a single being possessing opposite qualities. In reality God is one in two and not either one or two as many suppose.

The description given of Goddess Uma or Prisni or Aditi in the Rigveda is not as distinct as that of Lord Rudra; the colour of her spiritual form being nowhere mentioned in it. I need hardly repeat that without knowing the complexion of a body, it is not possible for us to draw a mental picture of that particular body. Even in the ancient Upanishad called the 'Kena,' where the appearance of Goddess Uma is depicted in clear and unmistakable terms, she is merely described as a maiden of brilliant beauty and nothing more;¹ of her colour nothing is even hinted at.

Let us, therefore, turn to some remnants of the oldest Tamil literature and see what they have to say on the

¹ "bahu sobhamanam Umam haimavatim." Kena, 3, 12.

by our familiar example of a steam-engine and its driver. So long as a steam-engine is in a perfectly good condition, the driver can drive it as he chooses; even if any petty disorder happens to it, he can repair it if he be a capable hand to that extent, and make it run; but if it goes wrong to such an extent as lies beyond his capacity to set it right, he is, then, rendered powerless to handle it and the engine comes to a dead stop. In the same way, when your brain or any other vital organ goes out of order, your consciousness and all your activities are brought thereby to an utter standstill. But that does not go to prove that the soul is a mere meaningless void. This exposition of the relation of the soul to the body, as given by St. Meikandan, is echoed in the words of the great living French philosopher Prof. Bergson who says in his excellent work, *Mind-Energy*, "The mind is undeniably attached to the brain, but from this it does not in the least follow that in the brain is pictured every detail of the mind, nor that the mind is a function of the brain. All that observation, experience, and consequently science, allows us to affirm is the existence of a certain relation between brain and mind."*

This relation between mind and brain may be illustrated also by the familiar instance of a painter and his painting requisites. Our painter may be a man of fine discriminative sense, of strong and vivid imagination, and above all may possess great skill in drawing beautiful pictures corresponding exactly to his mental images; still

* *Mind-Energy*, p. 36.

he cannot produce them without the aid of pencil and paper or colours, brushes and canvas. All his mental power avails not to exhibit his skill externally without such aids, nor can that power create the aids out of itself. Equally is it impossible for the painting accessories themselves to produce the pictures or create the mind of the painter. Each has an independent existence of its own and each possesses properties and potencies peculiar to itself. Nevertheless the two must co-operate with each other, if a picture is to be produced. Even when the two thus co-operate, how diligent and thoughtful the artist is at his work and with what nice discrimination he makes use of his painting materials, are points that impress us much. We perceive that all his intelligent and thoughtful strivings aim at bending the materials to his will in order to produce an exact likeness of his mind's picture.

Here it must be noted that the picture on the canvas is as real as the picture in the artist's mind, that neither the one nor the other is a transformation of its opposite, and that what the painter's invisible intelligence thus achieves with the aid of his colours and tools, these things themselves cannot achieve.

In the same way the mind uses the brain as an instrument of thought and so bends it to its will as to make it subservient to its own growth and expression. Neither is mind a transformation of the brain, nor the brain a transformation of the mind; nor can the one create the other as in the above instance; for the laws and natures of the two are ever distinct and in no known circumstance are the

laws violated. No doubt the intimate, interpenetrative and eternal union of the two substances raises difficulties insuperable to certain minds and renders the nature of the one indistinguishable from that of the other; still opportunities are not wanting in our experience to bring home to our mind the characteristic marks which differentiate the one from the other. The laws governing the nature and functions of the brain fall under the laws of matter, while those of mind come invariably under the laws of immaterial principles. Wherever anything exerts itself in setting something else in motion, or in binding up its particles into certain definite masses, or in breaking them up again to pieces, it is mind that is at work there; in all such operations it is mind that restrains and releases the activities of matter, while matter, though it offers resistance up to a certain point, yields at last to the mandates of the mind.

The state of being invisible and intangible to our senses, is no more a reason for denying the existence of mind than it can be for denying the subtle states of matter. As has been already pointed out, not only the existence of invisible and intangible things but also their different characters are studied and ascertained only by noting their action and influence upon things that are visible.

The essential mark by which we distinguish between the two great classes of the objects of our thought is spontaneous motion. So far as our experience goes, we are quite sure that spontaneous motion is no property of matter. Nor do we perceive anything approaching to self-

movement in any part of matter. If what is seen and experienced to be an invariable property of a part may safely be predicted of the whole, we shall not be wrong in saying that all matter is inert, that it is incapable of any self-movement. Whenever and wherever an apparent movement of a material body occurs, then and there we perceive either within it or close beside it a mind-principle first originating that movement in itself and then communicating it to the body that was lying still before. It is from this clear expression of its impulse in matter that we are assured of the existence and nature of an invisible mind. Finite and imperfect as is our experience, we cannot afford, even were we inclined, to ignore the fact which that experience repeatedly and invariably brings before our mind. For, all our knowledge consists not only in noting the frequent and invariable occurrences that take place in individual objects but in connecting them together by the help of memory and in deducing from them the law of such objects. Every fragment of pure matter, that is, matter not susceptible of being impressed by a mind-principle, being always in an inert condition, we cannot be wrong in extending to the whole the application of what holds good of the component parts. To our empirical knowledge modern science too adds its corroborative proofs. The science of Geology shows us various specimens of stocks and stones dug out from the lowest strata of the earth in a condition which indicates that they never possessed even the faintest vestige of life, although their age is computed to be millions and billions of years. In the

same way the science of Biology exhibits an infinite variety of structural forms which have once been the habitation of life but have long since become dead and have remained in that condition ever after. I believe the knowledge coming from these two sources must enable us to distinguish between the matter that is dead and the matter that lives and serves as the vehicle of life.

If there were no God, if matter alone had been the creator of life, if life were the result of certain peculiar self-adjustments of material particles taking place quite accidentally within the womb of matter itself, then the perpetual existence of vast quantities of matter lying lifeless for ages indefinite, receives no explanation whatever. In spite of the strenuous effort made by some so-called scientists to bridge over the wide gulf of difference that persists between the dead and the living portions of matter, that difference becomes the more pronounced the more our insight into its nature increases and the more the researches of modern science advance. It is, therefore, against all facts, reason and experience, to say that matter itself is instinct with a creative faculty and that life is but a result of its activity and not anything separate from it.

Qualitatively the brain and other parts of our body are in no way different from the painting materials possessed by an artist. Both are parts of matter and both are used by the mind to give an outer expression to its inner ideas. Like the brush and colours of the painter, the brain, too is a mere instrument of thought, though many degrees finer than they. You can weigh the brain as you can

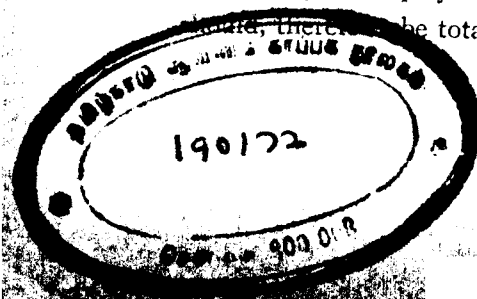
weigh the painter's materials. You can even cut it into several parts as you can the other; and you can again put together the severed pieces of the brain and, if life has not quitted it, can make it live once more, just as a painter mixes his colours and produces a fine picture. The only difference between the two kinds of matter is that, while the picture produced by the artist remains lifeless all through, the brain of a living body throbs with life for a certain period in a way the mystery of which is inscrutable to man. Although this intimate union of the two is too mysterious to be known exactly, we are not left in uncertainty as regards their distinct characters. That life is not the result of brain function but the expression of a superphysical principle in the brain, is forced upon our mind, whenever we come across the corpse of a man whose brain was once instinct with life but is now dead. If, as the physiologist holds, the brain itself had been the generator of life, the question naturally suggests itself, why has it not then regenerated it in a dead body?

If it be argued that the cessation was due to physical exhaustion, just as the extinction of a lamp-light is due to its losing itself gradually in the course of its radiation, we may point out that such exhaustion of the brain is brought on not by a gradual expenditure of its own force but by a decrease in efficient blood-supply, as the light of a lamp goes out as soon as the supply of oil stops. Now both the brain and the blood being material substances, neither the brain can of itself secure the blood-supply, nor

can the blood by itself reach the brain. Other causes, both internal and external, are indispensable to such physiological processes and when all these processes are carefully analysed and inquired into, they disclose within and behind them the presence of an intelligent mind as the fundamental cause which constitutes the main-spring of all their complex movements. It is no doubt true that blood is manufactured from food by the contact of inhaled air and circulated by the action of the heart; still it must not be forgotten that, in order to secure food, to assimilate and convert its essence into blood and send it up to the brain, the presence and activity of an intelligent agent is absolutely necessary. If it be asserted that all these too might be the actions of the brain itself, then the former question will recur: how can death, or complete cessation of activity befall to such a vigilant organ as the brain? The physiological theory can therefore offer no solution whatever to this question, so long as the mind is held to be merely a function of the brain. Whilst, on the other hand, the metaphysical theory which posits within the brain an intelligent and immaterial mind-principle that can generate, combine and adjust all the complex life-movements, readily offers an easy and satisfying solution to that vital question. When pressed by consistent reasoning grounded on the facts of life, the physiologist has in the last resort no other alternative than to admit the existence in the brain of a superphysical principle that communicates to it all its activities and thus renders it a living substance.



To prove further the unsoundness of the physiological theory, St. Meikandan has brought forward another argument of great importance which merits our most careful consideration. Even were we inclined to leave out of account the case of a dead body, in which the brain, owing to some mysterious cause, has ceased to perform its functions, we cannot so leave the case of a living body in which the brain occasionally becomes dead as it were, whilst life is still seated within. Such seemingly lifeless occasions St. Meikandan points out to be, in the experiences of sleep and rare trance conditions into which healthy living beings enter. So long as man, or any lower creature, is buried in deep sleep, the brain too is quite inactive, although it continues to be in perfect working order; but when he is awake it is also in full activity. These two entirely different states that alternate with each other do not so readily yield themselves to be explained away on the materialistic hypothesis of the physiologist as may be imagined; for if the brain itself be an active principle, it must be as ever active as is the magnet or steam; either attracting like the one or propelling like the other; and again, as in the case of the magnet and steam, the brain too must act in one uniform manner and not in any other way. But that is not what we find to be the case. On the contrary, very minute and intricate plans and infinite combinations of movements that are being formed in the brain every moment imply the presence in it of an intelligence which should be capable of bringing into play all such complex operations and should, therefore, be totally distinct in its character and



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**Some of the opinions expressed by some eminent
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