Saint Ramalinga Swami has passed on to posterity about 40,000 lines of devotional songs and a few discourses in prose as the true path — Sanmargam — for the attainment of Godhood. He has made it clear that his path aims at deathlessness and complete union with God. Thirumoolar, an earlier saint of the Tamil country has indicated that the followers of Sanmargam will not only visualize the supreme light of God but conquer death. Though historical evidences of the life of some saints are ample proof that they not only did not taste death but enjoyed eternal Bliss and Godhood, there is no philosophy cogently setting forth the secret of immortality.

Modern science while proclaiming success in creating life, has also founded that "death is alien to the nature of man". According to Kuprevich of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences ageing is due to damage caused to D. N. A and R. N. A structures. He argues that "if ageing is a disease of the genetic mechanism it must be cured and the cure, the elixir of life is readily available
in nature”. This elixir of life, “ஏப்பதினம் என்று வாழ்த்து, பொறைத்திழக்கு என்று வைத்தன்” (கல்பன.) has been referred to by saint Manikkavasagar as replacing the marrow of his bones. Saint Ramalinga Swami while describing the transforming human body, narrates that an elixir of life overflows and fills the human frame “என்று மக்காவின் வாதம் இறுதி இறுதிய வைத்தன்” of the divine aspirant. The ideas of this discipline lie scattered in his divine contribution.

It appears that only the Grace of God and the sacred acquaintance with a few followers of the Swami, made it possible to disentangle the skein of thought imbedded in the divine song of grace—இந்துமெல்லும்— and to venture to pen this wonderful philosophy as an introduction. My first thought in writing this booklet in English was to make his philosophy known to all the nations. Great thinkers of the world should be aware of the existence of such a philosophy of deathless life. As the Swami has predicted “great men of far north will learn this philosophy and come down to preach unto you”, there may come a day when the unique ideals of Sanmargam might be realised in its true perspective. It is therefore, with this motive that I humbly put forward the main theme of this great universal doctrine.

In fact, this was written about five years ago but my Tamil book—Suddha Sanmarga Vilakkam—which is but an elaborate translation of the present treatise, found the light of publication earlier.

Now, but for the financial assistance of my loving friends of Kuala Lumpur to whom this booklet is most affectionately dedicated, the publication would have been
delayed further. I thank them all most cordially for their timely help.

I am much thankful to Rao Sahib K. Kothandapani Pillai and Dr. Devasenapathi for giving foreword to this booklet. My thanks are due in a large measure to Thiru V. Natarajan M. A., Lecturer in English, National College, Tiruchi for critically going through the script and for correcting the proof. I am greatly indebted to the Publishers Ilakkia Nilayam and the Jothi printers for their devoted service.

Let me invoke the grace of the Swami and God Supreme to bless us all in our spiritual endeavour.

Annamalainagar, 24—3—’69  

C. SRINIVASAN.
Foreword

by

Dr. V. Devasenapathi, M.A., Ph.D.,
Professor of Philosophy,
University of Madras, Madras.

Ramalinga Swami describes God as the Joy that graciously grants joy alike to the unlettered and lettered. We can borrow these words to describe his own Tiruarutpa. The hymns of the Tiruarutpa have a wide range of appeal. From the devout unacquainted with mystic experience to those conversant with various stages of such an experience, everyone draws inspiration and guidance from the Tiruarutpa.

The Tiruarutpa is in Tamil. Hence to reach those who do not know Tamil, Dr. C. Srinivasan has given in the present work a gist of his earlier work in Tamil, Suddhasanamargavilakkan. Within a hundred and twelve pages he has succeeded in giving a biographical sketch and an account of the great achievements of the Swami in spiritual evolution. He has devoted considerable space to an exposition of the Swami’s teaching about the transformation of our corporal body into a celestial body. Not all, even among those who believe in the survival of personality at release, subscribe to its survival in a transformed condition. Hence the Swami’s teaching may appear contrary to tradition. However, one does come across expressions in mystic writings which seem to demand a literal—not merely a figurative—interpretation. One is reminded of the lines in Manikkavasagar’s Tiruvandappahudi which speak of a body of love, a body that melts
in love. Again, one is struck by Sekkilar’s statement about Candesvara:

‘With that very body he became the son of Aranar. Who is there who knows this state?*

It looks as if only rare souls like Ramalinga Swami know such a state. What is more, Ramalinga Swami has for the first time, so far as one knows, given us valuable insights about such a transformation.

Dr. Srinivasan is a Botanist, professionally engaged in scientific research. He is fascinated by the evolution he sees in the plant world extending its scope to superhuman levels as described by Ramalinga Swami. He is persuaded that it is not a mere flight of fancy but a solid achievement in the life of Ramalinga Swami. He describes the physiological and biochemical make-up of the corporal body and quotes Ramalinga Swami’s verses to indicate how divine light transforms this body into a celestial one. Dr. Srinivasan’s devotion to the Swami is strengthened by his scientific training.

I welcome this work and thank Dr. Srinivasan for making a valuable addition to the all-too-meagre literature — especially in English — available on the Philosophy of Ramalinga Swami.

University of Madras
16th January, 1969

V. A. DEVASENAPATHI
Foreword

by

Rao Saheb. K. Kothandapani Pillai, B. A.,
Retd. Controller of Emigration.
and
Member, Railway Service Commission

The philosophy of Swami Ramalinga to which this book is an introduction is a welcome addition to the philosophic lore of India and to that of Tamil Nadu in particular. The Swami came in the line of the great thinkers and saints of Tamil Nadu with a distinct individuality of his own. He was a great philosopher and spiritualist. He demonstrated by his life that philosophy is not a dream or fantasy of unpractical thinkers or idlers. His very life was a record of his philosophy and spiritual experiences. He was a living embodiment of love, sincerity, purity, spirituality and godliness. His spotless character, the indescribable glow of blessedness with which he was endowed by His grace, the divine wisdom he displayed, his unabating universal compassion for all suffering creatures, his all-absorbing love of God, had bestowed on him an unique position among the saints and philosophers of the Land. In addition to these, he was a profound scholar in Tamil. The numerous verses and songs poured out of his molten heart which wept for the attainment of spiritual eminence are remarkable for their literary excellence, melting rhythm, entrancing melody and great lucidity of expression. They inspired and moved not only the literate but even illiterate masses into tears. The wealth of his thought, his basic approach to spirituality which was not far from common human comprehension,
and the lucidity with which he expounded the great mystic heights of spiritual experiences, have offered solace and guidance to many a seeker after truth and true spirituality. His approach was simple and direct not baffling even a person of common understanding. The Swami had thus, by his thoughts and verses, conduct and spiritual achievements, found a sacred niche in the heart of almost every Tamilian who aspires to ascend the glorious heights of spiritual attainment. Without any propaganda, the fame and popularity of the Swami had been growing year by year spontaneously in intensity all these hundred years, after the Swami had bodily melted into the divine arms of the Lord supreme. He is now worshipped as the chosen one of the Lord, sent into the world to guide humanity to the attainment of eternal bliss.

The advent of the Swami was marked by a wake of spiritual revival all over the world. He was born in the 19th century, when mankind all over the world tired of materialism were eager to turn their gaze towards the ultimate truth and the goal of human existence. Madam Blavatsky, Col. Olcot, Leadbeater and Annie Besant led the spiritual renaissance in the west. Saint Ramakrishna and his disciple Vivekananda and others led this revival in North India. The Swami was the sole representative of the spiritual movement in Tamil Nadu. He was the first to proclaim the universality and equality of all religious truth and the equality of all men in spiritual unity. ( Vivekanandha) He was thus the fore-runner of theosophical movement and this was admitted by Madam H. P. Blavatsky herself in The Theosophist, July 1882.

It will be interesting to note that the Swami evolved no new pet theory of his own. He realised the spiritual basis of the ancient ideals of life of the Tamil land and
was well acquainted with the ancient thoughts on philosophy and spirituality and their practical aspects.

The Swami himself calls his philosophy ஸ்வாமி மாய்ச இயற்புமனிகத்தை சார்ந்து; இந்து இரு சார்ந்துபத்தை சார்ந்து; இது கூறு சார்ந்து. The ancient philosophic thoughts and practices of his land were thus received by the Swami and elucidated in terms and methods suitable to his times. The very name of his philosophy “Sanmarga” the good path was adopted from Thirumular of Thirumandram fame.

The basic approach of the Swami to spirituality was not laid in any remote spiritual conduct or practice or in any mystic yogic modes but lay in the active universal love and compassion for all creatures of the world, men, beasts, birds and all that had life.

To understand the full significance of this active universal love, preached by the Swami, it is necessary to comprehend the nature and scope of the concept of love advocated by Jainism and Buddhism the two great philosophic systems of the world which had exploited the philosophic and spiritual value of love.

It was the negative aspect of love which these two systems emphasized. Jainism adopted ahimsa, not to kill or not to harm any living creatures as its basic doctrine. Ahimsa means renunciation of the mind to kill or harm any thing. This is different from the feeling of active love or active compassion. Ahimsa arises from the idea of keeping unattached to the world. Active love implies activity in the world and brings in attachment to those who suffer himsa, misery or harm. Jainism which aimed at non-activity and non-attachment rejected active love.
and adopted ahimsa as its important doctrine. This Ahimsa thus keeps itself within the limits of non-activity and neglects the helpful activity to relieve the distressed.

Buddhism advocated compassion and this was also within the limits of non-activity and non-attachment. According to Buddhism suffering could be ended only by its Eight-fold principles, right knowledge etc. Unless the Eightfold path is followed and release from the world is obtained thereby, the suffering continued and recurred even if relieved. The suffering and misery could never be relieved or wiped out without renouncing the world and the attachment to it which were the root cause of the suffering and misery in the world. Buddhist philosophy therefore did not preach active compassion as it will bring man to the bond of attachment with the persons suffering. The compassion developed in Buddhism was thus an ethic of thought not of action. What Buddha advocated was the ethical activity of the mind and spirit in the ethical aspect of love and compassion. This aspect of love or compassion has its own importance. It generates a spiritual power which goes out to transform the persons who come under its sway. This was the secret of the powerful personality of the great Buddha. The radiation of kindness issuing from him is said to have affected not only human beings but also animals. ("A wild elephant which his hostile cousin Devadatta let loose on him in a narrow lane stopped in its course, so the story relates, struck by the force of his kindness, and lowered the trunk it had already raised to strike.") Similar incidents happened, we are told, in the life of the Swami as well.

The love of mankind which Swami Ramalinga developed and adopted was active universal love which
not only comprised ahimsa and the mental love of Buddhism but went far beyond them and reached a stage far higher and nobler and more beneficial to humanity.

Even this basic approach was nothing new introduced by the Swami. From time immemorial the Tamil land had been the home of this universal compassion and active help. They believed that the world exists because of men who live for others and are ready to sacrifice anything for the cause of humanity. "" ordinance of the good man of the world." (pp. 182).

Their love was an universal love which knew no bounds or the limitation of caste creed colour or country. அன்சல் அன்றி, மன்னர் போன்றை; all countries are yours and all men are your kith and kin declared வடரியின் தோவன். He exemplified this selfless devotion and service to humanity by the simile of a raft put into a ferry "... வன்று விளக்கும் பீடமான பாலை வண்டிய வேலம்பிக்கிற..." பாலை = raft; வண்டிய = water way. (pp. 192).

The raft is of no use to itself. It has lost its self and is there only to serve humanity without any discrimination of caste, creed, colour or country. The raft cannot escape, from the responsibility into which it has been pushed into. Similarly man cannot escape from the responsibility into which he has been ushered into this world and should serve the humanity even as the raft does. The ancient Tamilians explored the value and meaning of human existence. They found that active universal compassion and active help for all the creatures of the world in distress had the greatest ethical and spiritual value.

Their compassion did not stop with selfless devotion to humanity and active help to men, beasts and birds but extended even to the vegetable kingdom.
Nearly two thousand years ago long before Jagadish Chandra Bose the great son of Bengal demonstrated the unseen agonies of the vegetable kingdom which thrilled the European world, Chieftain Pary of the Tamil land felt the agonies of the Mullai Creeper *Jasminum indicum* tossed about by unruly wind and tortured by careless passers-by for want of a prop to lean on and entwine to ascend and spread over so as to withstand the ravages of nature and the plunder of thoughtless men. Pary had the culture to visualise its distress which the creeper could not speak out. He was deeply moved by its wretched condition, left the chariot in which he rode, to the creeper to spread on and walked home. This is no mythology nor poetic exaggeration but a plainhistorical fact. Authors after authors have spoken and praised the tenderness and nobility of Pary's heart. It was a glorious day in the history of human thought to be recorded in golden letters that for the first time in the history of the world a human being notorious for his selfishness, rose to the level of being disturbed in heart by the distress of a mute plant and went to the length of sacrificing his own comfort and convenience for the sake of a trivial plant life.

The Swami was the inheritor of this noble heritage of boundless compassion and active help. How much of this unique culture was in the blood of the Swami! Let the Swami himself speak out:

\[
\text{எழுத்துத் தருவது மறையாய் ஆர்த்தம்
சார்த்திகம் சிற்றாண்டு ஓலைத்து
இல்லாமல் உடன் மூன்று வைத்து
அகவலா உடைய கொள்பு}
\]
The Swami knew the spiritual value of this unbounded compassion and insisted on it as the first step to be taken even before the love of God and placed his குத்துக்களுள் கள்ளைகள் as the first rung in the Ladder of spirituality.

The Swami introduced a new angle of vision and a novel technique in the practical realisation of Godhood not hitherto known to the philosophic or religious thought of the word. This relates to the great transformations which come over the body of the aspirant குத்துக்களுள் கள்ளைகளும் the aspirant and குத்துக்களுள் கள்ளைகளும்.

These transformations, occur in the body of the aspirant according to the intensity of spiritual warmth produced in him. The Swami by a process of alchemy perfected a marvellous ball called Kuligai to test the spiritual heat in the human body. If a person who had generated no spiritual heat holds the ball in his hands he will feel an unbearable intense heat but if a real
spiritualistit holds it he can keep it and that too for such a time as the spiritual elevation will permit. This marvellous test ball had been in the possession of one of his disciples and had been tested by many an aspirant. It is always kept immersed in the holy ashes.

I should like to point out that even these transformations have been alluded to by the Saint Poet Nakirar. His Tirumurukatrupadai of Sangam fame is well known in Tamil Nadu. Commentaries, criticisms and research have not yet explored the rich store of philosophic wisdom imbedded therein. Let me draw the attention of the readers to the very first simile of the poem.

Nakirar was the first author to describe the divine rays of the Almighty and call them the light which unfolds His Grace மாமிய கிளயமானை மென்பொறியாளர் கூலியான் மென்பொறியாளர் அமிய தோனி நாகியார்

— விழுப்புரணம்

Let us now look into the simile. The unfolding rays of the Absolute are compared to the rays of the sun which fall on the sea (செந்தோற் குளோற்றவுரையாக). The rays of the sun undoubtedly drive away the darkness but that happens whether the sun rises on the earth, hill or dale or sea. The simile is only for the sun on the sea. We may
note when the sun shines on the sea, the sea water is purified (நார் ஆரம்பம் தேர் உண்டாத பெருந்தளிப் பொருட்கள்). The salt or the impurity is dropped down. The water becomes purified and fit for human consumption. Does this nto resemble the அம்மடிய பொருட்கள் of the Swami? The body is deprived of all its dross or impurities and made pure, fit for divine absorption. The sun's rays pierce into the sea water which glitters and bestows a golden hue and radiate a mellowed glow of light. Does this not correspond to the ஐருந்தெய்வுப் பொருட்கள் of the Swami and the அம்மடிய்ப் பொருட்கள் which radiates the mellowed light of divinity? It is this divine light which the Swami hid from the gaze of the curious by always covering his entire body except his face with long piece of cloth wound around.

Another great transformation is yet to happen in the sea water. The sea water is transformed, the very material structure of the liquid is altered. From the state of liquidity it passess into a gaseous state and is lifted to heaven as vapour. The water is not dead or buried. It has been lifted to heaven in another form which the sun's rays had bestowed upon it. Does this not correspond to the உயிரியவை with which the Swami melted into the hands of the Lord in Heaven? These transformations are no speculative factors or inferential deductions. These are the practical transformations which came over the body of the Swami stage by stage on the way to union with the Absolute. This is borne out by the statements of the Swami and by the evidence of the disciples who had seen the transformations occurring in the body of the Swami.

The author refers to three kinds of rays such as கிருத்தை, பாரதை, கத்தை as explained by the
Swami as activating the transformations. It is astounding to note that these three kinds of divine rays respectively correspond to the three attributes of light referred to by Nanceerar. They are முன்னாள் தனி, விரிவுற்று தனி, ஒன்றானே தனி. Of these ஒன்றானே தனி may mean the light that unfolded in all distant ages (அன்னாகர் தனி) that unfolds at the present moment (அன்னந்துள் தனி) and that will unfold for all eternity to come (அன்னாகார் தனி — அன்னார் — முன்னாகவாக்கம்). Therefore this light corresponds to the eternal light (அத்தேர் தனி) that unfolds the divine Grace to all humanity of all ages and all climes.

These philosophic thoughts are met with in no philosophy of the world east or west. It is a novel approach to philosophy and divinity peculiar to Tamil Nad and a unique achievement of the Tamil genius. No better analogy can be thought of to prove the mystic heights of these philosophic thoughts and transformations. This analogy is more than the “divine photosynthesis” of the author. The simile applies on all forms to the body transformations which occur in the aspirant and are referred to by the Swami.

There have also been other saints in the Tamil Nad who underwent these transformations whose bodies could not be photographed as they became translucent with the divine light of his grace but they never recorded these happenings. This remained a spiritual secret until the Swami came into the field. It was he who declared that these spiritual benefits are not meant for any one individual or saint. To make it a secret was nothing short of utter selfishness and he made known these processes by which these transformations come over and in his clarion voice invited the whole humanity to come and share the bliss,
The concluding portion of this ancient poem of Nakirar mentions the greatest blessing which God can bestow on the aspirant and the state of his soul so blessed. It states “இயல்தான் சூடாத வாயில் எகாதா, சூடாதாத 
தைய்க்குவிடும் வாயில் எகாதாதா.”
— குஜுரந்தபர்

The poem does not state that the greatest blessing God could bestow on the devotee is to make him one with himself i.e. to unite with the Lord in an inseparable union which almost every system of Indian Philosophy except atheistic ones aspire for. It is strange that this poem asserts the greatest and the unattainable reward which the Lord can bestow is to make the devotee one with the whole world. The last utterance of the Swami before he vanished was more or less to the same effect. “மூத முயமாற எல்லாமலை ஏறக்கொள்க, இனி எல்லா என்று 
சென்று புருஷா தம்மை இன்றையார்” I am now in this body? hereafter we will be in all the bodies (of the world). It appears to be that the final state actually disclosed by the Swami is the same as that described in the poem.

அம் தரும் முயமாற எல்லாமலை ஏறக்கொள்க
அது எல்லாமலை ஏறக்கொள்க விளக்கம் — VI: 132: 75

Another great contribution of the Swami to world thought is that it is possible to attain a state of deathlessness and attain a perpetual life—Not only did he preach this எல்லாமலை ஏறக்கொள்க the science of deathlessness but
actually attained this deathless state. Is it possible to become deathless and live for ever? It has been a puzzling problem for ages. Modern Science has not advanced to that condition either to assent to or dissent from this view.

The simile in Thirumurukatrupadai has been already referred to in which the water is not dead or buried but is transformed and lifted into the ether. This corresponds to the absorption of the spiritualist bodily into divinity without death.

There are also other passages in Sangam literature the literature of the middle ages, to show that there were persons who attempted to secure it and also those who actually secured the state of deathlessness.

The quotations will show that the poets of the land knew that a deathless state was possible and was also attained. Evidently the Tamilians knew the secret of this science.
To bury a saint in the earth and call it a Videhamukthi (வித்தியுந்து) is a misnomer. When a saint dies and is buried or burnt, call it Samadhi or anything else, it is nothing but a common death. None of the four great saints of Tamil Nad dropped their bodies on the earth nor was buried or burnt. They bodily vanished into the ether or into the Lord Divine. Tirugnanasambandar vanished into the divine light which shone forth at the time of his marriage. Appar merged bodily with the Lord absolute at Pugalur. Sundarar merged with the Lord of Mt. Kailas and Manickavasagar vanished into ether of Siva Veli at Thillai. This secret of attaining deathlessness was evidently kept as a secret and it was left to the Swami to preach it openly to the public to invite the whole humanity to share the bliss.

We are traditionally accustomed to view the mental consciousness into four different states as வாகமன்ச, மன்யாப்பிள்ளை, குரு, குரியா. They are waking, dreaming, sleeping and intuitional consciousness. The Mandukyopanishad also divides these mental states in the same way. But the Swami divides each of these states into
further subdivisions as பரா, பிர, தூது அவ்வை. This is indeed a novel classification not dreamt of before. The spiritual experiences of the Swami are unique, not met with in any spiritual or philosophic literature. We are accustomed to guage everything according to our pet standards. Anything that does not measure up to that standard is condemned as fantastic or impossible. Unless one attains that state of perfection and elevation of spiritual experience which the Swami attained one is not competent to comment on these supra-mental mystic heights. We may however be rest assured that the Swami indulges in no inferences or hypothetical statements. He would have made no subdivisions of these states unless he was sure they were each separate states and had special characteristics to be treated as separate and distinct.

There has been a lot of literature about the Swami and his works. So far there has been no work presenting a coherent view of his philosophy and spiritual experience in their order of sequence. The Swami did not write out a thesis of his philosophy. The philosophic thoughts and spiritual experiences are scattered all over his 6000 verses (40000 lines) and his discourses with his disciples and comments. It is no easy task to collect them into a cogent system. The author should be congratulated for his labour in presenting in English the philosophy of the Swami as a coherent whole in the order of sequence and his book fulfils a long-felt need.

May the Lord Supreme bless his work to spread all over the world to share the bliss which the Swami eagerly longed for and ardently prayed for.

Thirucherai
20—3—69

K. KOTHANDAPANI
Publisher's Foreword

The simultaneous progress of the modern world in all spheres of knowledge is remarkable. The seeds for this progress in the field of philosophy were sown by Sri Ramalinga Swamigal by the end of the nineteenth century. By judging and verifying earlier philosophic thoughts on the basis of his own personal experience or Arul Anubavam, he presented the Doctrine of Samarasam Sudda Sanmargam to the world. Sanmargam means the right path, the path which leads to the Ultimate Reality. With astonishing precision, the Swami has laid down the course and destination of this path and the various transformations and experiences of body and soul during the journey. The soul which successfully completes this journey becomes one with Almighty God, capable of performing all His actions and becomes immanent in all things.

Hence Sanmarga is a faith and a way of life. The Swami’s description of it, however, is not to be found in any compact form in his works. It is found scattered through the length and breadth of thousands of his Divine songs called Arutpa or songs of grace. It requires a great deal of patient and minute study, an analytical brain and critical acumen, to discover the key and put together the scattered hints and evolve out of them a carefully built-up system of philosophy on the most scientific lines. And that is what the present author has achieved. By virtue of his association with scholars and philosophical experts and his scientific outlook, Dr. Srinivasan has rightly interpreted the Swami’s doctrines in a Tamil book entitled Sudda Sanmarga Vilakkam, published about five years ago.
As the Sanmarga Neri is not the prerogative of the Tamil-speaking world alone and as it is bound to benefit mankind in its entirety, a condensed version of that book in English is now published under the present caption.

The publishers whose motto has always been the encouragement and production of outstanding and useful books, take legitimate pride in commending this volume to the reading public.

10th April, 1969

C. THIRUMENI,
Ilakkiya Nilayam,
Tiruchirapalli.
இந்திரவிடமல்ல

அனைத்து விளையாட்டில் தமிழ் சொல்லுங்கள்
அனைத்து சுருக்கத் திட்டு
அனைத்து குறிக்குடி பயன் பெறுகை
அனைத்து குறிக்குடியுடன்
அனைத்து குறிக்குடியுடன் செய்து
அனைத்து அறிவியலில் முடியும்
அனைத்து குறிக்குடியுடன் பொருளிடும்
அனைத்து குறிக்குடியுடன் வெர்சலிடும்
அனைத்து குறிக்குடியுடன் இவைக!
This Humble Work

Is

Most Affectionately

Dedicated

to

Arulthiruvalar  M. Shanmugam

Arulthiruvalar  M. P. Sellaswamy and

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For Their Devoted

Sanmarga Services.
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Introduction

The Philosophy of Ramalinga Swami is known as SAMARASA SUDDHA SANMARGAM. He lived to the very letter of his philosophy in the 19th century near Chidambaram in South India. The saint of eternity with his rapturous lyrics takes after none of the saints of his age in his pursuit of Godhead and reverence for Life. His poetry is that of a mystic who cannot be easily understood but at once moves all with his melting strain. It is one of real experience, sung in ecstasy, of his exalted melting mood. The whole collection of his work, the sacred THIRUVARUTPA—Divine Song of Grace—consists of about 6000 devotional verses and some random religious discourses in prose. His God is ARUTPERUNJOTHI—the Supreme Grace Light; his faith is SANMARGAM. His preceptor is God Himself. His Sanctum Sanctorum is at Vadalur. His chosen MANTRAM—the divine words—is ARUTPERUNJOTHI THANIPPERUMKARUNAI—Supreme Grace-Light: Supreme Universal Compassion. His society is Sanmarga Society which has no distinction of caste, creed, colour or country. His watchword is JEEVAKARUNYAM—absolute compassion towards all living things. His mission seems to have been to bring down Supreme Grace on earth and to see that his society consists of human angels enjoying the bliss of immortality. His message is SANMARGAM wherein love, affection and compassion for one’s fellow-beings and perfection in every thing reign supreme. These human feelings unadulterated and absolute pervade through all his works. His definition of SANMARGAM is that it is the path which leads to the realisation of The One
The Supreme Reality and merging with Him. He has explained his philosophy as that which exists as the ultimate end of the six paths for the attainment of Godhead—such as VEDANTHAM, SIDDANTHAM, NADANTHAM, BHODANTHAM, KALANTHAM and YOGANTHAM. Conquest of death by imbibing Supreme Grace is the quintessence of his philosophy. Transformation of mortal human body into the perfect divine body or the body of the Divine is the basis of his spiritual discovery. The incessant love for the Supreme Lord, the ardent panting for the descent of Divinity in him, the fretting and funning desire and the spontaneous devotion for the God Supreme and the unsaturated satiety in the attainment of Godhead breathe through all his rapturous lyrics.
1. The Life-History of Ramalinga Swami

Chidambaram is a very holy town in South India. It is said that the perpetual cosmic dance of Siva, the God Supreme, was for the first time visible to the great Saints Pathanchali and Viyagramadha through their meditation at this place. The earlier name of the town is Thillai, the Tamil name of the plant, Excoecaria agallocha which probably abounded in the place. At the temple of worship in this town there is a delightful image of the all-pervading Absolute by whose will every atom moves in space and who is commanding every minute detail of the world-play through His conscious force. The sacred image according to the Swami is the symbolic representation of that which is realised within and worshipped as the spaceless, timeless and unconditioned beatific Splendour at this Heaven of wisdom. Such invisible form of God is conceived of and named here as Nataraja.

It was in the vicinity of the temple of Nataraja, in the village of Marudur about ten miles north of Chidambaram that our seer Ramalinga Swami was born on Sunday the fifth of October, 1823. The parentage of the Swami is interesting. The father Ramiah Pillai was known for his piety. He belonged to an orthodox vegetarian family. He had to marry half a dozen times when one after another his first five wives passed away soon after the marriage. The sixth wife was called Chin-nammal from whose sacred womb our Swami saw the light of day as the fifth child.
Consecration

There is an autobiographical note in the divine song of Grace, the Thiruvarulpa which the Swami has sung, about his sanctification even when he was a babe in the arms of his mother. When the child was five months old, the parents made a pilgrimage to the temple of Nataraja at Chidambaram. It is said that when the curtain was lifted and the camphor flame incensed before the idol of Nataraja, the heavenly child burst into laughter and an unusual feeling of reverence and sanctity prevailed. The devoted priest Appaiya Deekshathar noticed the secret communion of the sacred child with the God Supreme and at once ran towards the parents. Embracing the child with all humility and respects the priest announced that it was the child of God. The happy incident is referred to by the Swami later in one of his verses that the God was so benevolent as to disclose to him everything without any reservation even in his childhood.

(Thiru Arulpa: Canto 6: Ch. 38: Verse 44)

Ramiah Pillai passed away about a month later and the family moved to Madras. Responsibility fell on the shoulders of the elder brother of the Swami, Sabapathi Pillai to look after the family. He used to earn a little by giving religious discourses to the public. When the young Swami was five years of age Sabapathi Pillai admitted the young prodigee to learn the letters under the ferule of his own teacher, the famous Mahavidwan Sabapathi Mudalial of Kancheepuram. Just after a few
Days of his school days the young Swami was found reciting
wondrous lyrics of his own at the temple of Kanthakottam
in Madras. This had become a regular and usual feature
of the young Swami. He says in one of his early verses:

"What a wonder it is, O 'God' you have educated
me in all knowledge; you have inculcated in me an
ardent love for you; you have persuasively taught me that
the whole world is nothing but a mirage; O My benevo-
 lent Being! You are in me and are showering your Grace;
you have condescended to be my spiritual master and
blessed me, the insignificant creature with a status above
wants without being driven to the necessity of begging
others."

V: 40: 4

Observing the extra-ordinary spiritual development
and hearing the spontaneous and ecstatic verses of the
Swami, the school master whiled away the time, not
daring to give him any tuition. Sabapathi Pillai was
very much vexed to see his brother wasting his time
without going to the school. When all remonstrations
failed, the angry brother severely ordered his wife, the
virtuous Pappammal not to feed his brother in the house
and expelled him. The young Swami used to go to the
house stealthily whenever he felt hungry and the sympa-
thetic lady used to feed her brother-in-law. The annual
ceremony of their father came off. Sabapathi Pillai
grandly feasted a number of friends and relatives. He
felt the absence of his shy brother. The hospitable house-
wife was waiting for the young Swami by the back door.
Late in the evening stole in our Ramalingam. The lady kindly treated him with the cold remnant of the feast. As he was gulping the stale food at that late hour the motherly sister-in-law of the Swami burst into tears. He asked her why she was weeping. The kind lady entreated him to take to his studies earnestly as demanded by his brother so that he need not be driven to the necessity of eating the cold dishes and that too stealthily. Young Ramalingam was moved by her words of love, sympathy, affection and compassion. These stirring words roused a feeling of resolve in the mind of the Swami. The moment for his consecration was, perhaps, approaching fast. He said “Mother, kindly vacate a room in the upstairs and give me a mirror and a lamp. I will study.” Whatever the promising prodigee asked for was granted at once and he shut himself into the room. It is said that he was melting into psalms and hymns. The supreme Grace–Light dawned through the mirror and poured the abundance of His Grace into the golden vessel of spiritual aspiration. Thus untaught by man, he got omniscience from the Omniscient. This happened at No. 39 Veeraswami Pillai Street, Madras.

This is the turning point in the life of Ramalinga Swami. Every drop of tear shed by the sacred Pappammal out of unstinted love and motherly affection for her brother-in-law, was returned several thousand times by the Swami for the achievement of his unique Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Monism. The Swami himself has given vent to his sanctification in his ninth year itself.

இன்றி பார்க்கும் கை போதும் பார்க்கை வாதம் அங்கே கொண்டு
II : 87 : 3

......... வானை — வானை வானைய வானை
	ஜந்நாசாவயா துல்லானம்
VI: 25 : 7
Further, he explains how the God Supreme was pleased to inscribe in his mind all unwritten wisdom:

VI : 53 : 8

You have infused all knowledge in me without my undergoing the ordeal of learning to such an extent that the most learned come to me to learn more. O' God! my stabiliser! You have endowed that light with which I could realise all knowledge and all wisdom and everything else without being taught.

VI : 1 : 23–24

The Swami has expatiated categorically how by His Grace he was educated. “I have learnt only from you; I have heard only from you; I have seen all in you; I have been infused all only from you; I have obtained all only from you; I have enjoyed all only in you; O’ my Lord dancing in the effulgent arena decked with millions of Suns! Great are my penances, wonderful is my fortune.”

IV : 1 : 16
During the later days his disciplined disciple Thozhuvoor Velayudha Mudaliar, while singing in praise of his master’s education says:

It is no wonder that the Swami learnt everything though he was not subjected to schooling. He is the virtual and visible form of the space in the universe. He can, not only disclose and infuse into all of us all knowledge in a moment, but can lift us to the sublime and inconceivable higher spiritual plane of Meethanam (மீதகம்). There is no gainsay in the fact that he learnt everything by intuition.

Just after this happy incident, the Swami was seen regularly going to the temple at Thiruwotriur in Madras, pouring forth spontaneous hymns before the deity. His teacher himself heard the verses and was wonder-struck at the gift of his disciple. He felt too small to give any tuition to this self-taught prodigee and informed his elder brother about his wisdom.

The Brother Sabapathi Pillai used to give religious discourses to the devoted at the house of one philanthropist Somu Chettiar and earn his livelihood in those days. When he found that his assistant in reading the script from the palm leaves was not doing the job satisfactorily, he consulted his wife whether it would be feasible to take the help of his brother. The lady asked her brother-in-law to take up.
the job. The young Swami yielded to the desire of his brother and used to read the script. The people were touched by the meaningful reading of the younger brother. One day Sabapathi Pillai was indisposed and requested his brother to go to the congregation and to explain to the people after prayer how his brother was disabled to lecture on that day. The Swami went alone, prayed to God and when he told the people that the lecture was postponed, all of them requested the young Swami to take the place of his brother and explain as much as he could. The Swami felt that it was the will of the Supreme God to initiate his mission in the world at this gathering. It was his lot on that day to comment on the life of Thirugnanasambandar, one of the four great saints of the Tamil country. He went on explaining the different aspects of philosophy as the underlying meaning of the verse in continuation. It was very late in the night. But still he had not explained even that single verse fully. The devotees were simply amazed at the miraculous pouring of the younger brother and expressed their desire that he should complete those series of lectures. He agreed to do so. Gradually many people even the much learned, thronged to hear him. This was sometime in 1835. One of the devotees asked the elder brother to hear the Swami and then assess his intellectual and spiritual capacities. Without being seen by his brother, Sabapathi Pillai himself heard him and felt that his brother was an incarnation of sheer Wisdom. From that day onwards the young Swami was treated with awe and reverence for his inner awakening which the young Swami desisted. But their discovery paved the way to the Swami for the gradual loosening of the intimacy and the worldly bondage of the household.
From the ninth year till he was about twenty-one there seems to be no evidence of his history. Where he was, what he was doing, who were his associates and how he spent these twelve years are not known. However, it appears that he was panting and pining for the flow of Grace and that he was mad after the descent of Divinity in him. The Swami shudders to recollect the ordeal that he underwent in those twelve years. "Why should I narrate the painful yearnings when You are the witness of all my sufferings all along and when You are pervading within and outside my mind both internally and externally?"

The Swami recalls that in his young days when he was inarticulate, the Grace of God turned him poetic and he was able to adore the God Supreme by profuse lyrics and hymns. The Swami mentions that in those days of childhood, when he used to play freely in the streets
without any care, the formless God shaped in the void taught him to sing His glory.

It is not known what the period of twelve years which the Swami has mentioned actually refers to. Is it after his initiation at his ninth year? Or did he recollect all his miseries after his twelfth year?

The next historical date in the life of the Swami is 1849. One day a youth of seventeen by name Velayutham of Thozhuvoor approached the Swami and showed him a few of his own verses saying that they were from the ancient classical Tamil literature, rarely obtained. The Swami after a perusal, smilingly said that the Sangam verses would not contain so many mistakes and that they were evidently of upstart origin. Velayutham surrendered himself to him and tendered his apology for his falsehood. The Swami took him from that day as his disciple saying, “My son has come to me.”

Thozhuvoor Velayutha Mudaliar was a great scholar and poet of repute. He was proficient in Sanskrit also. He learnt a lot of religious and spiritual philosophy at the feet of his chosen master. He is the author of ten books
in Tamil prose including Sankara Vijayam, Peria Puranam and even a drama on the life of Mahaveera. His poetical contribution exceeds thirty five booklets mostly religious. His excellent treatises on Ramalinga Swami especially the Method of worship of Ramalinga Swami (தமிழ் வரலாற் சமய சுயாதையம்) and the History of the Song of Grace (தமிழ் ஸங்கம் வரலாறு) are worth mentioning. The former book contains several kinds of traditional versification. His prayers invoking the grace of the Saint, adoring the greatness of his unique cult and philosophy and extolling his supreme love, affection and compassion for all live-creatures are enrapturing. The latter booklet of 63 verses, it is said, was perused by the Swami himself and he exclaimed that each verse contained sixty three verses. The Swami had a very high opinion of his disciple and one day even styled him as the great master of the twain languages (Tamil and Sanskrit) (இவ்விய தமிழ் முன்னணி) in the presence of many great savants and scholarly disciples. He was with his master for about twenty-five years almost till the disappearance of the Swami. I was informed by Sengalvaraya Mudaliar, the second son of Velayutha Mudaliar that one year prior to his disappearance the Swami asked his disciple to return to Madras as fame and name were likely to spoil his spiritual career. Accordingly Velayutha Mudaliar went away to Madras. He was employed as the Second Tamil Pandit in the Presidency College, Madras, had his second marriage and begot Sengalvaraya Mudaliar as his second son. Later on the 22nd February 1889 he passed away as painfully narrated by his first son Thirunageswara Mudaliar who has edited his father’s book on “the Method of Worship of Ramalinga Swami” in 1912. Many of the followers of Ramalinga Swami criticise rather
vehemently why the Swami did not infuse his tremendous spiritual power even in this most disciplined disciple. It is said that he felt diffident to follow his master in practice and the Swami having known his bent of mind painfully prayed it away. His son told me that the Swami felt very much for the strength of fate and conviction of his disciple. Was his fate so powerful as not to fade away even in the immediate presence of such a divine personality as the Swami? How is it that the disciple having lived with the Swami for twenty five full years, could hold such a strong conviction that his body could not be transformed as that of his master? Then how is it that he speaks so highly of the achievements of his master? Is it that his mind was only after material life and not after spiritual bliss? If so, why did not the Swami persuade at least the one who was dear and near to him, while he was praying all along for the benefit of all living things and that too for the eternal happiness and ecstatic delight of his fellowmen? In his history of the Song of Grace (ढांगुली संगीत) however, he describes the Swami as the alchemist who could transform our body into the divine golden body though he modestly points out that some sinners like him passed the Swami for an ordinary man. Therefore, he was not unconscious of his master’s capacity to be raised to the supreme transcendent stage if only he had asked for it.

The Mother Feeds

Now the Swami was pouring forth fervent appeals and poems to the God Supreme. He used to frequent the temple at Thiruvotriyur. Blazing fire of spiritual yearning caught hold of him. The verses are awe-inspiring, heart-melting and soul-thrilling; they are exhilarating and illuminating in their influence upon the mental and moral...
feelings. They pave the way for the comunion of the human soul with God Supreme. Like a bereaved calf he cries out “Canst thou not deign to annihilate the miserable obstacles in the way of my life and lead me on to the province of Bliss? I take refuge in thee. This is the occasion to show thy mercy.” While thus praying at the temple late in the evening, he forgot to go home in time. When he went there he found the doors closed. The Swami did not want to disturb his sister at that midnight although he was feeling hungry very much. He laid himself outside and was fast asleep. The Supreme Mother the Goddess or according to the Swami, the sublime incarnation of the Supreme power of God Supreme, appeared in the form of his own sister, offered delicious rice (சொற்று காய்ந்து) in a lotus leaf and disappeared. The Swami ate it fully and threw the leaf outside and entered into his usual trance. His own sister woke up suddenly and came out with anxiety. When she saw him lying in the verandah she woke him up and asked him why he should sleep without food and why he did not awake her. Saying thus, she called him inside to have his food. The Swami was perplexed and told her “Just now you have given me (rice) food. I have eaten. Look, there the leaf is also lying yonder.” Surprisingly the sister exclaimed, “No! I have opened the door only just now and am coming out to call you in. I have not given you any food.” The Swami understood the miracle of the Supreme Mother. This happy incident is referred to by the Swami thus:
It was about this time that the Swami was compelled to marry though he detested the very idea and resisted to his utmost. His mother, brothers and sisters pulled him to the yoke of wedlock. They caught hold of an old ascetic who was an intimate friend of the Swami. He persuaded the young Swami to marry and this has been referred to in the Song of Grace.

So he was forced to marry Thanammal, daughter of one of his sisters. It is said that he was completely engrossed in reading the sacred hymns of Thiruvachagam in the nuptial room. The bride was paralysed by his powerful aura. All the attempts of his kith and kin persuading him to the worldly life were in vain. Hence his wife remained a virgin throughout her life and she passed away before the disappearance of the Swami.

In 1855 he visited Chidambaram and all along he had been pouring forth spontaneously hundreds of verses.
He condescended to the affectionate request of one pious Venkada Reddiar to be his guest of honour at his residence at Karunkuzhi, a hamlet about three miles south-east of Vadalur. Here the Swami was living for a considerable time composing and reading verses even during the whole night.

The Water Lamp

The hostess Muthial Ammal used to keep in his room a wide oil lamp and an earthen vessel full of lamp-oil. One day as the vessel was broken, the pious lady got one brand new mud vessel and had it filled with water for rendering it fit for future use. That same day she had to attend a social call of her relative. She in her hurry, inadvertently kept the vessel of water and forgot to keep oil for the lamp.

The Swami, who as usual was absorbed in his search for the Supreme Light, without examining the contents of the new vessel, was making use of it to keep the light burning throughout the night without experiencing the least hindrance to his work. The next morning the lady of the house returned and realized her folly but was wonder-struck at the miracle. To this incident the Swami has drawn pointed attention in one of his verses.

\[\text{தமிழ் மொழி வர்த்தகத்தில் நிகழ்ந்த பூம்புக் கதை}
\[\text{தமிழ் மொழி மாநிலத்தில் நிகழ்ந்த பூம்புக் கதை}
\[\text{II : 101 : 1}

The same miraculous event has also been referred to by a contemporary celebrity Sri Chidambaraswamy in his eulogy for the sacred Song of Grace of the Swami, Thiruarulpa.
Day in and day out he was praying in frantic ecstasy. The perennial stream of inspiring verses kept on flowing towards the ocean of Supreme Grace.

O' Ocean of Compassion, nectar of my soul, cure of my ills, how shall I mouth Thy glory; Thy grace readily showers upon true and loving devotees. My supreme master, at Thy feet do I take refuge. I fully surrender unto Thee. O Father, Mother, my All, O Vastness of mercy, All-knowing, accept me and save me. Could I forget Thee? If it so happens, I will die instantaneously. I adjure. Would you forget me? Then, O Father what shall I do? Where shall I go? To whom shall I speak? Lord, kinder to me than a mother, I am rejoicing in the thought that Thy benevolent Grace that sustains the whole universe shall not forget me if you wouldst. Forget me not my Lord but favour me with Thy gracious Light expeditiously.

The Swami betook himself to Vadalur to perpetuate his spiritual mission. He was inspired to 'choose
this obscure little village. It is almost at the centre of an equilateral triangle of three great temples of Chidambaram in the south and Vridhachalam in the west and Thiruppathirupuliyur in the north-east. The passion of his devotion went on yearning day and night with a flood of emotional songs.

O God! Shall I, the meek self be able to get the acquaintance of your loving sages and saints who being free from egoism remain replete with the nectar of your Grace? Shall I be able to dispense with the paining heat of the worldly life and to get my mind cooled by feasting on their words? Shall I be able to get into the abode of Absolute Knowledge where I may rest for all times without any feeling of day or night on the bed of silence and peace that gives me all the best? Shall I be able to enjoy that state of transcendant divine bliss in this very life itself?

I : 5 : 93

Atheic Benefit

The Swami repeatedly preached that the aim of human life on earth is to hasten to acquire the Supreme Grace for the attainment of the benediction of the soul (Anmalabam). The achievement will lead one to the ultimate realization of God Supreme. He was explaining that the atoms of the human body of impure elements
will be converted into pure atoms of pure elements. It will be a body of light with a golden hue and it will never perish. This is possible by the true identification of his doctrine Suddha Sanmargam with the Grace of God.

The pre-requisite for this identification is devotion to God. The Swami appealed to the masses that the real form of worship of God is to be kind and compassionate towards all living creatures (i.e.) the manifestations of God and thereby develop the love of God. The Swami explained that God Almighty is in the form of supreme Truth called Arutperumjothi—The supreme Grace Light. He is the universal Dancer. The purpose of his cosmic dance is to redeem the souls from bondage and to shower His Grace for their eternal Bliss. The place of his dance is the heart of those who regard without any kind of refractation of mind, all living beings as equal to them and who feel that it is their foremost duty to see them all live in happiness.

As He is dancing in all live creatures in the miniature form of Grace-Light, Love and Compassion shown towards them become well nigh recoiled as love of God. In showing love to fellow-beings there should be no
discrimination of caste, colour, creed, custom, country and even of sex. He condemned the orthodox system of caste and community. He denounced the superstitious faith and false notions of the people.

The saint pointed out that the souls of all the human beings are equal. One should realize that the God who is manifest in one’s own soul and spirit is equally manifest in others also. When the universality of all the fellow-beings is clearly understood, love and affection for others and the feeling of reverence for life in general, will develop spontaneously. This will result in the universal spiritual communion. (ஜாமுழி செத்தும்பர்) By this unique but natural principle, the saint contemplated at the integration of the entire human society. He aimed at a world union. In other words he visualized one God and one world in the universal communion of souls. Many a hundred joined the saint as followers.

The Charity House

On the 23rd May 1867 he founded The Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathyaa Dharmasalai to extend hospitality with unstinted hand to many a weary traveller and indigent old persons. The inauguration ceremony was celebrated with due pomp and solemnity and it is said that about 10,000 people were fed on a lavish scale for three consecutive days. Under the aegis of this poor-feeding centre and within its own precincts, the Swami got out the first part of his venerable and impressive treatise on compassion towards all living beings. (Jeevavkarunya Ozhukkam) — (ஜீவாகருந்த ஓழுக்கம்)

Birth in this world as human beings is ordained only to earn the Grace of God. By all efforts we must strive to attain His Grace. It is obtained by the exercise of kind-
ness to all live creatures and incessant love of God. His Grace shall surely flow in such souls. By His Grace we can attain Eternal Bliss even in this birth. For attaining this Bliss the Swami ordained his Sanmargam or path of righteousness. He preached that in his path no one shall taste of death. It can be called the true path common to all religions and is true for all times. Immortality will lead to Supreme Bliss which is styled as the benefit of the soul.

The life breath of Sanmargam is compassion to all living things. Kindness to living things is inherent in every human being. This feeling must grow more and more to elicit the Grace of God. As God is manifest in all living beings, kindness and compassion shown to the living things is kindness and love shown to God. Hence the love of God or God’s Grace shall flow into the very form of the compassionate being. The aim of this compassionate life is to transform and embody oneself as kindness itself and receive the Grace of God. To be the recipient of the Grace of God one should become kindness incarnate. The feelings of fellowship and unity among all beings should be firmly established. What is this compassion about? The best form of compassion is giving food to persons who are unable to work and earn their food and to those who are deaf, blind and infirm without questioning as to their caste, community, creed, colour, conduct or country. It is also to relieve the hunger of beasts, birds, insects and plants realising that God is present in every being.

The Swami was residing here at Vadalur and used to give elaborate discourses to his disciples. Many visitors
thronged to Vadalur not to hear and follow him but to witness his miracles. The hungry people were fed and the sickly cured of their diseases. Great scholars of different philosophic and religious schools visited him. Many got their doubts clarified and a few got snubbed when they tried to show off their skill.

The Swami detested the very thought of non-vegetarianism. It is said that the soothing and kind look of the Swami itself was enough for several hundreds of non-vegetarians to undergo immediate conversion to vegetarianism. He vehemently condemned killing of animals of all kinds and eating them. He swears that one even capable of transforming the male into female and vice versa in a moment, and of providing life to the dead, cannot be called a saint, if he is bent upon killing and eating the live creatures.

While preaching his philosophic doctrine of Sanmargam, the Swami was verily the incarnation of compassion. He declared most emphatically in one of his verses that there was no difference between compassion and himself and that if he had to part with compassion he would be no more. His reverence for life cannot be better stated than in the following verse. It is a unique song of life.
My Lord, whenever I saw crops withering for want of water my heart too did wither. When I happened to see the poor exhausted due to starvation even after begging at every door with their hunger never quenched, my heart shrothed. When I came across people suffering from chronic diseases I was overwhelmed with grief. When I met pitilessly honourable men but totally depressed on account of poverty, I too got depressed.

VI : 21 : 58

It looks as though a society under the name of Samarasam Veda Sammarga Sangam was founded at about this time. Later the Swami re-named it as Samarasa Buddha Sammarga Sathya Sangam. The accomplishment of the members of this society seems to have been very high and supernatural. The Swami sings that no one except the divine members of this society (VI : 110 : 24) can prevent the inevitable death of mortals. He has proclaimed that he was ordained by the will of God to be born in this world in the present era just to correct the society which is darkened and to enlist all human beings in the society of universal spiritual communion (VI : 93 : 9) in order to enjoy eternal Bliss in this world itself.

“Members of the spiritual commune. I bow to Thy feet. Enlist me as one among you. Worship only our Almighty, the Divine Lord.”
It appeared with the authorship of Thiagesa Mudaliar of Mavandoor but it did not escape severe criticism by the Swami's party. Pamphlets on either side accumulated. Arumuga Navalar sought the aid of the court of law to put down the title of the book. His contention was that the verses of the Swami should not be called the song of Grace as the attributes assigned here would be applicable only to the verses of the four great earlier saints of the Tamil country and not to the verses of this up-start.

It is said that summons were issued by the then High court of Manjakuppan. (Cuddalore N. T.) It seems that the swami appeared at the threshold of the court hall only at the strike of the hour eleven, when all the persons of both the parties including Arumuga Navalar had already assembled. The judge was keenly watching the reverential feelings of all those assembled for the hearing and especially of Arumuga Navalar when he too rose up from his seat as a token of respect for the Swami. It is said that the Swami went straight to his seat, paid his respects to the court and walked out. All except the English judge stood up in reverence for the Swami. When the plaintiff was questioned as to the propriety of his showing respect even to his respondent, the scholarly Navalar explained that it was a custom of the country to show respect to a Saint. The judge immediately attributed that saintliness which demanded involuntary reverence by the opponent to the greatness and sanctity of his hymns and set aside the suit in question.

Thus the slings of calumny and condemnation were ably met. However, the orthodox revolt is still clinging in certain corners where wanton ignorance and traditional
superstition prevail. The religious fanatics feel even in 1968 that their traditional convention of castes and their communal supremacy have been shattered by the revolutionary doctrine of Sanmargam.

The sacred Thiru Arul Pa (Divine song of Grace) is one of the greatest master-pieces in Tamil. In expounding Spiritual Bliss it is next to none. T. V. G. Chetty says that in its elegance of expression and chaste poetic diction, melodious and mellifluous composition it may be said to be as good as the great Thiruvachagam of Saint Manickavasagar and even greater than it. The distinguishing feature lies in the wonderful display of lofty and noble ideals and erudite exposition of the greatest Truths and the hidden mysteries of Nature. The saint has actually unfolded the heavenly secrets of God-hood in his verses for the benefit of all the souls in the universe. The profundity of thought, the cogency of narration and simple and outstanding principles of the philosophy such as the nature and attributes of the soul, the nature and attributes of God, the symphony of human life with the divine life are worthy of note. The tremendous transformations of the mortal human frame into the body of Love, into the body of Grace and ultimately into the body of Bliss (Suddhadeham, Pranava deham and Gnana deham அறிவு, பிரணவதேவ ஃெய்தே) and the great experiences in these respective bodies (சமநாணங்க, பிரணவாரமங்க, அரிவாளமங்க) have been marvellously treated perhaps for the first time in the Swami’s verses.

A Miracle

While he was thus preaching and practising his philosophy at Vadalur, there was a devoted disciple Vedanayagam Pillai of Cuddalore. His son Ayyaswamy was very seriously laid up at his house and he
was actually struggling for life. The father weeping and brooding mentally, prayed ardently to his master to save his son. The saint was at Vadalur preaching to his devotees. But, anon, he appeared at the threshold of the house of his disciple and tapped at the door. Vedanayagam Pillai was surprised. He led him to his dying son. The Swami smeared sacred ash all over the body of Ayyaswamy. In a moment he was completely cured and he rose up. Advising the wonder-struck household to pray to God, the Swami started out at that dead of night. Subsequently Vedanayagam Pillai set out to Vadalur with his son in a country cart. The Swami came out of his dwelling, offered sacred ash and requested them not to reveal his trip to Cuddalore. Both of them were stunned to hear that the Swami had been preaching throughout that whole night at Vadalur! Thus he wrought many miracles not for the pleasure of it but out of necessity. But at every time he hushed them up.

It is written that he was a straight slender figure of moderate height. He had a long sharp nose and broad soothing eyes sparkling with spiritual fire. He looked emaciated by hard fasting. He took food once in two or three days and that too in a very limited quantity. He always put up a countenance of sorrow. He never liked people to hail him as Swami. He could very easily read the mind of others. He used to disappear for many days and none could guess his whereabouts. He was in short, meek and humble, loving and gentle, simple and plain. His disciple Velayuda Mudaliar later sang his glory as the God Himself:

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 கட்டமதித்திய கோயில் காவியம்
 கொடும் கஞ்சாக செங்கோட்டாக
 மாமியம் மிகக்குறுக்கைய திருநெய்யை
 கொண்டு பார்க்க குன்றில் புலம்
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He has exclaimed that his mortal body became resplendent with a golden hue (குருங்குழலை) and transformed into a body of love (அழப்புழலை). The changes that take place during this transformation have been exquisitely narrated by the Swami. There is no myth nor concoction. Everything is stated with scientific accuracy.

The saint was not satisfied with this divine stage. He has sung in his ecstatic delight for the flow of Grace more and more. His body of love has been further transformed into an effulgent body known as the body of Grace (அழைக்குழலை). Unlike the previous one this body cannot be perceived by the sense of touch. It is the Grace that is experienced in this body. This is known as the body of light and also Pranava deham. It will never perish and will not be susceptible to the great elements of Nature. The aspiration of the saint to embrace and merge with the God Supreme was fulfilled at this stage.

“My entire body sends forth an aroma of camphor which is ipso facto a proof of my being at-One-with my Lover, the Almighty.”

This is the actual acid test of those who have really enjoyed the Supreme God in themselves.
It was perhaps at this time that his disciples tried to photograph the Swami. The famous photographer of the day, one Masilamany Mudaliyar of Madras was brought. He tried eight times but all the plates showed only his clothing and no part of his body was photographed. An explanation is offered by one of his disciples Kandaswamy Pillai who has sung the life of the saint verbatim. The body of the saint had been already converted into a body of light and hence no shadow of his frame was cast on the plate.

However much the Swami was kind and loving, many did not pay heed to his words. But look at the magnanimous disposition of his heart! “O ye, My people, you make bundles of bad acts. What are you going to tell before the judgement of Death? O worldly mad ones, you do evils horrible to do. You speak hard words horrible to utter. You adhere to bad things horrible to approach. You lead a conduct horribe to lead. Alas! you know not how to think with raining eyes upon the Master who guards you even like the eyes. Fie upon your pretensions.” (VI: 107:10)

He used to advise the people not to burn but to bury the dead. He pointed out that burning the dead is tantamount to killing. His contention is that some at any rate will come to life if only they are buried. Those few
who had gone ahead in the pursuit of the Divine and had attained a fairly higher stage of spiritual experience and yet died would come to life again.

"Ye, my people, you do not know who has evolved spiritually and who has not. Alas! Really enlightened persons will tremble to take shelter and sleep under your care lest you should burn them alive." (VI:111:5; 7) Thus he sounds a note of caution and adds, "O people of the world, ye simply give yourselves up to wild expressions of grief at the time of removal of your own dear and near ones who have become dead. Where is the obstacle for you to attain the great boon of Immortality? Perhaps it never struck you. Are you prepared to undergo sickness and old age? Even the good and the holy when they recall these, quake with fear. It is the splendid Sanmarga path only that can conquer sickness, old age and death; wherefore, hearken unto this and come hither; ye can in this very birth enter into the true everlasting life and enjoy eternal happiness at once.

I prayed for an effulgent body that body that endures for ever against wind, earth, sky, fire, water, sun, moon, death, disease, weapons of killing, planets, injuries of evil deeds or anything else. He granted me anon and I have
such a body. Think it not a mean gift. O people, seek refuge in my Father who is the lord of the Beatific Splendour that immortalises even the material body.

"O, ye people of the world! It is true and absolutely true indeed that this transient nest of worms engulfed by shackles (human body) shall be transformed into an eternal entity of effulgence by the acquisiton and identification of Suddha Sanmargam."

The Temple of Wisdom

In 1870 the Swami retreated to a hamlet, Mettukuppam about three miles south of Vadalur and lived there in a hut. This is now known as (Siddhi Valaga Thirumaligai சிய்யிய வலகை திருமலிகை) the sacred mansion of miracle. He used to frequent Vadalur and meet his disciples. One day he disclosed to them that he desired to construct a temple of wisdom (நூற்றாண்டு சுருள்) or a temple of humanity as T. V. G. Chetty would put it. The Swami had visualised this temple within himself and he requested his disciples to have it built in six months as he designed. By about the middle of 1871 the foundation was laid and the construction was over within the stipulated time in 1872. The Swami called it Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Gnana Sabai (சமரசர சுத்த ஸந்மாரா ஸத்யா ஜனா ரலா). This temple which stands
The Temple of Wisdom
In an octagonal masonry cellar-terrace resembling a full-bloomed lotus flower, is surmounted by a lofty cone-shaped roofing overlaid with thick plates of brass more or less after the Gothic fashion and crowned with a stupi at the top. The whole structure exhibiting as it does, a conception and style quite of his own is a peculiar and quaint specimen of architectural beauty. It looks much like a chariot when seen at a distance, impresses the mind of the beholder in a manner never to be forgotten and commands reverence and devotion from him. Detailed description of this Sabai and its significance may be found later in the chapter, Space and Light.

The Inauguration was held on 25–1–1872. The curtains were removed one by one and the glowing lamp within signifying the light of Grace was worshipped by thousands of devotees. The spiritual light of human beings is hidden from view until the seven curtains (the Devil Power) that hang flat and intercept it are removed one after another. That is to say one cannot identify oneself and realize his own spiritual light unless all the shackles and lust of the individual which conceal the light are thoroughly purged of. How rational and universally acceptable is his exposition of the spiritual laws in relation to the individual soul! Hence this temple of wisdom graphically explains the momentous facts of life. The Swami has pointed out that the Gnana Sabai has been founded only at His will and He—The Universal Grace Light—has enshrined in it in the form of light. Therefore when the human beings strive hard to remove the first three thick veils of lust which hide their souls, the rest of the four curtains of shackles will be automatically removed by the Grace of God. Then the spiritual light or the light of the soul will be visible or the real self-
realisation will result. When one is able to see his own spiritual light he is sure by his penance and meditation, by his reverence for His creations and by ardent prayer and introspection to merge in the universal Grace Light—the Supreme God or to evolve into Immanence.

The Swami wrote out on 18–7–1872 how the Gnanasabai should be maintained and how the worship should be conducted. He has stipulated that there should be no ritual except the burning of camphor. People should silently pray with love of God and enter into ecstacy.

**The Marvel of the Age**

Ever since the foundation stone was laid for the Gnanasabai, the Swami was in the habit of shutting himself up in his hermitage for a few days and then emerging from his self-imposed privacy to engage himself in his lecturing campaign. This went on for some time. About the later half of 1873 the Swami, for the first time at his residence, hoisted his Sanmarga flag as a token of achievement of Supreme Grace Light. It appears that he explained the significance of the flag and preached to them to pray to God for eternal happiness. He gave thrilling lectures on universal spiritual communion.

"O my people! Waste not your precious life in falsehood and vain gossip. The light is in you. Would you fall into the dark well even when your own light in hand is burning bright? Meditate upon the Lord of Light seated in your heart." The Swami entreated the entire humanity to pray to the Supreme Grace Light so that they may also achieve the Athmic benefit. Towards the end of 1873 he kept out his oil lamp which he had been using and asked his disciples to worship the light of
the lamp and keep it burning for ever. He explained that they should imagine that the Supreme Grace Light is manifested in it and pray to Him for Grace.

The Saint was a bit vexed when his spiritual mission did not take as deep a root as it should. He said "We disclosed the treasure but no one was willing to have it. We close down." (கல்லால் மீதுடன் என்று முடிக்கின்றேன்; என்று முடிக்கின்றேன்). It appears that he remarked at an earlier date "You my dear ones! You seem to have decided not to hear me. You may not hear me now. There are some enlightened persons in the far north. They will be going over here. They will learn this philosophy and preach unto you. Then perhaps, you may listen."

When he found that his direct appeal to the masses fell on deaf ears, he resorted to appealing to God. Most painfully he asks, "O Lord of Light. What is the use of repeating my humble desires when you know my mind? When will all the world realising the universal spiritual communion enjoy eternal happiness dovoid of miseries and death? When shall I, on seeing their joy, be happy?"
The Disappearance

Friday the Thirtieth January, 1874 was an auspicious day. The star Punarpoosam was in ascendancy before the middle of night. The star Poosam was approaching. He wrote out and released a bulletin of wonder (இத்திரு புட்டு கூற்றாளர்) in which he has drawn the attention of human society to his sublime realisation, his greatest achievements and his eternal happiness in the kingdom of God Supreme.

After a lapse of 50 years, 3 months and 24 days of humane life, the Swami laid himself on a wooden plank in his hut and spoke out "My beloved ones! I have to be out of your sight for a time. Don't worry. Keep the light of the lamp (Gnana Deepam—கண்ணா தீபம்) burning for ever. Imagine that God is there and worship the light. You will be amply rewarded. I am in this body now and after a while I shall enter into all the bodies of His creation. Close the door and lock it outside. The room if ordered to be opened will only be void." Trembling disciples could not bear the parting and thrilling message of their loving master. Nor did they dare to lock the room outside. They simply closed the door for the moment although they locked the door on the third day out of sheer fear of disobedience of the order. Wondering mystery still hangs upon this marvel of the age.

The Sequel:

The disappearance of the Swami did cast a gloom all over the place. It is said that after a few days of the occurrence and on receipt of the police report, the Collector of South Arcot Mr. J.H. Garstlin, i.c.s., and Mr. George Banbury, i. c. s., the then member of the Board of
Revenue (Some say that the officer who came with the Collector was the then District Medical Officer) with the then Tashildar Mr. Venkatarama Iyer hastened on horses to Mettukuppam. They launched an elaborate enquiry. The people of the village along with the disciples of the Swami were unable to express or suppress their painful feelings. The officers went round and round the hut into which the Swami had vanished. Finding nothing to lend the least support for any sort of suspicion, they conclud-ed that he must be a Great Soul. The Collector asked the throbbing disciples what the Swami had asked them to do. They said that they were to feed the poor. Both the officials contributed twenty rupees and rode their way back!

Later in 1878 the Manual of South Arcot was published. There are references in it to the Swami and his disappearance written by the then Collector Mr. J. H. Garstin. He has stated that in 1874 Ramalinga Swami entered into a room at Mettukuppam and asked his devotees to lock it outside. He did not come out at all. His disciples believe that he has merged with God.

It is said that for one full year that is, till the next Poosam day on January 1875 the door was not opened and that when it was opened it was only void. The oil lamp which the Swami wished to be kept burning for ever is still burning. This light of wisdom (Gnana deepam) is looked after with fostering care at the Divine Mansion of Miracles (దివ్య మనస్స్తంభ రామలింగాస్తానం).

Thus we find that the Swami, while spreading and perpetuating his path of light (శైలి జలి) started with the light of Love (స్వామీ మహానేషు) at the charity house (అదనం ఇలా). The second was the light of Grace (శైలి జలి)
which he installed at the temple of Wisdom (இருவூலம் தோலி). The third and the unique one was the light of Wisdom (சுருக்குத்தோலியம்) which would ultimately shape the devout aspirant to merge in the light of Bliss (சுருக்குத்தோலியம்) (i.e.) The Supreme Grace-Light (இருவூலம் தோலியம்).
2. The Great Achievements

Abstract

Ramalinga Swami is a saint of God. According to him the aim of life is to attain eternal Bliss in this world by rigorously following four different disciplines pertaining to the senses, the mind, the life and the soul. Just like Saint Manickavasagar, one should convert one’s mortal body into the body of love, the body of Grace and finally into the body of Bliss. The experiences in these divine bodies are the greatest achievements of human life. The happiness experienced in the body of love is known as the achievement of the soul. The enjoyment in the body of Grace is the experience of the Supreme Grace of God. The realization of the Supreme God is possible only in the ultimately evolved body of Bliss. The experience at this transcendent stage is described as the benediction of the human soul, which the Swami achieved and evolved into Immanence. That is called the experience of the Supreme Auspicious Being—Siva. The Swami explains that the secret of these divine experiences and achievements has been disclosed to him by the Saint Thirugnanasambandar.
The Objectives

India is famous for the richness of her philosophic thought. It is a matter of common belief, at any rate, in this country, that the will of the Supreme Lord Almighty is carried out at all times and at every moment. The greatest thinkers of the world have come to realize that it is only at the will of God, that saints and philosophers appear on the soil here and there in human form as divine messengers to redeem the distress and monotony of the material life of the mortals. Ramalinga Swami is one such saint of God. He has evolved a unique philosophy of his own and he lived up to its maxims.

Apart from his eclectic poems of about 6000 verses, the Swami, by way of oral religious discourses to his disciples, has passed down to posterity, his prose works some of which explain the intricacies of spiritual experiences and the ultimate goal. The ultimate aim of man in the material world within the short span of his life should be, according to the Swami, the happy attainment of ANMALABAM (அன்மலபம்) which he defines as the divine life which one leads, uninterrupted by space and time, and undisturbed by any force or anything even to the minutest extent, after attaining eternal bliss of that Being which is manifested in itself by absolute reality and truth, by complete radiance and light and by abounding perfection and sweetness. This benediction of soul (Anmalabam) has four different phases such as (வாழும் ராச்சியம், சுருளும் மூழ்கல், கலவூர் சிழ்சி முந்திய அம்மையத்துடன்) perfection in the art of converting base metal into gold, education in immortality, control of the senses and their accessories, the realization of Godhead and merging with the God Supreme.
Four different disciplines help one to attain the above mentioned four phases and they are described in detail by the Swami. The first of the four disciplines is itself a prelude to the other three disciplines and is called the discipline of the five senses (கைந்திர என்று கிளிக்கை). The Swami gives a code of twenty-one rules of spiritual discipline to be rigorously observed by the thirsting aspirants. The second is (சுருக்க என்று கிளிக்கை) the discipline of the four aspects of the mind (viz., Manam, Buddhi, Siddham, Ahangaram). In this, the aspirant should concentrate on the centre of the forehead (நோயலோலோலோ) (a little above the joint of the nasal bone and the frontal bone (i.e.) in between the eyebrows). He should not feel inquisitive about the failings of others. The third is the discipline of the life (உடல் என்று கிளிக்கை) in which the aspirant should break the shackles of caste, creed, community, colour, faith, religion or country and should conduct himself so nobly as to be one with all human beings irrespective of sex. The fourth is the morale of the soul (நட்டுடன் என்று கிளிக்கை) in which the aspirant should discern the divinity in all living things from the elephant down to the smallest fly. The spiritual aspirant following these four codes of conduct steadily and ardently must necessarily gain and attain the four great objectives of human life on earth such as (1) Emasiddhi (ஏமாசிர்ஞி) (2) Sahakalvi (சக்தியானசக்தியான) (3) Thatvanikragam (தத்வான்கராகம்) and (4) Realization of the Supreme God by becoming one with Him (உயிர்ப்பூர்வமாகச்சிலுந்திராகம்).

The realization of the four objectives is accomplished in three successive achievements at three different stages of evolution of the soul. It is gratifying to note that all these three stages which have been perfectly enjoyed by the Swami himself (which will be dealt with elaborately
later) had been fully realised by one of the four great saints of the Tamil country, namely, Saint Manickavasagar. While singing in praise of the four saints and invoking their blessings according to the tradition the Swami makes a happy reference to the attainment of Godhead by Manickavasagar (சான்னு கவசரனும்).

The substance of the verse is as follows:—

"While disappointed are those who have been meditating for ages by fixing their mind at the centre of the forehead and who thereby have become apparently skeletal beings, you, the Lord of Vadavur have attained the three successive stages of (Anburuvam, Aruluruvam and Inburuvam) body of Love, body of Grace, and body of Bliss, one by one". The experiences that are enjoyed and realised in these three supreme stages of attainment of Godhead are respectively known as (மகாகாசம்) experience or realised of divine Life, (மகாகாசம்) experience or realised of divine Grace and (மகாகாசம்) experience or realised of God Supreme.

The actual technique of the Sanmarga Philosophy has been dealt with by the Swami only in the invocations of Saint Thirugnanasambandar, another of the four great saints of Tamil land. These verses may be said to be the key to this philosophic doctrine. In one of them Ramalinga Swami indicates that the only power which can dispense with the inseparable illusion and lust which have fastened themselves to the soul from its inception,
is the realization and experience of the Supreme Grace. The prerequisite of this realization is the state of achievement of the divine life (நிஃநீதித்தல்).

In another verse the Swami says as explained to him by this saint, Thirugnanasambandar, that in the event of one attaining the state of achievement of the divine Life (நிஃநீதித்தல்) the state of experience of the Grace Supreme (நிஃநீதிகாரம்) will dawn upon one, and in this superfine state of transcendency the most superior and sublime state of experience and realization of God Supreme (நிஃநீதிகாரம்) will blossom.

In the subsequent verses while paying homage to this Saint, the Swami defines in detail the three
great achievements such as (1) the achievement of the
divine Life (2) the experience of the Supreme Grace and
(3) the complete realization of and merging with the God
Supreme in his Divine path of Samarasa Monism (ஸமரசக
ஆனாம் குறிப்பிட்டுக்கொள்ள - 1 : 5 : 5.)

The Achievement of the Divine Life (அம்மாயை)

This is the preliminary state in which the soul is
to enjoy in full the real and natural happiness it is
entitled to without any restraint. A human being
of this world from the moment of successful fertilization
in his mother's womb suffers from some thing or other.
In fact the sufferings which he has to undergo are also
born along with him. The Swami has narrated the miseries
of the foetus before birth and those of the child after birth
in one of his great petitions to God. For those who take
the sufferings of life seriously, life is monotonous. All seers
of knowledge, ascetics of various ages and saints of
different creeds and countries have been worrying about
the miseries of life in this world. No living organism
on earth or elsewhere will be happy to part with its
own life. Life is sweet to all living things and death is
always painful even to the highly enlightened souls. All
the great saints and sages who have discovered solutions,
ways and means to avoid the miseries of life, death, re-
birth and so on preached only devotion to God. The
Swami also, like others before him in the line of descent
of saints, stated that one should get out of the bondage
for being bound to the boundless God Supreme.

1 : 3 : 624
The bondages of human beings are according to the Swami, with regard to the body, to the soul and to the enjoyment which one expects in these (நாற்பத்தில் பத்து செய்யாது). These bondages are thirty six in number. The moment the bondages and shackles are removed, there is the dawn of Grace of God in the individual which alone can put down once and for all the miseries of life.

VI : 51 : 8

The achievement of the soul therefore rests upon the conquest of the shackles one by one. There are three steps to reach this state. The first step is to remove the bonds one by one. They are estimated to be ninety six although they are generally known to be briefly thirty six. It is said that the Lord Supreme brought down all the bonds under the control of the Swami and consoled him by granting the boon of deathlessness.

VI : 33 : 5

The Swami has indicated that as the Supreme Love infused itself in him all the bonds disintegrated once and for all and quietism (சுயதம்) alone manifested itself in him.

VI : 1 : 1471

Now what are these shackles? According to the Swami, they are:
Brahma Thatyam

1. Space
2. Air
3. Fire
4. Water
5. Earth
6. Body
7. Tongue
8. Eyes
9. Nose
10. Ears
11. Sensitivity
12. Taste
13. Sight
14. Smell
15. Hearing
16. Mouth
17. Feet
18. Hands
19. Anus
20. Sex organ
21. Manam (மனம்)
22. Buddhi (புத்தி)
23. Sitham (சிதம்)
24. Ahangaram (அஹானாரம்)

5 elements

5 organs

5 senses

Different aspects of mind:

*It appears that the Thatvas 21 to 24 have not been included by the Swami in the verse quoted above.
Vishnu Thatvam (அசானைத் தாத்துமிகு)

25. Kalai (கலை)
26. Viddhai (விட்டை)
27. Aragam (ஏரகம்)
28. Niyathi (நியாதி)
29. Time (ஏரங்கை)
30. Mohini (மோகனைத்)
31. Purusha (புருஷைத்)

Suddha Thatvam (சுட்டை தாத்துமிகு)

32. Suddha Viddhai (சுட்டை விட்டை)
33. Eswaram (எஸ்வரம்)
34. Sadakkiyam (சடாக்கியம்)
35. Vindu (விங்கு)
36. Nadam (பாதம்)

All these steps have to be trodden one by one and conquered with the help of Grace. After passing all these steps the Soul is said to reach the stage of Paramanatham (பரமன்தம்) where it realizes the Supreme Grace. At this very high spiritual plane, the soul is freed from the shackles and no longer are they able to bind and stupify the soul. Now the soul losing the self and individuality, imbibes the Divine Grace. In other words the soul has become divine and dwells in the Grace of the Supreme God at this state of spiritual experience called (அசாரம்பு மானை) the achievement of the soul.

By now the human body of the five elements has transformed itself into Suddha deham (சுட்டைத் தெஹம்) or purified
body or golden body composed of pure atoms of purified elements. The change over has been dealt with more briefly under the heading “Transformation” where the body of the aspirant is an incarnation of all compassion, all mercy and all love (அன்புகள).

The Experience of the Supreme Grace (அத்தாத்ராமாது)

The Swami explains that if one attains this plane, the accomplishment of the next higher state of Divine experience is fructified.

Now what is this state of divine experience? This is called (அத்தாத்ராமாது) the experience of the Supreme Grace. The soul of this plane of Paranatham dwelling in the Supreme Light of Grace in a blissful state and enjoying the sublime achievement and experience of the soul (அமர்மாது) - Uiranubavam - and having been endowed with the sanctified golden body, is subjected further more to the hold of the Supreme Grace fully and completely for the evolution of the next higher plane. This transcendent plane of experience of the Grace (அத்தாத்ராமாது) is achieved by divine pursuit. The soul is to enjoy the Supreme Grace.
The divine soul is entertained bodily as a part and parcel of the Supreme Grace and is permeated through and through. It is enshrined in the divine Grace as an ever-existing and omnipresent object. It is to be found within the plane of Parambaram (பரம்பரம்). The profundity of the Grace Supreme is inconceivably pleasant. It exists pervading the universe as an inexplicable entity. This experience of the divine aspirant is known as the experience of the Supreme Grace (அனுதாயம்). Words fail to explain the different aspects of this blissful stage. The body of the divine aspirant transforms itself into an incarnation of Grace.

Experience of the God Supreme (செயலவம்)

The third and the ultimate state of the aspirant is the complete realization of the God Supreme (செயலவம்). This state is explained by the Swami in the following lines.

IV : 9 : 5

This is the most sublime and the highest plane of the most auspicious Godhead (உத்தாயம்). This is the all-pervading, all-knowing, all-embracing Super-Being. It is only at this plane that complete realization and complete merging with God is accomplished.

VI : 124 : 1
Here and here alone the great realization "He thou art, thou art He, Ye enjoy in Him" is achieved. The Supreme combustion results in the inseparable monism of the highest order. This plane of transcendency soars higher and higher into the most superior Godhead. It is inconceivable, uninferable and unimaginable even by the heavenly powers and divine beings and deities of high order.

This sublime achievement of the aspirant culminates in the complete union with the Lord Supreme for the eternal enjoyment of Supreme Bliss for ever and ever after. The experiences of the Swami at this plane have spontaneously and profusely overflowed into many of his melting verses sung in ecstasy.

VI: 109: 11

VI: 38: 61

VI: 109: 17

VI: 132: 74
On the day of this unique realization of the God Supreme the Swami has left the following words:

"I am going to close this door from to-day onwards. I am now in this body. I shall be in all the bodies in a few moments hence. Open not this door. If you do so, it will be only void". The disappearance of the Swami from human vision on the 30th of January 1874 at his residence at Mettukuppam will explain the truth and splendour of his wonderful philosophy. Thus the Swami achieved the greatest perfection of the soul in the mortal body under the Sun and on this Earth. This is the Supreme aim and blissful benefit (நித்ய பௌத்தம்) contemplated in his Sanmarga philosophy. He is, in his own words of song divine, in the body of the Supreme Wisdom (நித்ய சுத்கை) the body of the Supreme Auspicious Being (நித்ய முருகன்) enjoying the perpetual and eternal and most sublime and most Supreme Bliss.
3. The Transformations

Abstract

Ramalinga Swami explains that the mortal human body must be transformed first into Suddha deham—perfect body. He has described in detail the transmutation of his body by the Grace of God, which can be achieved by the universal spiritual communion and devotion to God. Three kinds of rays of light fall on the body of the devout aspirant during his melting mood. The atoms of the impure elements which constitute the body are alchemised into pure and perfect atoms resulting in a body of love. In short matter is converted into energy. Then the Suddha deham will again be transformed into Pranava deham or body of Grace and Light. By further concentration this body of Grace and Light will be transformed into the body of Wisdom (i.e.) evolve into the body of the God Supreme or Immanence.
Suddha Deham

This topic is of great significance in the philosophy of our Swami. It requires a very strong conviction for understanding this change-over. The material body the human frame of the aspiring individual undergoes a wonderful transformation into an imperishable and immortal body. It is not any other body such as the Devadeha or Sukhsmadeha referred to in some other philosophic doctrines, that undergoes this metamorphosis. This human body of normal but perfect existence and perseverance can be—or will be—nay—must be converted into Suddha deham—purified body.

The feasibility of the first stage of transformation as contemplated in this philosophy is evident from the body-change of the Swami himself. He has narrated in a picturesque manner the transformation of the body of Saint Manickavasagar who bodily disappeared at the Sanctum Sanctorum of Chidambaram Temple beyond human vision in the 7th century A.D. Though this historical event has been already alluded to, it has to be stressed that the Swami says that Saint Manickavasagar had achieved the transformation in the human frame first into Anburuvam (அபுருவம்) body of love, then into Aruluvum (அருளும்) body of grace and then finally into Inbaruvam (இப்புவம்) body of ecstasy, that is, the body of the God Supreme. All the three states of the body are also referred to as (நூறு ஓர் எழும்; ஜீவியின் பூமியில்) golden body.

This is evident from the words of the Swami when he declares that he was transformed into all the three forms one after another by the Grace of the God Supreme.
Now the explanation of the Swami with regard to the transformation is very clear. The human body is made up of the five elements. There is no doubt about this. In the clear cut words of the Swami the body is composed of several millions of minute particles, the atoms of unpurified elements (ஆனால் போற்றத்தில் அதிகாரமாக, அம்மைக் கருவகிகள் இன்னையும் ஆத்து பிரிவில் அதிகாரமாக அமிவ அக்கினைப்.) This impure body of impure elements can be and will be converted into a pure body of pure elements. The impure elements of the impure body are merely the means of composition amalgamated with the causative and impure particles of primordial matter.
(Prakrithi). This will be converted into pure body of pure elements (திரு சுருள் முற்கால முலவர்களை கண்டுக்கொள்ளும்). This body is also called (Swaran deham) golden body (சுருள் முற்காலான) of immeasurable carats. The Swami perceives the descent of Divinity in him for this transformation in these lines:

VI : 82 : 48

He swears that by the observance of this Divine Path of Buddha Sanmargam (துத்து சுவாதானம்) the most impure body susceptible to the natural bonds and to putrefaction shall become an everlasting and imperishable body.

VI : 132 : 54

It is a well-known fact that the human body as any other body of a living organism, is made up of innumerable cells and that each cell includes depending upon the tissues which they constitute, the cytoplasm, the nucleus and the other substances. The protoplasm includes the nucleus, the vital part of the cell. It is composed of highly complicated substances such as the phosphoproteins and nucleoproteins. There are many minute substances in the form of amino acids, D. N. A., R. N. A., enzymes and catalysts for doing certain functions. These will ultimately be resolved into certain chemical elements such as Oxygen 65 parts, carbon 18 parts, hydrogen 10 parts, nitrogen 3 parts, calcium 2 parts, phosphorus 1·1 parts and others in small proportions. They are again
in the form of molecular particles. These particles form the fundamental basic substances of the human body—matter and life. The metabolic activity of the cell releases the required energy for the various physiological functions of the body. Modern science tells us that the same matter and energy synthesised in the same proportions fail to become a living cell. Probably the (prakrithi) particles of primordial matter, those which are responsible for bringing in the life of the cell, are lacking in the artificial assemblage of matter and energy. Now, supposing that these particles of the elements and those of the primordial matter which are causative for the synthesis of the human body are by a sudden and miraculous power metamorphosed into the so called perfected and pure particles, the transformation is quite possible. The power that is involved in this is the power which the aspirant has gradually attained by the descent of Divinity in him. I mean that the Supreme Grace of the Lord has manifested itself in him for this transformation. There is an oft-quoted verse among hundreds of similar others, which explains pointedly and clearly about the special body which the Swami desired and got by the Grace of the Lord Supreme.

He desired to be blessed with a body which should not be destroyed by the five great elements of Nature such as wind, earth, space, fire and water, the firmament headed by the sun, the god of death, the diseases, the murdering weapons, the planets, the evil deeds resorted to for killing, or by any other means and it was at once sanctioned to him. Having been endowed with this divine body, the Swami proclaims that his begging the Lord for such a body is not mean and entreats the whole world to go to the Lord Supreme.
This is the body which the Swami contemplated and achieved. Now let us consider the explanation offered by the Swami for this transformation. In a word it could be stated that it was the Grace of Love Supreme which alchemised him.

To translate these lines (in not so perfect a manner) the Swami says: "O God—the Eternal Love, just to bestow upon me the golden body, you, the Universal Love have merged with my heart. Allowing Yourself to be infused in me, O Supreme Love, You with the light of Grace have alchemised my body."

What is this light which converts this mortal body into a body of light? It is only the Light of Grace Supreme which can transform this human body into the purified body of light.

Here the Swami establishes the fundamental principle of his philosophy. He says that God Supreme granted him an elixir of wisdom to convert the mortal body into a body of light.
This is called the principle of Light (விளைநாள்) which alone can save this body from decay. There are two important aspects of this principle: One is universal reverence for life—PAROPAKARAM (பரோப்பகாரம்) and the other is devotional meditation—SATVICHARAM (சத்த்விசாரம்). The Swami repeatedly points out that if one is able to get at the more important first aspect of the principle of Light, Grace will be immanent in him easily.

All living things are the manifestations of God. He is present in the form of life in them. In other words the life in the animate is a fraction of the light of Grace Supreme.

God is present in all living things and they are all in God. Understanding this one should do good to all living beings. This will lead one to the discipline of the soul (சுத்தியாகத்து), where life of all creatures from the huge elephant down to a small fly is the temple of God. The Divine is the inner light or life in them. By developing love,
compassion and mercy for all these live creatures an universal spiritual communion can be obtained. In this privilege of universal love and universal spiritual communion (அருள் வளைப்பு) the Grace of the God Supreme will dawn in the form of the light of Grace (அருள் வாத்தல்). The saturation of this universal love and the manifestation of universal spiritual communion are, according to the Swami the real form of worship (மண்டபத் புனிதம்). Grace is the mercy of God. It is manifested in God. Compassion is the mercy of the soul which is found in the human beings. By developing the mercy of the soul in which God is present, the mercy of God can be realized. By extending the simile it may be inferred that from a spark of light a greater radiant light can be obtained.

The other aspect of the principle of light is the ardent devotion to God. Here again love of God should enhance and enlarge. The perpetual thinking of God and praying for his Grace, gradually enriches the aspirant with the sparks of Grace Supreme.

There is a delightful verse sung in ecstasy calling the fellow-beings to enter into immortality. This is one of the sweetest songs of the Swami to illustrate the concatenation of spiritual development.

VI : 21 : 90

VI : 110 : 1
One has to think and think incessantly, till he feels and feels, till he melts and melts, till love for God fills in him. As love fills and fills, the aspirant of the melting mood bursts into tears. As the tear glands pour out profusely the body becomes wet by the overflow. When this is uninterruptedly repeated and repeated, the heart throbs and the mouth sobs the praise of the God Supreme. This is the type of emotional spiritualism which is needed for the prayer at the moment. When this is achieved the Grace of God is sure to descend. Not only does the Light of Grace dawn on the aspirant but sets aside the inevitable death. In other words conquest of death is realized (as the mortal body will be converted into immortal body). Hence the Swami proclaims to all mankind that this is the most propitious moment to enter into the life Divine. He adds that he is neither exaggerating nor uttering falsehood and swears that this is true and cent per cent true.

The aspirant thinks of the greatness of God and the smallness of his being. He thinks of the transient nature of the world and worldly objects and of the truth of God and the Soul. He is aware of the bounteous Grace and its benevolent flow in the loving individual. The pangs of hunger, disease and poverty of the majority of mankind and fear of death harrow out his very life. He trembles at the forces of lust and the shackles which not only cover and conceal the greatness of the soul but impel him into the ocean of desires. The sufferings of the poor and the horror of the mighty touch his very nerves. Therefore, he thinks of God Supreme to redeem the miseries of life and in his prayers he finds solace and solution. Hence universal, compassion and spontaneous service to fellow-beings and intuitive love for God are the best
methods to imbibe the mercy of God who is nothing but love.

The secret satisfaction of serving God by serving the multitude of living organisms in which God is manifested and ardent prayers for the mercy of God lead the aspirant into universal spiritual communion. This practice of thinking of God always and incessantly and praying for His Grace assiduously and affectionately kindles a noothing warmth in the body of the aspirant. Without knowing this secret, sages and seers of lore underwent severe penance and meditated for hundreds of years just to gain this warmth (இயற்றி). This pure warmth (சிகாரையு) which is not yet measured by the clinical thermometer, gradually develops. Now when the universal spiritual communion and the sacred warmth grow more and more, the body as well as the soul of the aspirant are well nigh prepared to receive the Grace of God. In the melting mood and in the emotional feeling of love for God, the grace of God Supreme descends in the form of light.
Grace in Melting-mood

There are three different forms of descent of Divine light in the aspirant (dealt with in detail in the Chapter on Spiritual Experience).

VI : 109 : 1

The Divine rays of Grace penetrate into the eyes, the mind and the intellect of the lovable individual and ignite not only with his melting compassionate feeling which has reached the saturation point but with the tremendous warmth developed out of his love for God. As a result of this combination evidently chemical change does take place. The material body of impure atoms is transformed into a body of pure light atoms emitting a golden hue. This converted body is known as purified body or body of love. (படேகுத்து, நந்திப்பிள்ளை). Great savants of this philosophy like Sri Chidambarswami of Porayar and Sri Arunachalam of Nagapattinam at whose exalted feet, I learnt a little of this doctrine, hold that there is an intermediate stage before this transformation. They are of the opinion that there is a preparatory body known as a sanctified body (சுந்தரில்லை) before the attainment of the purified body (புனிதகுத்து). In support of this view there is a reference in the divine Song of Grace.

VI : 14 : 16
Notwithstanding this deviation the purified body is Imperishable. It has become immortal and it is a body of light (புராந்தை) having been converted by the light of Grace emitting a golden hue.

The properties of this pure and perfected body are depicted very clearly. As the name indicates this golden body of perfected elements appears to be of about 12 years of age. The feelings are with regard to the Divine and Divinity. No more are there the physiological activities of the body. There is no question of food, digestion, excretion, growth and ageing. The external symptom of this transformed human frame is that it appears gracefully beautiful without casting a shadow. This is an important aspect which we might explain in the light of the historical event in the life of the Swami.

In about 1867 some of the disciplined disciples of the Swami wished to photograph him. The best professional photographer Mr. Masilamony Mudaliar of Madras was requested on special invitation to photograph the Swami. According to the reference (புராந்தை) available, the body of the Swami could not be photographed. It is
also stated that the photographer tried again and again eight times with the best plates and obtained negatives which showed only the clothing of the Swami. Neither the face nor any part of his body which was exposed could be photographed. The fact that the clothing of the Swami was photographed explains that there was nothing wrong with the plates. Evidently light passed through the exposed part of his body without casting any shadow. Hence the body of the Swami could not be photographed. There are other evidences for this fact also. The Swami was completely clad in pure white cloth. He in one of the verses speaks out that he felt so much awkward to expose his body that he was constrained to cover it fully. The fact is that he did not wish any pomp and publicity about his transparent body lest he should be overcome by ego. There are several instances in which the Swami hushed up some miraculous events and pointedly requested his disciples who could not help knowing them, not to disclose those secrets and he never hesitated to say that it was the Will of the Lord Supreme.

The transformation of the material body of impure elements into the perfected body of perfect elements has several stages. They are categorically narrated by the Swami in the following lines:

 Tamil text
The changes that take place in the human body externally and internally illustrate the gradual conversion. They indicate the symptoms on the human body at every stage. There is no myth nor concoction. Everything is stated with scientific accuracy though it is a puzzle and a problem even to the highly advanced scientific mind of the present day. The Swami says that the skin—the dermis and the epidermis—has become extremely soft. All the nerves and the tendons have become gradually loosened. All the bones membranous and cartilaginous have become automatically pliable. All the muscles and the muscular tissues have become loosened. All the blood has become inter-
nally coagulated. The semen has become not only hardened but concentrated in a unit. The brain and all its parts the cerebrum, the cerebellum and the medulla oblongata have loosened as an opening blossom. Throughout the body an elixir oozes out and flows and fills up all the parts.

Externally the forehead perspires. The face becomes brilliant. There is a delicacy, soft and mild, sweet and harmonious in the tender and cool breathing. The internal beauty is evident outside. The hair splits. The tear glands are so profusely pouring in the eyes that it flows through the feet. The mouth gasps with a trembling note. The ears and their delicate parts are filled with melody. The entire body has become cool. The chest and the heart are throbbing. The palms are folded. The legs are staggering. The four different aspects of the mind have respectively attained a melting mood, have the sparkling filled, have harmoniously heartened and have then and there, the repurcussions put down. The heart swells with anxiety to see the whole world (of love). All the visible parts of the body are blooming with ecstasy. The life-bound ego which spurs out through the senses has vanished. All the blemishes that surround the heart and the mind have extinguished. The tender and soft, loving and affectionate, mercy and compassionate quietism stands out. All the world and the worldly affairs are hidden. The ardent desire for receiving the Supreme Grace is increasing and overflowing. Now the God Supreme in the form of Supreme love fills up the body fully enshrining divine life.

All these characteristics of the transforming body are exquisitely narrated. These are the personal
experiences of the Swami during the attainment of this
pure or perfect body.

Apart from his own experiences of the transforma-
tion the Swami has given a detailed account of the
properties and capacities of the divine individuals who
are blessed with this (Suddha deham) perfected body.
They will not be affected either directly or indirectly,
internally or externally by the five great elements. Hence
the Swami says that earth or stone in any form afflicted
against them will not strike on them. The coolness of water
will not affect them nor can they be subjected to immerse
in water. The heat of the fire both internally and externally
will not affect them. Not even a scar will be formed on
their body. Air in any form will not impinge on them.
Space will not have any effect on them. They may move
about in space without any base of support or even a
spatnick.

Similarly all their senses can perceive of the respec-
tive feelings without being barred by distance and obstruc-
tion. Hence their eyes can see anything of the universe
though generally they are not bent upon seeing things of
the world. They can hear any sound produced anywhere
in the universe. They can smell anything from being in
their own place and their body can feel anything of the
universe at will. Their limbs can give anything to
anybody irrespective of distance. They may walk
anywhere with out any regard for space. They may
speak to anybody at any place in the universe and
beyond. Their knoweldge is universal and omniscient.
All the bonds of nature such as space, time and the
like and even the natural order and regularity of the
universe will not bind them. As already pointed out,
food, sleep, and sex are no longer necessary for them. There would not be any perspiration, shadow, ageing or death for their body (—allahikāra canāsā). It is not necessary to point out repeatedly as the Swami does, that their body cannot be disturbed by the great elements, devils, weapons of any kind, animals including human and superhuman beings in any place at any time. With regard to their power, it is said that they are capable of any creation or destruction at will. They can bring the dead to life; they can change or convert the old into young. In short, their knowledge, their action and their experience and every thing about them will be Godly, They are all-powerful, eternal and omni-potent.

Pranava Deham or Body of Grace

The purified and perfected body may undergo a metamorphosis further into the body of Grace known as Pranavadahem (—allahikāra canāsā). This Divine body can be seen but cannot be felt. It has an appearance of a heavenly child of about 5 to 8 years of age. The capacities are inassessable. He can command all the Siddhis at will. The Swami says that he was blessed enough to accomplish this transmutation and evolve still further.


The Grace Supreme is fully manifested in this divine body. The godly aspirant enjoys the most celestial Bliss. He imbibes the real ambrosia in his body. The Swami says that God Supreme declared that he had reached the
transcendent state of the Grace Supreme and that he had gained the body of Grace. Further He blessed him to reign the divine kingdom of Grace Supreme.

Gnana Deham or Body of Bliss

The Swami was not satisfied with this sublime state of Gnanadecham (க்ணணாடேசாம்) though he was wedded to the Supreme Grace.

The next higher transformation is the greatest and the ultimate evolution of the human body ever contemplated. The Swami realized this transformation also. This is the highest transmutation into Godhead. It is known as merging with the body of Supreme Wisdom—Gnanadeham (கோயில் கிருஷ்ண-நர்புணம்க). It is the body of God Supreme.

This supremely high state is inconceivable. The body is omnipresent but is neither perceived nor felt nor even seen. It is all-powerful and all-graceful. God supreme
has actually exchanged His body for the body of the supremely Divine Aspirant namely, the Swami.

The God Supreme was gracious enough not only to merge in the divine and sublime body of the Swami at this plane but equated him with the most Supreme Grace and Godhead namely Suddhasivam (நுற்றஞாய நீ),

All these three transformations of the human body into Suddhadeham, Pranavadeham, and Gnanadeham have been respectively achieved, accomplished and realised by the Swami in this world.
4. The Spiritual Experiences

Abstract

The soul of the aspiring individual undergoes different stages of experiences. The waking, dreaming, sleeping and intuitional consciousness are gradually becoming more and more perfect. The lust and the shackles which fasten the soul are loosened and lost sight of in the higher stages of experience. At Parathuriyam—Supra—mental consciousness or perfection, self-realization is achieved. At the stage of Sivasakram the aspirant visualizes the Supreme Grace. He becomes eligible to enter Sanmargam. His body of love becomes converted into the body of Grace. He enjoys God Supreme now and then and sings His glory in ecstatic delight for eternal Bliss.
The Spiritual Experiences

For the proper understanding of UIRANUBAVAM (உறானுபாவம்) the achievement of the soul in the human body, one has to know the various stages of spiritual experiences. Human beings leading a mundane life, without even a thought of its transient nature, are said to be in the normal wakefulness JEEVASAKRAM (ஜீவசாக்ரம்). They are alert only for trivial things; they are cautious for the acquisition of wealth, gold or land, of women and wine and of name and fame by all means indiscriminate. There are two more stages in this kind of imperfect indulgence such as JEEVASORPANAM (ஜீவசோர்பாணம்) normal dreaming and JEEVA SUZHUTHI (ஜீவ சுழுத்தி) normal ignorance at sleep. I am afraid that most of the people of the present day world do not cross this border.

The domain of the spiritualist is SUDDHASAKRAM (சுட்டகசாக்ரம்) perfect wakefulness. He is conscious of the real and the unreal and the transitory nature of the world. The wordly things, be it the kingdom of the world at his feet, be it the most beautiful ‘Miss World’ at his beck and call or be it even the most precious diamond of the purest ray serene at his disposal, are nothing to him. He is really aware of the momentary nature of life and of the ever existing supreme deity. When this perfect wakefulness is saturated in him he is able to visualize the existence of the Lord Supreme. The next stage in the perfected line of ascent is SUDDHASORPANAM (சுட்டகசோர்பாணம்) perfect dream. The aspirant of this experience will be in his dreamland of God and Godly things. No longer has he an iota of sexual desire in his dream. He will be dreaming to see the lotus feet of the Lord and feeling an inseparable union with His feet in
his untiring search for him. Gradually he enters into the stage of SUDDHASUZHUTHI (சுத்துசு சுழுத்தி) perfect and conscious ignorance. At this stage the aspirant is not aware of anything except God. The Swami explains that at this stage the irresistible lust–love of gold–does not cling to his heart. The next stage is SUDDHATHURIAM (சுத்துதுரியம்) perfect experience of dawn of sparks. The lust and the veil which have been covering the soul hitherto for generations by the influence of the impure devil power, ASUDDHAMAYA (அசுத்துமாயா) are shed one after another and the soul is gradually cleansed by the sparks emanating from the Supreme Light of Grace. The soul is bound by the shackles of Purusha. However, the melting mood and the spontaneous impulse of love for God, overwhelm the aspirant.

The next stage of higher wakefulness, PARASAKRAM (பராசகராம) is supposed to pave the way for the sphere of heavenly experiences always in the ladder of ascent in the pursuit of the Divine. It has been clearly depicted by the Swami that the authors of the great Upanishads, the cultural heritage of India, have trodden this path. They convey the message that they have been successful in attaining this stage, the next stage of higher dream, PARASORPANAM (பராசோர்பாணம்), the next further stage of higher ignorance, PARASUZHUTHI (பராசுழுத்தி), the still higher consciousness and further higher stages.
It is also said that they, the Upanishads, were wonder-struck when they were not able to see Him who is manifested beyond these supra-mental stages.

Mandukya Upanishad analyses the various spiritual stages of experience of the soul. "They are waking, dreaming, sleeping and intuitional consciousness. The first condition is that of wakefulness where the self is conscious of the common world of external objects. It enjoys the gross things. Here the dependence on the body is predominant. The second condition is that of dreaming where the self enjoys subtle things and fashions for itself a new world of forms with the materials of its waking experience. The spirit is said to roam freely unfettered by the bonds of the body. The third is the condition of sound sleep where we have neither dreams nor desires. It is called SUZHUPTI. The soul is said to become temporarily one with BRAHMAM and enjoys bliss. In deep sleep we are lifted above all desires and freed from the vexations of the spirit. The oppositions are so to say lost in this pure objectless knowing subject condition. But there is the likelihood of its being confused with sheer unconsciousness. So the Mandukya Upanishad points out that the highest is not this dreamless sleep but another, a fourth state of the soul, a pure intuitional consciousness where there is no knowledge of objects internal or external. In deep sleep

* Indian Philosophy: Volume-II
the spirit dwells in a region far above the changeful life of sense in absolute union with BRAHMAM. The THURIYA condition brings out the positive aspect of the negative emphasised in the condition of deep sleep. This is not that which is conscious of the subjective nor that which is conscious of the objective, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is an all sentient mass, nor that which is all darkness. It is unseen, transcendent, inapprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, the sole essence of the consciousness of self, the completion of the world, the ever peaceful, all blissful, the one unit. This indeed is the Atman."

The mind and its four different aspects at the stage of PARASAKRAM (उत्साॅकार्म) supra-mental awareness are alert and conscious of only the Supreme God and His Grace. At this moment the aspirant does not know whether he is conscious of anything else other than his Divine pursuit. The next stage of PARASORPANAM (उत्सार्पोपान) supra-mental dream, places the aspirant in the dream of enjoying the Grace of the Lord. This feeling of ecstasy leads him to the next stage of PARASUZHUTI (उत्सेवुज्ञति) supramental unknowing where the majority of the shackles are removed by the Grace of the Lord.

This stage may either lead him to the next higher stage of PARATHURIYAM (उत्तर०ष्ट०ृत्यम) supra-mental perfection where he visualizes the sparks of the Divine Grace or as in certain cases may revert him back to PARASAKRAM (उत्साॅकालम) where he will be searching for something which he has tentatively lost. The experience
of Parathuriyam is by itself the tasting of God albeit it is not ultimate.

The entelechy of the soul at this stage depends not only upon the extent of penance, devotion, and incessant love for the Lord but also upon the level of compassion, sacrifice and scrupulous service to all the living organisms indiscriminately, human or non-human.

The soul is charged with Divine Grace and it is conscious of nothing but the glory of the Supreme Grace. God is so merciful as to remove the shackles of the aspirant in order to exhibit the real nature of His Sublime Grace. When the aspirant is able to visualize the inestimable magnitude of His Grace, he is naturally able to realise his smallness. The Swami explains that whenever he is able to perceive of, he is conscious of the Divine and whenever he is unable to perceive of, he becomes one with the Divine extricating the egoistic self.

Since the veil of the diabolic power which has so far concealed the virtual greatness of the soul, has begun to disintegrate, the soul is able to see for itself its own true colour and lustre. This is spoken of as self-realization (ஆதிகாரிகம்). Now the soul besides being immersed in an unprecedented ecstatic delight, realizes its own true nature. In the words of the Swami the soul is in the form of an atomic particle several million times brilliant as the Sun.
The next higher stage of SIVASAKRAM (சேவகாசம்) or GURUSAKRAM (குருசாசம்) and subsequent stages are governed by the Grace of the Lord Supreme. The possibility of enjoying these divine stages depends upon the extent of the descent of Grace in the soul. Although everything big or small, trivial or indispensable concerning the matter or mind, is by and due to the Supreme Grace of the Lord Almighty, it is more so at this stage.

VI : 1 : 977.

There are thousands of verses yearning for the Grace to pervade in him. The sanction is not so simple as it appears. It was perhaps miraculously easy for the Swami to be blessed with all these experiences. Many souls of this world have attained this stage and only a few could ascend further. Most of them were either overpowered by the extra-ordinary brilliance of the soul and mistook it for the brilliance of the Supreme Grace or were disappointed by their inability to proceed further. At this stage of SIVASAKRAM also known as GURUSAKRAM —the aspirant is able to perceive the Supreme Grace in the form of light. This is the secret of this philosophy. The descent of divinity in the individual is gradually profuse. There are three forms of Supreme Light which will beneficially act upon the human body of the purified soul for the infusion of Grace. The tremendous power of the Sun is offered to fill in through the eyes of the enabling aspirant to do all wonders at will. The Supreme Light of Grace dawns in the sanctified intellect of the aspirant empowering him to disseminate the soothing principles of Grace. The illumination of a higher
power called PARAI (பறை) is disbursed in the mind of the aspirant enriching him to gain supremacy in the domain of the Supreme Grace.

These three different kinds of rays supply the necessary energy for a divine photosynthesis in alchemizing the fundamental elements of the human frame in which the perfected soul is enshrined. The actual experiences of the soul as evidenced on the body have been elaborately dealt with under another heading. The soul is saturated with compassion and the body appears to be an incarnation of immeasurable love for the living—not to speak of human beings. This transcendent body of the aspirant is supposed to experience real divine life UIRANUBAVAM (விருப்பவ முயம்) and it is called SUDDHADEHAM (சுத்தகவி) purified body or golden body or body of love. It may be clearly understood that the experience of divine life in the purified body (சுத்தகவியே) is known as UIRANUBAVAM (விருப்பவ முயம்). This experience is realized in the highly elevated sphere of the soul at this esteemed stage of SIVASAKRAM, in the supernatural purified body. The achievements of the soul at this stage are many. The foremost is the transformation of the impure body, into a pure body. The experience of the soul in this body makes the aspirant love incarnate. In other words
the aspirant visualizes the universality of love in all fellow beings. He realizes the oneness of life in all living organisms; he is able to see a fraction of Divinity in all live creatures in the form of a spark of light, that is, life in them.

A little harm done to any living organism of the universe wounds him very much. He is pained to see even the withering of a plant for want of water. As by now, all his senses are capable of perceiving everything regardless of space and time he is worried all the more. Since he is realizing his own self, he becomes eligible to visualize his smallness and the greatness of the Lord Supreme. Unless one sees within himself his true nature, he cannot —nay—will not understand the reality and greatness of the omnipotent and omnipresent God. As he has by now conquered all the elements and their influences, his own mind, space, time and the like, he is above all the thatvas and sees the reality of his soul.

The more he realizes his smallness the more he sees the greatness of God in him as a result of which he is delighted. The aspirant is able to feel the inestimable love of God, the spontaneous flow of Grace for him, if only he prepares the ground for Him to descend. The love of the individual for God and the manifestation of God in all living things, is automatically reciprocated and sublimated as Supreme Grace and Mercy, as God Himself is absolute love.
In fact the Swami goes a step further to point out that it is only the love of God that has alchemised his body and brought him all bliss and eternal happiness. Love of God is not only the means for the realization of God but is an end in itself as God is love. Above all, at this stage of SIVASAKRAM, the aspirant is able to see with his own eyes the Lord Supreme in such a form for which he has become eligible to receive and bear. The brilliance of the Lord is so inexplicably intense and powerful that the aspirant should have made his body and senses so perfect as to receive Him. Unless there is such a divine perfection of the individual there cannot be the seeing or descent of God in him. The argument is very simple for those who wish to see God. Unless one has seen one's self one can never see God and unless one has become perfect in every thing one is ineligible even to bear the presence of God. What will happen to the sensual body and the vicious eye even before an incandescent arc lamp of several million watts power? To move in such a tremendous speed in a sputnick, man has to put on protective armour lest he should be blown to pieces. In the words of the Swami, the brightness of God Supreme is measured in terms of several million times and more the brilliance of the sun, the moon and the universal fire put together.

We are concerned with the experiences of the Swami at this level and he says that he was tempted to embrace the Supreme God and such a stage is SIVASAKRAM. He proclaims that this stage need not be confused with
PARASAKRAM. The external embrace is possible only at this stage. It is only here that the aspirant is enjoying Supreme Grace (ஆத்மாவை).

At this and subsequent higher stages we transcend and enter into ecstatic delight. These stages are beyond human perception as we are attempting to conceive the inconceivable, to realise the unrealisable and apprehend the inapprehensible. The aspirant is already endowed with such a purified mind and body that the Grace of the Lord Supreme is incessantly filling in his mortal frame. He, therefore, with infusing power and cosmic strength is able not only to visualize but pierce through his onward march to and into the Supreme God and Godhood.

Now I am afraid, that I am exceeding my limits and daring to tread on the Divine path which can by no means be imagined. The sacred book of the divine song of Grace, Tiruvarutpa and the very strong conviction that I
am led by the Will of the God Supreme, strengthen my nerves to proceed in this endeavour. The stages of spiritual experiences enlisted so far are of one kind. Still higher stages are heavenly. Here the mind fails to conceive and all the senses cease to function. Austerity and penance of the highest order are needed for the ascent of the soul not only to get at the descent of the Divine Grace but for its accumulation further and further in the gnostic pursuit.

At the next stage of SIVASORPANAM (சிவாசோபணம்) or GURUSORPANAM—Supreme dream—the aspirant dreams of the divine embrace if at all he poses to sleep.

The next is SIVASUZHUTHI (சிவசுழ்த்தி) supreme tranquillity where the soul is neither conscious of its own self nor ignorant of it. Here the Supreme Grace flows into the body of the aspirant more and more and the enlightened body prepares itself for the next higher sublime stage of SIVATHURIAM (சிவசுதுரியம்).
5. The Divine Experiences

Abstract

The plane of experiences becomes transcendent. The Swami discloses that his body has by then been transformed into Pranavadeham or body of Grace. The stages of experiences are divine. At the stage of SIVATHURIYAM he could visualize the God Supreme fully and merge with the Supreme-Grace-Light. He feels diffident to express his feelings of ecstatic delight of this and still higher stages. He has been benevolent enough to explain the splendour and glory of the extremely effulgent stages as SUDDHASIVASAKRAM and so on. These extraordinarily supreme stages have been explained for the first time only by the Swami. He has emphatically narrated the Supreme Bliss of his being in the kingdom of God Supreme.
The Divine Experience

The enjoyment of the Supreme Light is the experiences of this stage known as SIVATHURIAM (சிவத்துரியம்). This is also known as GURUTHURIAM (குருத்துரியம்). This effulgent stage is again very high. It is beyond the reach of most of the so called great saints and seers. The Swami himself points out that this stage was attained by a few great souls like Muthuthandavar (முதுத்தாண்டவர்), Thathuvarayar (தாதுவாராயர்) and the like. The irresistible bliss of this stage had engulfed the seers and they were perhaps, satisfied with the excessive happiness of this stage and even felt it to be the consummation of their goal. I am afraid that the Grace of the Lord Supreme was so sanctimonious that they could not evolve further.

But their consecration was exceedingly high and they were permitted to enjoy the ultimate and eternal happiness of all the six divine paths such as SUDDHA SIDDHANTHAM, SUDDHA VEDANTHAM, SUDDHA NANDANTHAM, SUDDHA KALANTHAM and SUDDHA BHODANTHAM. It is only at this level the divine aspirant gets SAMARASA SUDDHA SANMARGAM—the divine objective of the Swami. The realisation of this gnostic stage permits the aspirant into the threshold of SANMARGAM where alone the conquest of death is possible. The Swami has set forth the truth of experiencing the exuberent bliss at this stage of Sivathuriam as Sanmargam.
The benediction of this sacred stage and the preliminary achievements which consummated in the accomplishment of this divine experience have been exquisitely narrated in one of the verses by the Swami:

He says that he has tasted the bliss of all the sixteen stages contemplated by the Vedas by the permutation and combination of the four paths such as (1) Devotion ( சத்ய விசயம்), (2) Action( வித்யா), (3) Meditation ( மதாம்) and (4) Wisdom ( விவாத) one after another and attained higher and truer perfection with the aid of the Supreme Grace, besides the ultimate goal of all the six heavenly avenues such as Vedangham, Siddhantam and so on, leading to Divinity. He has further given an exposition of his admittance into Sanmargam by the bounteous and boundless descent of the auspicious Supreme Being in him which has resulted in his immortality.

He has specifically defined and repeatedly sworn that his path is SANMARGAM in which the aspirant becomes immortal.
In the opinion of the Swami, the Supreme Being visualized by all the Divine paths can easily be realised by getting into this route of his SANMARGAM, of course, only with the benevolent flow of the Supreme Grace.

The outwitting accomplishment of this supramental and transcendent stage, a stage which cannot be conceived of by human intellect and endeavour unless with a tinge of Divine Grace, a stage which is beyond the reach of many seekers due to either subjective or objective shortcomings, a stage which has to be attained by the devout aspirant but with the sublime sanction of the Supreme Grace, is the Divine embrace of the Lord Supreme.

This holy embrace is characterised by the Swami as external merger of the Divine (புரூஷவாதம்). The experience and enjoyment of this Divine embrace have been picturesquely depicted in the following lines:
At this juncture I shall explain very briefly the traditional cult of classical Tamil literature especially in expounding the love of God. Unless we understand this it is not possible to follow the Swami since he has sung his philosophy in the traditional manner of Tamil poets.
There is a specific treatise in the age old Tholkappiam which relates the science of Love which is called Agapporul—that which is enjoyed from within. Usually a youth of princely qualities chances to meet a young lady of equal attainments and they fall in love with each other at first sight. He is deeply desirous of meeting her as often as possible. Generally there are obstacles in their way, of several kinds. He painfully narrates his story to his chosen companion. Similarly she laments over her woeful parting from him and pants and throbs not only for her impulsive love for him but also for the unbearable torture he might undergo in not having her hand. She also secretly discloses her immense love for him to her bosom friend in an indirect manner. Permission of parents for the marriage is sought, failing which elopement may take place. The same code of conduct has been followed by several saints and seers in their pursuit of God. Generally they used to assume themselves to be the lady love and the Lord Supreme to be the consort or the lover. The Swami has followed this method to reveal his immense love of the God Supreme. His mind is often treated as the chosen companion. His soul, in the higher stages, is the maiden seeking relentlessly the Divine embrace of the Lord. At this very high stage the Swami speaks about the merging of his divine soul (the beloved) with the Divinity (the consort), in hundreds of verses. The most exalted bliss experienced in the embrace, the transcendent happiness enjoyed at the merging of the Divine husband, the unquenchable and unsatiated desire to enjoy Him again and again and incessantly—nay, perpetually—the unbearable pain and passion even at the momentary separation, all these are explicitly expressed by way of conversation with one’s bosom friend. At this external merger of the Divine, the Swami
could see superfine brilliance everywhere and feel exceedingly happy with a unique thrill which he had never experienced before. He also felt that he was with the Lord Supreme in the most sacred Sanmarga Society.

In this philosophy the achievement of each and every stage can be verified by external symptoms and therefore there is absolutely no myth nor imaginative inference. We have noted already that, before entering this stage, the body of the aspirant along with his soul has been fully charged with the Grace and has become superb and perfect gradually absorbing the Divinity in him. Now at this level, the Swami sings that the merging of the Lord has permanently left in his body, an aroma of camphor. This pervasive fragrance of camphor was emanating from his body throughout his later period. It was ever-lasting and never fading. In fact even the disciplined disciples of the Swami mistook that he was always carrying camphor with him. But the Swami speaks it out very beautifully in these sweet lines:

\begin{center}
\text{VI : 82 : 10}
\end{center}

The ultimate objective of this stage of Sivathuriam is the perfect realization of the Supreme Grace by the aspirant. It is known as the accomplishment of the Grace (ஞான முறை) to be achieved at about the level of PARANATHAM (சுமார்தை).

\begin{center}
\text{IV : 9 : 4}
\end{center}
It has been repeatedly explained that the Grace of the Lord Supreme personified as His sacred feet can only be perceived at the spiritual level of PARANATHAM in the form of exceedingly brilliant light.

It has to be inferred that beyond the spiritual level of PARANATHAM wherefrom the Supreme Grace is pervading the Universe the aspirant attains the stage of SIVATHURIAM in which the Divine Godly embrace is sanctioned. It is so because MEETHANAM – higher stage is considered to be SIVATHURIAM.

And it is said that the Supreme Grace, the sacred feet of God is to be realized in the form of brilliance that
emanates from this higher stage of MEETHANAM. It is also said that the feet of the Supreme Lord is to be perceived just above the level of PARANATHAM. Hence above the spiritual level of PARANATHAM, the divine experience of SIVATHURIUM is held possible.

At the happy realization of this resplendent stage of SIVATHURIAM (சிவதுருமம்) in which the aspirant has been transformed into a Godly being with concentrated Divine Grace, his body is known as PRANAVADEHAM (ப்ரான்வாடேஹம்) body of Grace – a stage in which the God Supreme has found a perfect place to dance or rather a body wherein the Supreme Grace has flowed. At this stage a complete union of the aspirant with the Supreme God in and out is fructified. The Swami feels diffident to express the tremendous feeling of ecstatic delight of this state.

But he has given expression to this stage that it is the Supreme bliss throughout and the Supreme Lord harmoniously integrates with the aspirant. Only the chosen gifted souls enter into this realm of this really eternal bliss. Many could not reach this stage and hence have become stagnant then and there at different levels of attainments. Many are lost in the Bliss. However, a few
being overpowered by the Bliss imbibing the Grace remain here itself. Fewer still enjoying the Bliss more and more and being charged with saturated Supreme Grace evolve further and further. The next higher stage of this Godhood is spoken of as Sudhhasivasakram—Absolute Supreme Consciousness (சுத்தி சோகச்வகவும்).

The most celestial subsequent stages are SUDDHA SIVA SORPANAM, SUDDHA SIVA SUZHUTHI, SUDDHA SIVA THURIAM and SUDDHA SIVA THURIADEETHAM — Absolutely Supreme Brilliance and Sweetness (சுத்தி சோகச்வக முன்தி, சுத்தி சோகச்வக முன்தி முன்தி). All these absolutely supreme stages are explained by the Swami for the first time as enjoyed by him. In all of them the merging of the Supreme Godhead is explicitly declared. The highest stage in this Sanmarga philosophy is the most sublime and most supreme where the Swami unites with the Supreme Godhead. The most superior Divinity merges in him fully and completely. The ecstatic bliss overwhelms him perpetually. The supreme delight has been depicted as the elixir of honey happily blended with supreme fragrance with supreme brightness of the Supreme auspicious Being.

There are several verses explaining the eternal union and communion of the Supreme God.

"The Lord Supreme who has established a fondling abode in me got Himself not only merged in me but got me merged in Him. He became one with me. He became Himself realized in me. The supremely sweet Lord dancing in the arena of pure knowledge and wisdom is in me in a state of blissful ambrosia".
91

VI : 124 : 1

VI : 109 : 16

VI : 86 : 5

VI : 73 : 9

VI : 82 : 75
It can be seen from these verses that the merging of the Swami with the Supreme Divinity in these higher and highest stages is subjective. The Swami proclaims in an ecstatic delight “Blaze with the drum that I have become one with the Supreme Blaze of Grace; Blaze that I have acquired the kingdom of Grace Supreme”.

Apart from the foregoing declarations of his accomplishment and realization of the Supreme Godhead, there are several references with regard to his achievements of the three eternal forms of SUDDHA DEHAM, PRANAVA DEHAM, and GNANADEHAM.

VI : 109 : 17

VI : 38 : 61

VI : 109 : 27
All these absolutely supreme stages of Godhead such as SUDDHA SIVA SAKRAM, SUDDHA SIVA SORPANAM, SUDDHA SIVA SUZHUTHI, SUDDHA SIVA THURIYAM and SUDDHA SIVA THURIYADEETHAM (அழுக்குமுறைத்து, அதுக்கும் வரையமாக, அதிரித கற்றதற்கு, அதிரித முதலிடம் அதிரித அணிவெத்தும்) have been pronounced for the first time and that too only by the Swami. He proclaims that he was endowed with that eternal Bliss of the Supreme Godhead which even those who are reputed to be the Divine and Blessed Sages of lore could not achieve. The Swami even questions whether there is anybody in any world who has been blessed with immortality in the manner in which he was sanctified and to the extent to which the Grace Supreme was saturated in him.

Here the Swami expatiates on his greatest achievement so much because it is very difficult even for great seers to conceive of this extremely great state of Godhead. He says very vividly that God Supreme alone knows what he accomplished in His Divine presence.

VI : 74 : 11

VI : 73 : 7

VI : 164 : 32
Further, the Swami points out very gracefully his actual state of affairs in the kingdom of God at the moment. To enable us to infer his personality and his final attainment in his pursuit of Divinity the Swami himself has clarified that the loving sages ultimately found the Swami who sought to realise God Supreme, to be the same as the Supreme Auspicious Being, ARUTPERUN-JOTHI (அறுபத்தற்செண்).

VI : 85 : 9
6. Space and Light

Abstract

Sanmarga Philosophy may be said to be the path of Light. The soul is veiled by several kinds of lust and shackles. They have to be removed and conquered one after another. Then the brilliant light of the soul will be realized. To explain the greatness and the brilliance of the human soul and to show how God condescended in his own soul, the Swami constructed the temple of wisdom.

The Swami has very vividly explained the structural beauty of the universe. He has pointed out the dovetailed nature of the spaces of the universe. The idea is to visualize the similar spaces and light in the human body in the course of realizing the God Supreme. The nature and definition of the Supreme God as per the finding of the Swami are narrated here. He is blossoming in the form of formless Supreme Light in all embracing and supremely effulgent space at the most auspicious supreme plane.
Space and Light

The philosophy of Saint Ramalingaswami can safely be said to be that of achieving the Light of Grace. He has pointed out that it is a progressive evolution of the speck of light manifested in the human-being into the greatest light—the Supreme Grace Light (කාලාමාරුෂාන්‍ය යුගය). The analogy of the Swami is that of developing the greatest fire from the smallest spark of a flame. In expounding this theory he has explained his own experiences, how he was picked up by God, how he was tried, how he stood the test, how the Light of Grace was infused in him and finally how he became blazed with the Supreme Grace Light. The contention of the Swami is that the spiritual light of the human beings should be gradually developed into the most effulgent light and ultimately merged with the Supreme Grace Light. The lust and the shackles of various kinds (Devil Power) not only have been preventing but have been concealing the real brilliance and the natural power of the spiritual light of the human beings. To understand that the human soul is several million times radiant as the sun and that it has been veiled for generations together, is by itself an enlightenment in this theory of light (කාලාමාරුෂාන්‍ය). This realization is achieved by constant thinking, “What we are, and what we are about”. Sincere devotion to God, persistent austerity, enduring penance, real love and affection for all the fellow beings and a kind and compassionate attitude to all live creatures, will certainly demand the flow of God’s Grace in the human beings. By this descent of Divinity, the curtains veiling the greatness and power of the spiritual light in the human individual gradually begin to fall. With the aid of this
universal compassion and ardent meditation, the aspirant is able to visualize the beatific brilliance of his soul.

Out of absolute mercy and sheer love for the fellow beings, the Swami wished to construct the great Temple of Wisdom (தவளு) at Vadalur. It is only an external symbolic representation of what the Swami visualized within himself.

The Swami has not followed any religious appellation or cult in the construction of this gnostic auditorium. The entire superstructure was sketched out by the Swami himself. He desired that the construction should be completed in six months. His disciples undertook the task and meticulously carried it out. On the 25th January 1872 when the star, Poosam (புசம்) was in its ascendancy, the opening ceremony was held. The curtains in the hall were unveiled one by one and the sublime light of Grace glowing therein was witnessed by several million devotees.

The date and time synchronise with those of the transmutation and disappearance of the Swami later. Every year on this day the great festival is celebrated with all grandeur and several millions of people throng to worship the glow of Light when the raising of the curtains followed by the incense of the camphor flame is ceremoniously lifted. The thundering noise of the devotees produced by the pronouncement of the sacred words, "Supreme Grace Light, Supreme Universal Compassion" (நிற்கினாளும் பூமுகம்) fills the air with a sensational thrill. The greatness of this temple hall wherein the perpetual cosmic dance of the Lord Supreme is indicated by the light, has been extolled in a few verses.
While describing the various curtains, the Swami points out that they have been concealing certain divine spaces in the Universe.

This is not a temple similar to those that abound in the Tamil country. It signifies the real nature of the human soul and its relative position in God. There is no sectarianism of any kind; nor has any code of religious fanaticism crept in. This is an external symbol of what a perfected soul of a human individual actually realizes within.

There is a vast space at Vadalur sanctified with an air of Grace. An iron chain runs around this majestic octagonal hall. Three pathways surround the hall that is facing south. There are three main entrances apart from two on the sides which lead into a large hall. Here there are five steps leading to the door of the temple hall. There are seven curtains which conceal the light within. The first curtain is nothing but the veil which surrounds the individual. This is not only supposed to prevent him from having the inner awakening but it drives him into the materialistic worldly affairs. When this is removed by the opening of the door, there is found a blue curtain representing the veil that hides the very life itself. When this is also removed a green curtain is seen. This is made up of two parts, the inner golden green and the outer darkish green. All these three curtains are so strong that they are directing the human beings into the worldly affairs. The next inner curtain is red which hides “the space of miracles”. The curtain behind this is of the golden hue. This conceals the space of reality. There is another inner white curtain hiding the space of the Lord Supreme. The innermost multi-coloured curtain is preventing the experience of the desired enjoyment.
The inner four when lifted will lead one to divine experiences.

Apart from these, there are also other curtains preventing the stages of spiritual experiences.

When all these curtains are unveiled there is found a thick glass slab of about 5 feet in height inside which there is a bright lamp. The light illustrates the human soul in its real and natural lustre. The glass slab indicates the purity of the soul. It is said that the Swami was keeping the glass slab and the lamp in his prayer room at his residence for about 48 days prior to their installation. That is the light of the
The vast outer space of the universe known as Paguthi Van Veli (பாகுதி வந்தி விலை) encircles the space of the great elements known as Booda Veli (புத்தா விலை). The former is in turn inclosed by Uyir Veli (யுறை விலை) the space of life, which is again and again inclosed by different spheres or spaces such as Kalai Veli (கறை விலை), Suddha Alar Veli (சுத்தா அளர் விலை), Para Veli (பரா விலை), Parambara Veli (பரம்பரா விலை), Parabara Veli (பரப்பரா விலை), Peru Veli (பூர்வ விலை), Perum Suga Veli (பேரும்சுகா விலை). The last one Space of Bliss is also known as Siva Veli (சிவா விலை). Each one of them is radiant with brilliant light named after the different regions of the space. For example the outer space (பாகுதி விலை) of our universe is lighted by the sun, moon and the stars. Similarly the last and the outer-most Siva Veli is gracefully effulgent by the Supreme Light. Just as all these spaces are found in the universe they are also to be realised within.

According to the Sanmarga Philosophy there are nine regions in the human body, which are supposed to be the domains of nine different divine powers. The Grace of the God Supreme is manifested in them in ascending series namely,

1. the domain of Bhraman, the abdomen
2. the domain of Vishnu, the navel
3. the domain of Rudhran, the heart
4. the domain of Mahesan, the neck
5. the domain of Sadasivan, the pharynx
6. the domain of Vindu, the ethmoid air sinus
7. the domain of Nadam, the forehead
8. the domain of Paravindu, the forehead
9. the domain of Paranatham, the frontal air sinus
நாள்காலி விளக்கம் சிற்றூச்சாக அண்மலைகள்
அயுர்வேகம் அமைக்கு உட்பட்டதுங்கள்
- VI:
Median longitudinal section of the human skull
1. Ethmoid air sinus       2. Frontal air sinus
The soul becomes concentrated off and on in these regions according to the spiritual development of the individual. Higher experiences of this philosophy are said to be realized from the fourth region onwards. The sixth is severally known by different philosophic doctrines as Laladam, Akgnapeedam, Mahameru, Chitsabai and so on. It is situated in between the eye-brows on the forehead. Anatomically in a vertical section of the human skull passing through the centre of the nasal bone there is an elongated triangular socket at the base of the frontal bone where it is articulated with the nasal bone. This is known as ethmoid air sinus. Perhaps this represents the divine Chitsabai and Vindu stage of Sanmargam. A little above this socket there is a similar but more vertically elongated socket in the frontal bone known as the frontal air sinus. This may perhaps represent the PonSabai (போன்சபை) and the divine Paranatham stage. It is said that the great saints visualized the most brilliant spark of the Supreme Light at this domain of Vindu and Paranatham. The mortal body of those who have seen this effulgent light will never perish.

- போன்சபை
- போன்சபை

VI : 82 : 12

II : 88 : 10

VI : 168 : 2
7. God in Sanmarga Philosophy

Abstract

According to the Sanmarga Philosophy only one God, the God Supreme is manifest in all things of the universe. He is present in three forms such as a formless Being, as a form without form and as a form of Light. The last state of His form has been visualized as the Supreme Grace Light (அப்பலக்கோட்டை) which is also known as the most auspicious supreme Godhead Suddhasivam (சுத்தசியம்). He is visualized by means of spiritual speculations though He pervades still further and beyond them. Such a God has not only been manifested fully and completely in the Swami but has granted the beatific splendour of His kingdom. The Swami therefore entreats the whole world to pray to the one God for eternal Bliss.
God In Sanmarga Philosophy

Sanmarga philosophy expatiates on the glory of the Supreme God—head—Suddasivam. It conceives of the most superior God as Arutperumjothi (அருட்பூர்ம்பூர்தியா) the supreme Grace Light. God is in the form of the most perfected Absolute knowledge dancing eternally and perpetually the most Supreme Bliss of Action—for the benefit of the universe in the divine manifestation of Nature (அன்னா மன்றுறைமுறை).

These words of the Swami depict his true realisation of God and define His form, function and place. It looks as though it is a ready-made answer for the usual questionnaire of the commoners. God is the Absolute Reality of the highest wisdom, pervading the sublime bliss of His cosmic dance in the perfected arena of divine souls. It is a supremely great being of absolute truth of Nature; it is a supremely great state of absolute grace of Nature; it is a supremely great bliss of absolute happiness of Nature.

In all particles of matter, in all senses, for all doings, in all fruits of actions, in all experiences and in everything else, He is there in all respects both internally and externally, both intensely and superficially but not bound by any of these. There is no bit of matter or energy in which He is not manifested nor is there any particle which alone represents Him solely. He is not an object, though all objects are for Him and in Him. He is not a thought but all thoughts are for Him. He is not a thing normally
seen but is the principle of all seeing. He is in all living things and in Him all the living are found. Realizing this principle one should do good to all.

VI : 1 : 973–974.

He possesses nothing but all things possess Him. He is not anything but He is all in all in every thing. Such a unique and only God is resplendent in the universal arena of Nature.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

VI : 3 : 13

In this philosophy the Swami has perceived of a cult of Light. From the meek and insignificant creatures to the highly evolved human beings and super-human beings, all living things are simply manifestations of the light of God. The Light of God supreme is present in every thing and more so in the human beings. The human being is embellished with a higher sixth sense with which the fraction of light in him should be developed more and more for the complete realization of the God Supreme. Supreme Grace Light is referred to as (Suddhasivam— சுத்தா சிவம்) the perfect auspicious Being. This is the most sublime and transcendent plane of Suddha siva thuriya- adecetham (சுத்தா சோதிதர்த்தேசம்) where alone the divine souls can merge with the Supreme God. The Swami has explained how he evolved into this supremely beatific plane.

VI : 83 : 96.
There is only one God in the philosophy of the Swami. That is the most Supreme Being and referred to as the great Godhead. The Swami gently refutes the idea of plurality of Gods by questioning whether there can be two or three lives in the body of a living organism. He proclaims that there exists only one God supreme. He may be in three different states. They are a form, a formless and a form without form. (The last mentioned is the form of the container of the thing contained. To be more precise, water has no form but the form of the water in a cup or a jar is the form of the cup or the jar.) When this is so, there is no need to quarrel whether there are two, three or five gods.

The three different states of Godhood are generally referred to by the Swami and all of them are pervaded by the Supreme Grace and are visualized in the most auspicious and sublime plane of superfine space.
This space is known as that of Siva, the most auspicious Being. (அஹ்மத்து) There are many explanations about this space that it is the place where universal Grace Light is effulgent and that it is the unique and the most superior plane where the supreme auspicious Being is ubiquitous.

VI : 1 : 27–28

He can be realized only by that divine experience stretching beyond even the supra-mental consciousness.

VI : 1 : 949–950

The Swami has spared no pains in narrating the greatness of the Lord Supreme and has tried his best to describe Him as clearly, cogently and exquisitely as possible. He has left us an excellent stanza of maximum number of syllables, perhaps the only one of its kind in the whole of Tamil Literature in which the first one-fourth of the verse is composed of Sanskrit out and out. That alone consists of 32 lines of 192 syllables. The entire verse is an invocation praising the sublime features of the feet of Lord Supreme. The first quarter of the verse is fully dedicated to the unique description of the supreme auspicious Being. The grandeur of the divine aspects of the supreme God has been majestically brought out in a thrilling strain. The melodious harmony of the verse, the choice
words pregnant with meaning and the simplicity of its narration, bind now and then the prankish and peevish mind just at least for a moment.

Apart from this verse, the Swami has been gracious enough to pass on to posterity another wonderful verse in Agaval metre. This is also unique and unsurpassed in Tamil Literature, running to 1596 lines, known as Arutperumjothi Agaval (அறுபூர்மூசோதி ஆகவல்) — verse of the Supreme Grace Light. The Swami has genuinely attempted to define Supreme-Grace-Light since he has at his wits end equated Supreme Grace Light with Supreme Grace Light only. It is the real treasure house where many of the subtle points, abstract ideas and abstruse thoughts
have been skilfully explained. It may safely be said that it is the perfect essence, the all-told gist and the pure quintessence of his song of Grace. God is manifested in, 'he', 'she', 'it', and is apart from all these three. It has to be pointed out that there is no plurality of Gods in this philosophy. In fact he has graded the various powers that are personified as different deities endowed with certain divine powers. They are known as the Heads of different stages (முதல் முதன்மைகள்). To understand these powers and to distinguish them from one another some symbolic names have been assigned in religious literature. He has made it clear that the God Supreme is Supreme-Grace-Light (உயிரியற்பைத்தோற்றம்). In this philosophy Arutjothi (அறுஜோதி), Arulam Perumjothi (அறு பூரம் பூர்வஜோதி) and Arum Perumjothi (அறும் பூர்வம் பூர்வஜோதி), all indicate only the Supreme Grace of the Supreme God and not the Supreme-Grace-Light. He calls him as the Supreme Father who has equated him on a par with the Supreme Grace, the divine embodiment of His power (Sakti) and the Supreme God himself.

Likewise he has called Him by several names such as even Buddha, Narayana, Sudda Sivam and so on. The Swami enumerates many different names as befitting the name of God and establishes the cosmopolitan outlook of his philosophy. He explains that names of all the individuals of the universe are also His name as He is manifest in all.

The Swami points out that the God Supreme who is realized beyond all human efforts and endeavour is not
so easy to visualize. He is perceived in gross things not in any specific object.

He cannot be subjected to any unit of measurement unless scrupulously comprehended by spiritual means.

The Saint has not spared even the intricate means to unfathom His reality. He exquisitely narrates the most subtle and abstract truth of his finding. Though apparently the God Supreme appears to have been bound by his skilful and spontaneous speculation, He is not at all encountered even to the smallest extent. He is virtually visualized by means of his spiritual specifications and pervades still further and beyond them.

The sage has been so kind as to unfold the real nature of the Supreme God. He is blossoming in the form of formless but all embracing and supremely effulgent space at the most auspicious supreme place.
Such a God, the Supreme Grace Light has not only manifested fully and completely in our Swami but has granted him the beatific splendour of His Kingdom.
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