

AFTER DEATH...?



P. Sangarapillai

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Published by
Dr. S. MANOHARAN
219, S. FREDERICKS LANE,
ANNAMALAI COLLEGE,
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CONTENTS

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Publisher:

Dr. S. MANOHARAN

840, S. WILD FLOWER LANE,

ANAHEIM - C.A. 92808

U.S.A.

First Edition: August, 2006

©

- Title** : **AFTER DEATH...?**
- Subject** : Philosophical Study on "After Death...?"
- Author** : P. Sangarapillai
- No. of Pages** : 190
- Size** : 14 x 22 cm
- Type** : 11 Point
- Paper** : 18.6 Kg. N.S. Printing
- Cover** : Art Board
- Price** : Rs INR 90.00 - US\$ 10
- Copies Available in India** : Kumaran Publishers
3 (12) Meigai Vinayagar Street,
(Via) Kumaran Colony 7th Street.
Vadapalani, Chennai - 600 026.
India.
- Typeset** : SIVAM's. Ph. 9444232005.
- Cover** : Bible Painting 'On Death' by Gustave
Dore (1832 - 1883), World Famous
French Painter, Sculptor and Illustrator
- Designed by** : Trosky Maruthy

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are happy to place on record our sincere thanks to Lion M. Srinivasan who volunteered to provide with a Tamil version of My Father's book titled 'Maranathukku Pin...!' We also thank Mr. E. Gopal, Journalist, for his Editing, Proof Correction and shaping up the book.

Publisher

Other English Publications of the Author

- **We Tamils**
- **Saiva Siddhanta**

INTRODUCTION

"Is there life after death?"

"Who am I?"

Since long, the inquisitive people have been trying to find answers to these questions.

Whatever we see and enjoy are impermanent. They are not going to last for ever. The appearances and changes are by themselves perishables.

People are eager to know whether there is anything more permanent existing beyond these things. From time to time, sages, mystics and seers have tried to answer these questions.

Common people can never understand the answers given by the seers. Most of the answers appear contradictory and against the common sense.

There are many religions practised in the world. These religions also have taken up the same questions and tried to answer.

And those answers given by the religions also appear to be mutually contradictory. It is no doubt the answers are quite so important. That is because, our life and prosperity, worth and greatness, outlook and ideals, thought and action, culture and civilisation, righteousness and unlawfulness – all these – are dependant upon the nature of the answers we get.

Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, was wandering like a wagabond in a park.

The park keeper confronted him: "Who are you, Sir?"

"I am also trying to understand the same point, my dear keeper," answered Schopenhauer.

There are stories about Indian sages and seers alike.

Reverend Francis asks the same questions like "Who am I?" or "Who are you?"

"Know thyself" is one of those famous sayings in the engravings found in Delphi's temple.

"Who are you? What is yours? Wherefrom did you come? Think, O my dear brother," says Sankaracharya.

The theistic religion affirms the existence of God, and salvation is nothing but realisation of God. Realisation of one's own self is the first step towards realisation of God.

"There are some who affirm that there is life after death. Some others say that there is no such life. What is the real truth?" The answer that Nachiketas sought about this from Yama was after all as the third boon that was due.

Lord Yama even then refused to answer the question saying that was the very thing which was denied even to the Devas. He wanted Nachiketas to seek a different boon, but the latter refused to budge and insisted on an answer for the question he had put earlier. It was then that Yama gave him the answer in secret tones.

"Not even one among the millions who were born in this world, when they became dead, come back to us and explained how their experience after death was like. Therefore, we can understand the truth of anything of afterlife only after death", said Omar Khayyam. Is there any shade of truth in what he says?

Many believe that arguments and logical deductions can help us understand the truth. We all appreciate argumentative wisdom and sense of logic. The intellectual sophistry carried enormous weight right from the days of the Greeks. Yet these arguments and philosophy have all been found to be polarised. Things that are found to be quite too inadequate from the point of view of understanding the real truth are:-

- a. Those who argue, take certain basic premises to be infallible and unshakable axioms to suit to their conclusion. They do not really have any justification to do that. They add further on to every step comfortable points only for building up their arguments.
- b. What is seen is not anything that is totally a function of what is seen but also a function of the seer. Similarly the conclusions drawn by anybody are a function of the arguer's prejudices and pre-conceived notions. It is not that difficult to understand new hypotheses. But it is difficult to clear the mind of the old prejudices and ideas.
- c. Whatever you hear from anybody, it is wise to see the real truth behind it and not be guided by the superficiality.

You do not find this wisdom in any of the argumentative thoughts. They come again and again to the same ideas and conclusions starting from the basic premise of one's own pre-conceived notions. Arguments are most often propagandas. One could argue for instance, that dictatorship is nothing but a form of democracy; capitalism is nothing but a form of socialism; exploitation, corruption and injustice as nothing but a form of dharma; racial prejudices as maithriam. But there is none in this world either in the past or now

who could see the truth as a result of arguments. Nor could you find one who could prove so.

- d. The arguers give their own meanings to the words they use. For instance, in the Indian scene, truth, maya, suunya, Adwaitam are all used in different contexts and meanings.
- e. All people perhaps without exception, have the basic expression of ego and arrogance, at least to a small extent. They want the entire right to be given to the ultimate truth. This "I" factor is the greatest impediment to understand the truth. Not to speak of the political economic arena where this ego is reigning high.

One could find this element of ego even in the religious arena. "Only my religion is the truest. It is my God who is the supreme and the truest one," say many 'T's.

- f. Hypotheses and principles are the stumbling blocks for understanding the truth. The more we dissect for understanding, the more we seem to deviate from the truth. What we seem to comprehend within a set boundary and grammar by contemplation and understanding, is called the common sense. The highest of our senses, it is, which is able to comprehend this supreme fact, one cannot just ignore our common sense and general knowledge. If one tries to ignore, the common man cannot find a way out in the mundane world. One should think deeply and dispassionately about every principle, policy and philosophy. Simple book knowledge and common sense are not sufficient to understand the perfect truth or the complete truth. One should have wisdom much

superior to these and an intuition much superior to the above.

The questions of "Who am I? Is there life after death?" have been duly dealt with by me according to Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, in my earlier book entitled "Saiva Siddhanta" and answers are given.

For the same questions, I have researched herewith in this book answers given by Materialism, Buddhism, Vedantham, the Upanishads, Hebrew religion, Christian faith, the Spiritualists, the ancient Egyptians, Socrates and Plato including the modern western philosophers.

By dispassionate thinking, try to unravel the truth shedding the last of the egoistic impulses in you.

California, U.S.A.

P. Sangarapillai

**"The Kind of Death and Experience
are determined by individual natures.
Death is not as miserable as birth
throes. But people are unnecessarily
scared of death. It is this fear which is
at the root of many complaints.
Scientists and medical fraternity do
research on births. They have
discovered new methods of easing the
system during births. But they do not
do any research on deaths."**

1. MATERIALISM

Materialism has been practised since time immemorial in our country too. It is part of the Indian ethos. Seethalai Chaththanaar (the author of "Manimekalai" one of Tamil epics) refers to materialism as one of the six religions. Legend has it that the first treatise on Materialism was written by Brahaspathi who was Indira's priest. There were many branches to this philosophy of Materialism. But they were all considered to be anti-religious in approach. The argument of the materialists is that religion was formulated as an imaginative formula by Man to keep himself in mental peace.

People of ancient times had no knowledge of science. They were struck by awe as they could not explain most of the natural phenomena. Even these phenomena drove them to fear. They looked upon them as mysteries and Godly acts. And it was a good period for the temple priests to perpetuate these into superstitions. They controlled the people through superstitions and fears. They exploited the common people. In fact some of the 'Siddhars' were advocates of materialism.

Gods with knowledge there's none;

God is ignorance level of every community.

*Spiritual debate is a dead corpse, you see – other
Agamas are cancerous wounds!*

*Soul is imagination of falsehood - Theism
is selfish sale!*

*Vedas are spoken speech - Inner
Upanishads are breath of fear*

*Puranas are mountains of lies
Which says no element's above five*

*There is no other world, - Satellites
are but no other world.*

*None of hell or paradise - people
when uncultured these vexations introduced*

Yet the principles of materialism as expounded during those times were not very much convincing, clear, deep and expansive as of our times now. Whatever these principles were, they answer two of our questions rather very clearly. I give below in brief the essence of our materialistic principles through the verses of Sivagnana Siddhiyar.

*The only measure of all things is by perception;
This perception when limited to mind, divides itself
into six kinds. Inference and Agama are not correct
methods of proof. The things proved by perception
are the (four) elements and their inherent natures
such as hardness, coldness, heat and diffusiveness.
Just as you get various shaped utensils from
clods of clay, so also by the combination
of these elements all forms are produced;
Like the bubbles formed in water,
Buddhi, other antahkarams and senses and sensations
arise also from the combination of these elements.*

Just as you use mud or earth to make earthen vessels, all things in this world are made up of the five 'bhoothas' or elements. Depending upon the ratios of the various mixes, different things

are made in different sizes, shapes and quality. These shapes and qualities of things just appear and vanish. They come up like water bubbles only to explode very soon. Things attract each other. The combination of the five major elements is by chance. You do not need any external agency to bring about any such combination.

*If one of the elements is separated from the rest,
the senses, sensations, intellect, all die.*

So do all movable and immovable objects (perish).

*When the effects as form, quality etc. vanish,
they are resolved into their cause, the four elements.*

And such knowledge constitutes the highest wisdom.

Air is one such element. When it evaporates, life becomes extinct. Senses die. Intelligence and character die away. When the combination becomes a negation, the constituents die away to reform into the original elements. One becomes wise by understanding all these.

Against this there are those who postulate

The separate existence of Karma,

Soul and God. How can they be equated?

They are like the son born of

A confirmed sterile women, riding

On the horns of a hare and plucking

The flower of the sky, without fail!

When the five elements combine, they attain the character of life. It is ignorance to call it Aatman or Life. Only the five elements are the truest things. God, Aatman or Karma are just pigment of imagination. But the religionists have their own axes to grind by making the common man believe in such things.

If you assert the Karma effected in previous birth

Follows one to his present life, how is this possible,

*When we all know the Karma dies with the death of body.
Oh, my good sir, if you say that this Karma lives
In sukshma (subtle) form, then it is like saying
Flame can burn apart from the wick of the lamp.*

Karma done in our earlier births, they say, will cause repercussions in this birth. Whatever you do in any birth, after all, must leave its last prints on your body and must die with your body. How can they continue to affect you in your next birth? If it were to affect you in a subtle way, how could you expect a lamp to remain lighted without the wick burning?

*If you assert there is a soul independent
of the body, let it not be a false assertion.
Such a soul must be perceived
by one of the six modes of perception.
The assertion against the proof furnished
by perception is like statements about the length
of the hare's horn in this world!*

Betelnuts with betel leaves when chewed, bring about the colour of red hitherto unseen on your tongue and lips. Similarly the combination of the five elements brings about the sense of life. This is all that is there to it and no such thing as 'Aatma' which has no existence. If there were one by that name, it should be visible. It is just a pigment of imagination to say that 'Aatma' exists. (This verse answers the proverbial question, "Who am I?" The materialistic philosophy, in its evolved form as of today, says that consciousness is just a characteristic of a fully evolved life.)

*If you say that God is Arupi (formless),
Then He is nonintelligent as the sky.
If He is a Rupi (with form) then
He is one with the objects of the world.*

*If you say He is Rupa Rupi (formless form)
Then tell me can you suspend
A stone in the sky?*

If God were formless, he must be an entity without intelligence just as sky. If he were to have any form, then he must be one of those five elements. Both a formless being and one with form would never combine. (There is no such entity as God. This is again a piece of imagination intelligently concocted by the religionists.)

*Oh, why should these people follow these
Various delusive paths, and fall into error and sorrow,
When their own Veda assert that the elements
Evolve into food and from food arises body
And from the latter the mind and the rest
And resolve with each other in the same order?*

Food materials are produced from land. The growth of human body has its development from the food. And from the body grows the intelligence which in turn gives birth to mind. This is as per the Vedas themselves.

*Oh, these fools give up the pleasures
on hand in this world and hanker after
heavenly pleasures and drown themselves in sorrow.
They are like those, feeling thirsty,
leave the water in their presence and fly after
a beautiful mirage only to die of greater thirst.*

When this is the status of knowledge, why should people confuse themselves with strange and other notions? They have water alright in their hands to drink, yet move around begging for it.

*Why do you get weary in pursuit of Moksha?
Show me one, who had pointed out the way,*

*or had seen it, or had heard of it?
Without transgressing the laws of the king,
earn money and seek pleasure as well as you can.*

It is further strange that people have been made to believe that many happier and pleasanter things await them in unseen heavens and they leave aside the plenty of opportunities and things that could be enjoyed on earth. They spend their lives in meaningless sorrows. What a stupendous amount of ignorance it is? It is just like begging for water while you have plenty to drink, with yourself.

People have been brainwashed into thinking that there is something called heaven where everything is pure joy and that is what awaits them on their death. There is none who has seen this superior abode. There has been none again who showed unto this world or people what and where this heaven is. This is a wasteful dream. One should after all be a good citizen, conducting himself to the tenets of the Government and earn as much as he can. With the wealth that he could earn, he could maximise his happiness.

(Materialistic) philosophical thoughts of the west

Such outlooks are rampant in the west too. They are there like ours since time immemorial. It is wrong to think that such ideas were born only after scientific developments took place. Quite a few of the ancient Greek thinkers were Materialists only. Democritus, Epicures, Heraclitus, Aristotle, Lecretius are a few who deserve special mention.

Copernicus, Francis Bacon and Spinoza are a few who were popular in the medieval times. After the intellectual renaissance and industrial revolution, the materialistic philosophy gained greater ground during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. A special mention must be made of the following thinkers.

The basic theories on Materialism did not suffer any serious change though apparently the scientific development obtaining in the world caused some changes from time to time. The materialistic philosophy of the 18th and 19th centuries was called the Mechanistic Materialism. They equated man to a machine during these days. Though Newton's laws on motion formed the basis for this, Newton himself did not subscribe to Materialism. During the same time, Darwin's theory on evolution was propounded. It is not my intention to go into the old materialistic philosophy. As a piece of example, let me dwell on Marxian Dialectical Materialism here.

Marx's dialectical materialism was born out of the combination of Hegel's dialectics and Feuerbach's materialism. They were the integral parts of Marxism. Whatever applied to materialism was connected to economy, and society was the creative introduction by Marxism. It is unnecessary to explain Hegel's dialectics here. We shall see only about Marxian dialectical materialism briefly here.

There are infinite varieties and things around us in the world. Right from the atoms upto giant molecule combinations starting from the uni-cellular amoeba are also part of this very big list. There are many nearer to us and equally many far away from us. We are able to see many of them through our own eyes. Some we are able to sense through our other organs. There are many far away from our sight and far away from being sensed by other organs of ours. Some we are able to comprehend through our delicate scientific instruments. There must be still many far from any human comprehension even with the aid of these instruments. Though their shapes and sizes might vary, they are but the combinations of the basic molecules; only the combination ratios would vary. (There were times when people

took the molecules to be atoms.) Later scientists discovered the existence of protons and neutrons within the atom. And molecules are formed by atoms. Today they say that matter and energy are one and the same. Whatever it is, whatever we see around is nothing but matter. There is nothing other than matter around. Nobody can deny this fact of experience.

Science is able to prove this fact. Everything is but a combination of molecules. Every molecule is but a combination of atoms. Every atom consists of a combination of protons and neutrons. Atoms are the subtle constituents of molecules. And molecules go to make matter. Matter is the ultimate both as cause and effect. The matter might undergo different changes but the basic constituents remain. You cannot destroy the original molecules nor introduce new ones. When matter disintegrates, its atoms form a different combination. This becomes a new matter. Matter is permanent and real thing. It is not a piece of imagination. It is not also a non-entity. Earth, galaxies and planets were there even millions of years before the emergence of human being on earth. Were they not there before the emergence of man?

The kind of world that we experience and see have real existence. They are true. They were not born out of our own imaginations. Our senses are able to comprehend them. Mind is able to feel about them.

The natural quality of all things is to be dynamic. Matter is in a permanent state of dynamism. There is no matter without the dynamic element in it. There need not be one to make it dynamic. For example, there cannot be an atom without the dynamic action of protons and neutrons within it. It is this dynamic phenomenon which is responsible for our senses to comprehend them. Energy comes out of this dynamic activity only.

It is this energy which is propagated in the form of sound, light or electromagnetic radiations. It is these radiations which come and cause an impact on our five senses. Our senses in turn comprehend them.

External materials and our senses must be in the same frequency in order to comprehend them. Attraction and reflection are all but commonest characteristics of the matter. Only the degree differs. It is this mutual attraction that is responsible for reflection. Every object on this earth attracts another object.

Our mind which is capable of feeling, thinking and understanding is a form of matter. Due to evolution that came off during a very long period, matter became a thinking entity. On further evolution, it became self conscious. The human mind is the ultimate of the evolutionary process. Man is none but a thinking form of matter. Thinking and self consciousness are not one and the same in the human world and the plant world. They vary in their measure. Animals are the nearest to us by evolution. Even amongst animals, monkeys are the nearer to us. Man emerged out of the monkeys by evolution. Due to ignorance, people called this self-consciousness as Aatma or the life spirit. They idolize this concept and exist in a dreamy world. You find radio in operation when it is able to broadcast music and speech. Some fools took it in the initial stages, that there was some human being sitting inside and singing!

The matter of the human body first became a reactive element and in due course of evolution it became one with feeling, then one with common sense. We shall now see these different stages of evolution. When things come into contact with each other, each is oppositely affected. Each has an impact opposite in its effect with the other. This is an elementary phenomenon. It has no effect of life in it.

It was a phenomenon of tremendous importance that the lifeless matter became a living organism in the history of evolution. Man's mind is the highest stage of the evolution. Man is not only capable of adjusting himself to the environs but also capable of changing the environments.

Science tells us that living organisms were born only out of the lifeless matter. For both the lifeless and the one with life, the basic molecules are one and the same. Only the combination ratios differ. The basic constituents of all matter in this universe are Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Carbon. Carbon combines with Hydrogen very easily. This is one of the most basic constituent molecule of all organic things. From such combinations more complex forms of organic compounds were formed. Then were formed the most reactive acids. This amino acids formed the basis of forming the protein molecules that were formed later. As per the evolution, though the combining capacity of every element with the other was varying, until now there was no sign of life in any of the compounds.

The changes that happened until now were both physical and chemical only. The next one to come was the more important one and that was biological.

From the amino acids, the basic protein molecules were formed. These protein molecules evolved over further a few million years into living molecules. The reason behind this was that the molecules by continued reactions, underwent metabolism. All living things have the fundamental property of metabolism. They take place under two circumstances.

1. One is to absorb the nutrients from the chemical environment and converting them into cells and tissues. This is called the assimilation.

2. The cells and tissues are annihilated and decompose. This is called dissimilation, disintegration.

Metabolism and auto regeneration are quite common in the most basic living cells. But those cells which have complicated chemical structure do not exhibit such property. Only those living protein cells have got the property of metabolism. Metabolism is the inherent property of those living cells and their development. The metabolism stops, the life in the cell vanishes. This is what we call death. Angel explains this phenomenon in an easy language – "Life is nothing but a status of the protein molecules. These molecules in the environments presented to them get life through metabolism. The moment metabolism stops, life becomes extinct."

Reactions are but common to all matter with life or no life like inanimate matter. The phenomenon of inanimate matter having become living molecules was a big milestone in the history of biology. Consciousness is one of the basic features of anything that has life. Plants are sensitive to the sunlight. Plants owe their life to sunlight only. Amoeba is the most fundamental cell that has life. This has impulses and shows reaction to whatever that kindles it. Its reaction has important characteristics like the selective tendency. It has got the nature of assimilating whatever it takes in for its growth and perpetuation. Such traits are in the most rudimentary level in an amoeba. Amoeba does not possess any tissue. It has no other special features. Hence its reactions are most general and do not carry any special characteristics.

When evolution further progressed, things became more and more complex. Special tissues, organs and other kinds of cells started growing. Special kind of sensations became the order of the day when evolution grew further and further. The external

impulses acting on the live cells brought in the element of consciousness' as per Lenin. The sensuous impulses were of different kinds. Some of them were subtle. Such impulses could be understood if one were to study the plants, animals and human beings separately. The highest point of evolution is the development of the human brain. The inanimate matter became a thinking and analysing matter ultimately.

Man could not merely comprehend the outside world but also himself. He developed communication. He formed the vocabulary. He gave meaning to every word. He further developed his intelligence and ideas using the words as tools. All these developments were after all part of the evolution. One must understand that all these were part and parcel of that original matter which after all ultimately evolved to become the human being. The successive stages of evolution were after all, movement, activity, reactive impulses, life, sensitivity, consciousness, thinking, analyzing capability and subtle expressions of the thinking faculties. Both the external world and the internal world were all different forms of the fundamental matter only. The people are matter. The seer is the matter. The seen is matter. There is nothing in this world which does not belong to the class of being a matter.

Western materialists take all those things which can be felt by our five senses to be real. Our understanding becomes complete by our sense of smell, feeling, hearing and sight. But what the westerners call it as 'real' is not the same as what is meant as 'true' in the eastern philosophy. The eastern philosophers give a special definition of what they term as 'true'.

a. The one that is true had no beginning. It has no end. It can never perish. Whatever has a beginning will have an end too. The one that is true never had a beginning nor it will have an end. It is permanent. It never perishes.

b. The thing that is true can not be further classified. It is a wholesome entity by itself.

Materialists of India saw the primordial thing that began as something that is true. The non-dualists (viz. the advaitis) defined the Nirguna Brahman as the only thing that is true. Because everything undergoes a change, Buddhists say that nothing is permanent nor true. The Saiva Siddhantins see Pathi, Pasu or Mulaprakirithi (primal matter) or the Maya as the true things. Even though the inanimate things are true, as per the Indian philosophy, they are not true, because they have the dynamic element in them and suffer change. The basic constituent of matter is the one that is true. Is it atom? Or is it the electron or positron? Or is it energy?

We shall now see briefly the answers given by the Materialists for both the above two questions.

1. There is nothing in this world except matter. Because of evolution protein molecules appeared. They reacted with the environments and attained life through metabolism. They further evolved into thinking animals, consciousness and analytical ability. Hence there is nothing like Atma. It is pure imagination. We idolize the self consciousness and call it Aatma. Ignorance and wishful thinking are the background for such an imagination. It is out of this imagination were born the Puranas and other imaginative stories. Pujaris, the temple priests and those who wore saffron robes exploited the people's ignorance and lived on such exploitations. The sense of Godhood is just a fantasy. This is born out of some bio-chemical deficiency. In reality, Man is a conscious and a thinking matter capable of analytical reasoning powers.

2. When the protein molecules in association with environments and reacting with them fail to attain metabolism,

sense or life ceases. This is what we call death. In reality, this is the case of matter which has attained evolution, losing one of its properties. After death, it is just a dead body. We either bury this body or burn it. Even if the body perishes, the molecules of the matter in the body do not perish. They dissociate themselves from the main body. They go for fresh combinations. There is no life after death at all. There is neither heaven nor hell after death. There is no God. There is no salvation. People really desire that they live eternally for ever. It is because of this desire they think that there is life after death, that Aatma starts living in other mysterious worlds; Aatma, gets reborn and ultimately attains salvation. These are all nothing but pigments of imagination and segments of Man's wishful thinking. Heaven, Hell or God are but the creations of Man only.

3. Who am I? There is nothing like 'I'. This is nothing but an expression of self-consciousness of an emotionally and fully evolved matter. After death, the human body is reduced to a corpse. That is just another matter. The molecules of the matter in the dead body decompose into various constituents. There is no God, nor Aatma. Man is nothing but matter with life and emotion. So long as life exists, it is not wrong to call this body, 'I'.

2. BUDDHISM

Buddhism was one of those religions those days which had spread to many countries. Its four different kinds were called as Chowndraathikan religion, Yogachaaran religion, Vaipaathikan religion and Maadhyamikan religion. There were also two big divisions in Buddhism called Mahayanam and Hinayanam. Though there were quite some differences between two divisions, the answer to our two questions from both these divisions is one and the same. Impermanence, sorrows and negation of Aathma were the three broad principles basic to Buddhism.

*Those who are born are bound to suffer sorrows
 They who escape birth gain eternal joy
 Attachment leads to the former; the latter
 Is the gain of the non-attached*

– Manimekalai

All things in this world suffer a continuous change. Everything is impermanent. Sorrows or sufferings are common to all those who are born. Sorrows come out of birth. It is desires that give rise to birth. If one chooses to win over desires, there won't be birth. Where there is no birth, there is no sorrow nor suffering. And absence of sorrow is Heaven or Bliss. There is no God. There is no Aatma. As the Buddhists did not believe in God, they were called atheists. All that you see on this earth are all just apparent. Nothing is true. There is nothing behind

what you see and hence whatever comes and strikes you are all nothing but the effect and there is nothing like cause behind. As they held such a view of this universe, Buddhists were called 'Suunyavaadhis' or those who believed in 'negation of everything'. Later they were also called, 'Ganabhangavaadhis'.

Seeththalai Saaththanaar lived in the 2nd century A.D. Ilangovadigal who wrote "Silappadikaaram" was his contemporary. Saaththanaar had embraced Buddhism as his religion. The "Manimekalai" written by him was one of those five great epics. This epic explains Buddhism and its principles; only the Hinayana principles of Buddhism. Hence Mayahana must have been born only after the 2nd century A.D. Nagaarjunar who lived in the 2nd century A.D. was the one who was responsible for the birth the Mahayana. He is referred as one of the Indian mystics.

We deal only with Hinayana principles as expounded by Sivagnana Siddhiyar. As examples from Tibetan Buddhism and as answers to 'What after death?' we give below certain excerpts briefly from the Tibetan literature dealing with the dead.

*Sky and soul not for reason
Everything untruth expect life
Kinds of action true that finish life
There ends liberation.*

*Survey and view inference two kinds
Things you expected enlighten attachment affected
Figures never dispute all four
What received one to two spread.*

Means of acquiring knowledge is known both by appearance and guess. (Buddha's words are not taken as sacrosanct.) By this doctrine, one understands about both knowledge and what is understood. That means both knowledge and what should

be understood. There is no knower at all. The wisdom or the knowledge and what should be understood appear and vanish or suffer a continuous change. They are impermanent. Every one of these falls under the category of forms, formless, home and customs and become eight in categories ultimately.

*Wisdom and attachment besides nothing to say
Were knowledge if not universe
If its knowledge only or not its
As sand cannot be destroyed.*

There is knowledge and what should be understood and there is no one like the knower. If there is a knower or the seeker, is it one with some intelligence or not? If it is one without intelligence you can equate it with earth only – an inanimate object. If it already possesses intelligence or knowledge, there is no need nor place for yet another intelligent being in it. (Hence there is nothing like 'Aatma' residing in it)

*If life is knowledge it must know
without five senses, if with senses
experience, sastras aligned, the soul is aware,
It is wrong; if so at night Green and red
Colours should be known by touch; hence
Soul has no knowledge and therefore no soul.*

If it is conceded that all lives have intelligence, they must be capable of comprehending anything without the use of senses and books. If it is not like that and one says that it is only with the help of senses and books, the world around is comprehended, then it should be wrong. If that is so, one must be capable of understanding, for instance, red colour just by touch, during the night hours. Aatma has no knowledge. Hence there is no Aatma.

*If senses have no knowledge, nil to soul
 If sense have knowledge, it is the sixth
 If knowledge has life, it should have
 Five senses. Hence no soul as Buddha said.*

If there were no senses, lives cannot comprehend anything. If you concede that the five senses have by themselves no intelligence and the kind of understanding about all these five senses is possessed by the human life, then one must be able to understand just by the existence of life all those that are understood by the five senses. Hence there is no Aatma.

*If life is subtle, it wont go with body
 If life has form it wont fit in body
 If life is atom it can pass off through holes
 If life is eternal, it should not have sense.*

If the intrinsic life has no form, then it cannot bind itself to the body which has a form. If you conceded that the intrinsic life has form, one that has a form cannot settle itself into another form. If you call life as a blend of atoms, then the atoms must go out of the body. If you call life as permanent, sensibility or sensitivity must be permanent. Life is formless. Life is not a blend of atoms. Life is not permanent. Hence there is nothing called by 'Aatma'.

*If soul is everywhere, it shouldn't differ in body
 If it is full in each and every body it should
 die with deadly body if it should be in one point
 It would know only that point.*

If one accepts that Aatma stands permanently pervading every point of space, it should not vary from body to body. If it is a thing that is unique to the body, it should also die when the body dies. If Aatma must be attached to a particular part of the body, then it will understand only that portion where it

had stayed. Hence Aatma considered to be one capable of comprehending is not there. Buddha himself explains these things to his disciples. "O my disciples, there is nothing like Aatma in this body. If there were so permanent or changeless, then this body should never be affected by any disease. It is only because of the absence of the Aatma, the body gets the diseases." This principle is enunciated in the following verse in a beautiful way.

Suffering is there, none in that state

Action is there but none for action

State of liberation is there but none to achieve

Path is there but none to walk on

Buddhism not merely negates Aatma but also God. Some would say that this world was created by God. If world had existed before, then there was no necessity for one to create it again. If it were not there, one could not create it. God is the root cause of this world. If the world came out as an effect of a primal cause, there is nothing in this world, which at once, exists and also does not exist. This universe is not one that was ever created. Hence there is no such person as the creator. If God had created this world like a pot maker making pots, then how did he manage to create them? There is no place other than this universe from where he could have possibly got the materials. If God had created this world out of a sense of mercy, then could one call it as 'mercy' to have created tiger, lion, bear and snake? Why did he create Aatmas? If it were just out of a sense of playfulness, then could you call God as a small playful boy?

Therefore, this universe was at no time created by an individual. If God had a form, then who was it that created that form? If it were possible for the God to have been able to create his own form, then it should be equally possible for

every one of us who has been created by him to create our own forms. If God had obtained a form through prior birth (Kanmam), does God have prior birth (Kanmam). If God had no form, then he would be like the sky. He has no action. How would he protect the beings? If he were just a shadow, how could the lives reach such a shadowy entity? Hence there is no God. He is nothing but the pigment of people's imagination.

*Trees are there in massive growth; without life
They spread over this earth in several forms
And die, this applies to all lives.*

Trees and plants have developed forms, grows dense and huge, one becomes many and ultimately perish. This is what we are seeing. This is true for all *Yonis*.

We do not see anything else materially other than the group of characteristics. We do not understand anything else. We cannot also understand. We find only characteristics and not anything that possesses these characteristics. If there is nothing like Aatma, then who am I?

Man is the combination of five elements. They are:

- a. **The first is the element of form.** The elements of air, earth, water, sky, five senses, the male and the female differences and the likes totally making about 28 such elements.
- b. **The element of pain or sensitivity.** The experience of the organs through senses constitutes this element. The elements in combination with the sixth, namely, the mind constitute this element in six forms. Separately as they can be classified as good, bad and goodish good; totally they make 18 forms.

- c. The element of reference.** There are five kinds of senses through the body (skin), mouth, eye, nose, ear and mind. As you name the different objects and phenomenon through the knowledge obtained because of these senses they are called the element of reference. As this element is concerned with six sense organs, they are of six different kinds.
- d. The element of feelings and emotions.** The kind of experience or sensations obtained through operation of mind, mouth and body is called the element of feelings and emotions. This is of 52 different kinds.
- e. The element of scientific nature.** This is the basic thing that stands behind the body of life, senses and knowledge and called the 'scientific element'. Human thoughts are the result of this scientific element. The effect of this scientific element is divided into 89 different kinds.

All these elements are impermanent. They undergo continuous change. The element of form appears like a frothing and vanishes soon. The element of pain is like the water bubble that floats on water for a fleeting time. So is the element of reference also. The element of feelings and observations is equally of transient nature. The element of scientific nature is like a magic. Aatma is not in any of these nor outside these elements. There is sorrow; but there is no person who feels the sorrows. There is action and the results of action. But there is no one who is the doer behind these actions nor one who experiences the results of the actions. It is the combined effect of all these elements that is called Aatma they say out of ignorance. The expressions, "I" and "mine" are peculiar things under the scientific element. They are borne out of our desires and fancies. The cause of all sorrows and sufferings is because of the feeling of "I" and "mine". Once this feeling is absent, there is no sorrow; no suffering and the like.

When the senses come into contact with external elements, thoughts get registered in our mind. These registrations are scattered, sporadic and individualistic. They do not happen at one and the same time. In fact, they occur one after the other. But as these happen in quick succession, they appear continuous as though they occur all at the same time. We can explain this with an example.

Take for instance any object. They are all porous. Because the atoms have an unimaginably fast nature of revolution about themselves, these objects appear to be solids for us. You cannot call the object as a discontinuous thing also. A certain thought gets registered in mind initially. As the flavour of this thought hardly vanishes, the next one gets into the mind. This only gives room to the next and so on it goes. And so it appears that the object is one of continuity. It is this continuity that gives an illusion of "I". This is just an illusion. It is just a feeling. It is born out of base feelings, desires and fascinations. It is just ignorance that forms the basis for these feelings. And when you are rid of these feelings, you attain what is known as 'Nirvaana'. Or you might call it the ultimate salvation.

The internal world and the external world are just appearances. They just appear and vanish.

It is but something natural to every life. There is no family without distress. The distresses are due to desires. These desires are born out of ambitions. The basis of these ambitions is feelings like "I", "mine", etc. Ignorance is the root cause behind these feelings.

Ignorance disappears at the dawn of wisdom. When there is no ignorance, the kind of feelings like "I" and "mine" also will vanish. When there is no desire, ambitions will disappear. That will give rise to a state of no distresses.

There are eight-fold ways or paths of getting wisdom. The eight-fold paths are as follows.

Noble thoughts, noble outlook, culture in spoken word, good deeds, noble life, noble deeds and noble in thinking, noble prayers. The one who realises the four truths and conducts himself in the eight-fold paths of truth and fairness, and surrenders himself to Buddham, Charanam and Sangam, will rid himself of the botheration of sorrows and distress and he will attain salvation.

*To snap attachment by recognising
Impermanence, pain, soulessness and dirt,
May your anger cease by good consciousness
of friendship, compassion and joyful thought,
Give up illusion by reading scriptures.*

Manimekalai

*Destroy crude desires, do good deeds
Get rid of mean senses, pleasure, pain;
Good life with eight paths – otherwise
Your wise ethical life will be lost.*

Lust, wrath, anger, miserliness and overpowering ambitions will cause ruin. One must avoid these and indulge in good deeds, carefully dissuading oneself from base and sensuous instincts. If one is careful in adopting such a life and follow the eight-fold paths of righteousness, he gets the ultimate in wisdom, namely Nirvaana or Samadhi.

*You are the God for yourself
There can't be any other;
If you control yourself
You will be the good god!*

Buddha called the ultimate salvation as Nirvaana. Some call this as Suunya. But many do not accept this idea. For instance,

Narada Maha Thero of Srilanka gives the following explanation: "You cannot explain Nirvaana in just words and letters. You cannot also understand what it is through your intelligence or logic. You can rather define it as the status of desire-less-ness or one in which there is no distress or sorrow at all. It is wrong to call this status as 'suunyam'." There is nothing by the name, "Aatma". Therefore, the words like salvation or freedom or redemption are all meaningless. There is certainly a cluster of sorrows in this world. But when you attain a status where there are no sorrows, you can be said to have attained the status of Nirvaana.

Buddha accepts the theory of Karma and re-birth. When you do not accept the concept of 'Aatma' then the question arises, 'What is it that gets re-born?' Though there is nothing like 'Aatma', there is a stretch of experiences which form a mental elements. This will continue till the Nirvaana. This suffers a continuous change. The kind of deeds, both good or bad have an impact on these. It is like a thin stream of water. This mental stretch of elements or the scientific elements combining itself with the other elements of this world gets reborn. It is not correct to call this re-birth.

There are quite a few branches in Buddhism. The concept that has been explained here belongs to Theravada Buddhism. Those philosophers who accept the Theravada Buddhism swear it on the basic premise of "Abhidharma Pidakam." Abhidharma Pidakam was written by the followers of Buddhism, a very long period after Buddha died. It is this Abhidharma Pidakam which forms the basis of Sunyavaadam. Protaganists of Pukkalam have not accepted "Abhidharma Pidakam." These followers accept on some sort of Aatma. This Aatma is connected with five Gandhas. But it is different from them. It is not one of them. But this

Aatma is not permanent. It is an appearance and liable for death. This Aatma suffers the benefit or the punishments due to the way it conducts its life on earth. At the end it attains Nirvaana.

The Tibetan book on 'Dead Beings' clearly brings out whatever happens after death. It advises people on the verge of death. Here's the essence of those teachings.

There are six stages of Badoo (mid stages six) They are, (a) birth, (b) dreams, (c) Samardhyaanam, (d) Just before death (e) Dharmatha, (f) Just before re-birth. Out of these, the latter three are mentioned in the above book. The kind of experiences that one undergoes are enumerated below. The first of these experiences is in the form of doubtful possibilities - 1. Is he going to die really? 2. Will all connections with the world cease to exist? 3. Is he going to continue to live?

The prime and basic constituents of the body dissolve and die. When Prithvi, the earth becomes water, there is heaviness setting in. When water becomes the flames, heat dissolves and disappears. When air becomes the ether, the contact with the physical world vanishes. At last, when the ether or space or the Chaythanyam dissolves, the Agam becomes the Puram. Mind stands alone. It floats without any support. Life enters in full swing abounding in happiness and sorrow and mental images. All the six worlds reappear. Hell, the world of evil spirits, the world of animals, the world of humans, the world of the demons of desire, lust, hatred and enmity, the world of angels, the world of Dharmatha are the different worlds that appear now. At every stage, the Dharmatha world appears transiently for a few moments and then disappears. This is the brilliance of pure wisdom or Gnanam.

While the death occurs, the vignana gantham, in a fleeting way like a stream of water, gets separated from other gantham. It

gets subjected to the influence of passions and love. In between the shining brilliance of wisdom appears like a shining star. Inebriations will not be influenced by passions. If you contemplate on wisdom only, the vignanana gantham will merge with wisdom. This is called Nirvaana. Mental perversions, desires and infatuations and wisdom are pictured by personification into forms of angels and demons. But every now and then, there is a frequent stress on the point that these are but mental projections and perceptions. Desires and passions are appearing as fascinating splendours. Wisdom is pictured as a brilliant shine with a pleasant shock. Seeking comfort and pleasures, if one were to tread the path of passions, the vignaana gantham roams about in those worlds and gets reborn and that is sure. Instead, if it were to surrender in the gnana gantham, one could attain Nirvaana.

One could also attain Nirvaana in six ways like hearing, wearing, seeing, reminding, tasting and touching. After death, terrific experiences and gory scenes appear one after the other. The desires, sense of lust and other base feelings appear as dreams along with his good or bad deeds. All these are mental pictures or projections. One should realise all these, meditate on wisdom and stabilize one's mind in it. This is the sure way of attaining Nirvaana. In order to do this, many possibilities would show up after death. Unless one does all these, one cannot escape the cycle of births and deaths. Before rebirth one gets the vision of that particular birth. Once again at this juncture, six methods have been prescribed in order to prevent rebirth. (Not merely after death, but also during the life-time, we do get opportunities to attain wisdom. If one does not miss these opportunities, one could attain Nirvaana during life-time itself.)

We shall now see the details of the Bado stages following one's death, described exhaustively in the 'Book of the Dead'

which is widely followed by the Tibetans. These advices are useful not merely for conducting of oneself during various stages after death but also for the course of life itself.

1. O! the one born of high pedigree, once the intake of oxygen stops, you will get a vision of brilliant light. That is of basic nature. This is the stage of Dharmatha. This is the vembalam concerned with open and ethereal space. It has no centre nor periphery. This is the clearest state of mind. Stabilize yourself into it. Do not allow mind to sway here and there.

2. O! the one born of high pedigree, you are going to die now. "I am going to die now. I should attain the all merciful state of wisdom. This, I should attain for the benefit of all beings." Meditate with these ideas in mind.

3. O! the one born of high pedigree, listen to what I say with keen attention. Look at the fiery brilliance of Dharmatha that is shining. Your mind is now a clear void. It has no material properties, character or anything of that kind. It has no barriers. It is pure, vibrant and twinkling. This mind is a perennial glow. This is what is obtaining in the purest mind of Lord Buddha. Realise it.

4. O! the one born of high pedigree, listen to what I say with keen attention. The intervening stages of Bado are six in kind. Birth, dream, meditation to samadhi, the stage just before death and the stage immediately before the Dharmatha stage of rebirth. Of these, the first three are the kind of experiences that one undergoes before death. The latter three are those experiences which one happens to go through during death and after death and until one attains the Nirvaana. Yesterday, you had the experience of the Bado stage which comes just before death. You do not seem to have realised the benefit of the truth. You are immersed in the Samsara. You are going to go through the

stages of the Dharmatha. Unless you realise and surrender yourself to great wisdom, you will be entering the phase of the Bado stage which is going to present itself just before your death.

5. O! the one born of high pedigree, the one who is born is bound to die. Nobody can escape death. Even if you try to prolong your existence, you cannot. It is this desire and outlook that immerses you further into this Samsara. Try to control your desires. Renounce them completely. Do realise that the kind of all experiences during the stage of Dharmatha, Bado are none but the reflections of death. You need not be afraid of them.

6. O! the one born of high pedigree, when your body and mind get separated, the Dharmatha stage will appear. That is the moment of extreme brilliance. Though it will be clear, it is difficult to explain. It is like mirage. Fear not. Understand that this is nothing but the natural brilliance of the Dharmatha stage.

7. O! the one born of high pedigree, a loud thunder will follow that brilliance. This is nothing but the natural noise of the Dharmatha. Don't be afraid of it. Now you are no more the combination of body and blood. Now you are nothing but an ethereal spirit and if anything, your body is not now physical but airy and intangible. This is blemishless and can never be attacked by sorrows. Understand that the kind of brilliance of light and the loud noise that you would now experience are nothing but the projections of your mind.

8. O! the one born of high pedigree, unless you understand that the brilliant light and the loud noise are nothing but your mental projections, different kind of light flashes will now frighten you. The varied kind of noises will frighten you. Sharp light

beams will frighten you. Unless you understand the truths, you will get immersed in the Samsara.

9. O! the one born of high pedigree, you will remain senseless for four days after death. Once you come back to senses, you will be wonderstruck to see whatever had happened. Understand that this is the 'baado' stage. The world has become topsy-turvy. Whatever you see now is nothing but flashes of light and shadows. The entire sky will be aglow in blue. Bhagwan Vairochana will appear. This is pure wisdom. Do not be afraid of this. But you must seek this wisdom. Understand that this is Bhagawan Vairochana's blessings and mercy and surrender yourself to it. At the same time, the soft and silken glow of the heavens will appear and make you happy. This will fascinate you. If you go for it and become happy, you will start roaming about in heavens.

10. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the second day you will see the brilliance of the clean water molecule. Bhagwan Vajrasathva Aksabhoya will appear. It will rather be difficult to experience this vision of brilliance. It will pierce your eyes. But seek it. Understand that this is the brilliance of Bhagwan Vajrasathva Soobhaayaan's vision, and surrender to it. At the same time, light rays from the hell, soft and silken glow but smoky light will also appear. This may attract you. If you happen to feel happy, you will fall into hell and suffer endless agony.

11. 'O! the one born of high pedigree, on the third day, an yellow glow will appear which comes from Pirthvi's pure molecule. Bhagwan Rathina Sambhaava will appear. This is the glow of pure wisdom. Surrender yourself unto this pure wisdom of the Bhagwan Rathina Sambhaava. At the same time, you will also get the soft bluish glow of the human world. If you happen to enjoy the latter, you will fall back into the human

world again. You will undergo the cycle of birth, old age and death again and suffer.

12. O! the one born of high pedigree, the pure and reddish glow of Agni will shine brilliantly. Bhagwan Amiththaavaa will appear. You surrender yourself into it. At the same time, the soft yellowish glow of the devilish world of jealousy will appear. Without surrendering yourself into the red glow, if you prefer to choose the soft yellowish glow being attracted by desires and passions, you will get into the world of the devilish feelings of jealousy and hatred.

13. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the fifth day, you will get the shine and brilliance of greenish glow, the shine of pure Vaayu molecules. You give yourself unto it and become Samabhoga gaaya Buddha. At the same time, you will get the soft glow of the world of Perumai Thevar. If you get attracted by this, you will go into the world of Perumai Thevar.

14. O! the one born of high pedigree, you have now experienced all the interpretations of five-fold wisdom on all the five days. If you had surrendered unto any of these, you would have become Samboga Kaaya Buddha. You have not realised the truth behind of all these that shines. That is why you suffer the wretchedness of being swayed here and there.

15. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the sixth day, all the five different kinds of glow will shine at once. All the five Gods will appear at once. Along with these brilliant glows, will shine the dirty glows of the six worlds. Had you not surrendered into the earlier ones but chosen the latter ones, you will never get into the world of wisdom but you will get into the respective world and be roaming about.

16. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the seventh day you will get the multi-coloured glow signifying pure wisdom.

Sudha Vidhyatharar will come from the pure world of heavens and will call you. At the same time, you will get the glow of the soft greenish colour. Without surrendering yourself to the former, if you seem to get attracted by the latter, you will suffer by getting born in the world of animals, a place of total ignorance.

17. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the eighth day, the blood-thirsty demons will appear. Budha Kerukka will get born from your brain. Do not get afraid. This is your Ishta Devatha. If only you realise this point, you will merge with Sambhoga kaaya Buddham.

18. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the ninth day, the blood-thirsty members of the Vajra family appear. Bhagwan Vajra Kerukka will be born. Do not be afraid of him. Do not get perplexed. He is also a product of your mind. He is none but Bhagwan Vairojana. If only you realize this, you will merge into Buddhism.

19. O! the one born of high pedigree on the 10th day, the family members of Rathina will appear. Bhagwan Rathina Kerukka will be born. Do not get upset. He is just but a shade of your own mind or softness. You may realise this.

20. O! the one born of high pedigree, listen carefully. On the 11th day, will appear the family of Padmanadu Mayaththavar. Bhagwan Padma Kerukka will be born. Do not get upset. Take him as your own ally. Bhagwan Amithaapaa appears along with his spouse. If only you realize this, you will merge into Buddhism.

21. O! the one born of high pedigree, on the 12th day, the blood-thirsty Kanma family will appear. He is none but Bhagwan Dharma Kerukka. Do not get upset on their appearance. Take them as you own ally. He is none but Bhagwan Amoka Siddhi. If only you realise this, you will merge into Buddhism.

22. O! the one born of high pedigree, after this, the people of Kerukkas and twenty eight Yoginis will appear. They will be wild with anger. All of them will appear at once. All these people are none but allies of yourselves.

23. O! the one born of high pedigree, the family of Dharmahayaaka are peace-lovers. They come out of vacuity. The angels belonging to the group of Sambokaayas are people noted for anger. They appear out of light or wisdom. Now all the fiftyeight angels, who are prone to drink your blood will appear from your brain, entering brilliant lights. Unless you realise this, you will roam about suffering in Samsara sagaram.

24. O the one born of high pedigree, until now you experienced all chances of merging in Buddhism. You have failed to utilize these opportunities. Now the time has come for you to take your next birth. The uterus that is going to give the next birth is now opening up. At least now, if you now realize the truth, the uterus might be closed and the next birth can be avoided.

25. Now you have failed to close the uterus. Now the chances of vision of the land where the next birth is going to take place are opening up. Even if you are not able to stop the next birth, at least choose the proper uterus.

Now we will see what Buddhism has to say in regard to the two questions we pose.

a. There is no God. There is no Aatma. There is nothing as permanent truth. Everything is Suunya. Everything is just apparent. Everything is nothing but a reflection of a character or quality and there is nothing behind them. Man is none but the combination of the five Ganthas. And they are appearances, pain, reference, character and Vignana. The Vignana Gantham

represents the wisdom remaining as the basis within the degradable body. That is the principle of Chaitanya. Even this Gantham is impermanent. It is like Indrajalam. There is nothing like 'I' or 'You'. It is foolish to think in terms of 'I'.

b. The merging of Vignana Gantham along with the other four Ganthas causes birth. When it separates from amongst the other four, death occurs. There is nothing like one dies. The Vignana Gantham is one that is devoid of any character or anything behind that character. It suffers continuous change.

c. The details of 'Vignana Gandha's Bado stages upto re-birth after death are explained elaborately by the book on 'After Death' written by the Tibetan writers.

d. Sorrows emerge from birth. That is the nature of the worldly life. May be there is none suffering sorrows. But sorrows are realities. The state of sorrowlessness is called Nirvaana. This is just a status and none attains it.

e. Once when one realises all the four truths, follows the eight-fold righteous paths and surrenders to Buddhim, Sangam and Dharma, he attains Nirvaana. Until one does not shed the feelings of 'I' passions and inebriations one will continue to remain. Unless these are shed, births and deaths and re-births will continue along with sorrows. Buddhism teaches the essential principles for attaining the Nirvaana. They are aacharam, nobleness, fasting, religiousness, meditation, righteousness, kindness and humility.

3. VEDANTHA AND SIMPLE ADVAITA

All the angels reside in me. I am the one who created them all and help them to sustain. I am the one who directs. I am the one who created all the wisdom, Kanmam and all lives and religions. I am like the winds in the sky and life in body. I am everywhere. I am there beyond this earth and beyond the solar system. I was there even before this earth was created. All the worlds are but the manifestations of myself. (Rig Veda - 10th Canto)

"Our soul is nothing but a brilliant spark of God" (Kabir)

The old visions are six in kind. Justice, Vaisetikam, Sankya, Yoga, Puurva Mimaamsa and Uthara Mimaamsa.

1. **Justice:** God is called the Paramaathma. The lives are called Jeevaathmas. God is the primal cause behind every creation. The molecules are the subsidiary causes. God created the molecules and created the world. He also sustains them and destroys them. He creates them again. The lives are infinite in number. Liberation from suffering is Mukthi or Salvation.
2. **Vaisetikam:** The world is true and has come about by combination of molecules. The commonplace realities are seven in kind. Views about God and salvation are common to both above principles of Justice and Vaisetikam.

3. **Sankyam:** Principles governing the world and the entire philosophy of life have been elaborated in Sankyam. The primal cause is permanent, all pervasive, a permanent matter and remains formless. There are 24 principles enshrined in this. Saathvikam, Rajasam and Thaamasam are three principles contained in it. The twentyfifth is Purusha or the life. The evolution of the primal cause is Buddhi or intelligence. The purusha is the combination of all the 24 principles but remains without any attachment. Once one realises the primal cause and Purusha lust vanishes. This is salvation. There is no God apart from this.
4. **Yoga:** Yogas are based on Patanjali Suthras. Yoga accepts the primal cause, lives and God as the truest and most permanent things. God is called the Mahapurusha. The lives are called the many purushas. The Mahapurusha and the other Purushas are not one and the same. The path of salvation is through Yoga.
5. **Puurva Mimaamsa:** Vedas were not written by any single individual. It is timeless. The world is permanent. The human actions are of two kinds – righteousness and sin. The fruit of actions is wrong. Action without expectation of any fruit will bring salvation. There is no God. If one follows what has been laid down in Karma Kaanda, one can attain bliss in both this world and the other. Rakshasaas like Thatchan or Hiranyan performed many yagas and obtained extensive power. That is what the Puranaas tell us.
6. **Uththara Mimaamsa:** This is what is Vedantha. What it means is that this is the ultimate of Vedas.

Of all the kinds of philosophical writings of our country Vedas are considered the best. Upanishads, Brahma suthras and Bhagavad Gita are all the derivative works from Vedantha. These

three are called the Prasthanathraya. There are quite a lot of interpretations and commentaries for these. We find a lot of controversies and difference of opinions amongst these different commentaries. Some of those that are important among them are -

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Simple Advaita | - by Sankaracharya |
| b. Visishta Advaita | - by Ramanujacharya |
| c. Bedaabedam | - Nimbaarkar |
| d. Sudha Advaita | - Vallabhacharya |
| e. Achinthya Beda bedam | - Sreechaitanya |
| f. Sivadvaitam | - Shrikantha |
| g. Dwaitam | - Madhwacharya |

Vedantham has three special aspects.

1. Every life is Godly. It is a spark that came out of the Nirguna Brahma (that is Brahma without any attributes). Salvation, karma, bhakthi, wisdom or Ganana and kindness are the ways for salvation.
2. There is one and only thing called the Absolute Truth. All religions explain this in different names. This cannot be comprehended by human intelligence and is beyond perception by the human mind and words. It is not possible to explain this by any phraseology. Only the Godly experience is the sole evidence.
3. All those who created various religions are great people. They showed the way for spiritual wisdom. One should realise the truth following the paths indicated by these wise men. Just arguments and logical utterances cannot get you to the truth.

I shall briefly give here Sankaracharya's interpretation of simple Advaita. This was written around 7th century A.D. The authors of "Manimekalai", "Diwakaram" and "Pingalam" do not seem to have made any mention about this branch of philosophy or interpretation. Only the author who wrote the "Nikandu" makes a mention about the Maya Vaadam. Sankaracharya's simple advaitam became so famous that even the foreigners took it for Hinduism itself. Sankaracharya was very good in logical arguments by intellectual acuity. Yet one could see the basis of his philosophy in Upanishads. All the religions of our country do not owe their allegiance to Upanishads. One could see the principles of simple advaita as expounded in Sivagnana Shiddhiyar's verses.

*This Brahman is the cause of the worlds,
the limitless bliss and intelligence is formless,
omnipresent and eternal, is true and pure,
free from all marks and attributes,
and is the measure of the Vedas,
and is without distinction of Jnathuru and Jnana.*

The Brahma without any attributes stands as the ultimate wisdom, the primal cause of the entire universe, an endless joy and bliss, the formless and omnipotent, the real essence, the purest, the one without any attributes and one that is the root of all vedas, the one without wisdom nor the wise. It is this Brahma that is the ultimate truth.

*The shining sun is one
Yet its reflections are many
Seen in numerous pots of water;
So also one God lives in every body,
And yet is imperceptible to senses
And antakarams; He cannot
Be known by six kinds of proof.*

The image of the sun shining from the heavens, when reflected by the water kept in different vessels appears many - each from the different vessel. Similarly it is the same Brahma who appears different in infinite variety of the lives. He stands away from the worlds and lives. He cannot be comprehended by our senses and mind. You can not set any scale to measure him. (There is no single entity as Aatma. It is the Sarvaatma who appears as Jeevaatmas.)

World is nothing but God's manifestation. All the lives are none but his praana.)

*The rope appears as snake in darkness.
When light dawns, the rope reveals itself,
and the snake disappears as a delusion.
Similarly the world appears as Sat when deluded;
in spotless wisdom, the true Chit appears as Sat;
and all the world's allurements will appear mad.*

We mistake a piece of rope for snake in darkness. As you get the sun light the rope shows up and reveals. The snake becomes untrue. It is our ignorance that makes the world look real. Once you get the realization of Brahma, you get the enlightenment that this world is nothing but a reflection of Brahma. (It is Godpower that is manifested in the form of this universe.)

*The material cause of the world is Sat.
As the spider produces from itself the thread
and works it into a web and then takes it back
into itself, so also God originates the world as real
and sustains it; when he resolves it, it becomes unreal again.
Looking to its place of origin, the world and all its
appearances are also Sat.*

The spider creates its own thread for the web it is going to weave and takes back the thread to itself. Similarly, Brahma

creates the apparently different looking world, takes back after protecting the world. All this universe is nothing but the manifestation of Brahma.

The course of evolution is this.

*From Brahman was produced the Akas (space);
from Akas, air; from air, fire; from fire water; from water earth;
from these elements plants; from plants food;
and from food the body and its six component parts.*

The sky appeared from Brahma, the air from the sky, the Agni (fire) from the air, the water from Agni, the Prithvi from water, the Oshathi from Prithvi, the food from Oshathi and from the food appeared skin, bones, nerves, sperm and minerals like them.

*The above mentioned six parts constitute annamayakosa;
when the air vitalizes these, they constitute Pranamayakosa;
with the manas, they form manomaya kosa; with buddhi
and jnanendriyas, they constitute anandamaya kosa.*

The gross body is a combination of all six minerals. Entry of air into this Annamaya kosa brought in the vibrant life. This is called Praanamaya kosa. Into it emerged the mind. This is called the Manomaya kosa. It is Vignanamaya kosa that functions as intelligence in the mind. And from the Vignanamaya kosa emerges Ananda or the bliss and it is called Anandamaya kosa. (All these pancha kosas are manifestations of Nirgunabrahma or the Brahma without any attributes.)

*This Brahman appears united in the visible body
composed of the above mentioned pancha kosas.
The way in which He so appears is similar
to the rays of the effulgent sun
which is difficult to be reached in the sky*

*becoming reflected in several pots of water.
Yet God does not become tainted by such contact,
as Pasa cannot bind God.*

Just as water kept in different vessels show the images of the same sun in varied containers, so also, the Brahma that is above comprehension by our senses appears differently in different bodies. Though Brahma is found mixed with human spirit, the latter can never affect it. Hence there is no connection between the human spirit and the Brahma.

*As the same thread strings through countless beads
of different colours appears also as particolored,
so also the one God dwelling in different bodies
appears different beings and appears as undergoing
different kinds of experience without, in fact,
undergoing such.*

When you string pearls of different colours over a thread, the entire string multi-coloured though the thread is of one and the same colour. In a similar way, the same Brahma appears different in different lives. Just as the thread containing the pearls of different colour stays unique and different from the pearls, Brahma also remains unaffected in spite of His manifestation in the infinitely varied lives.

*The one Brahman is known by different names
by its union in different bodies and appears to undergo
experiences of pleasure and pain. It undergoes
in body the four avastas – Jagra, Svapna, Sushupti and
Turiya. In Jagra it is in conjunction with (all) - the organs;
in Svapna the four; in Sushupti one and in Turia
all the organs do not function and experience ceases
(The body merely vegetates).*

Because of his association with the universe and lives, Brahma will get different names. It would appear that Brahma undergoes all the travails of the human lives. Brahma will undergo all the four Awastha states. Brahma will ultimately align with God.

To identify all the bodily organs as the self is bhanda (fettering); when this false knowledge is destroyed, mukti is attained. The seed of bhanda is in avidya, and by its acts maya and its products attach to the Brahman.

When Avidya is destroyed maya also vanishes; when this happens Jnana (wisdom) is secondary and bhuta (phenomenal) knowledge disappears.

The instruments should not be mistaken for Bandam. Once when one gets liberation from the thoughts of 'I' and 'mine' one gets salvation. It is the action of Mulaprakrithi which is the seed for Bandam that gives rise to sorrows and joys. Once when ignorance disappears, the illusion called Maya will disappear. Brahma gnana will appear. The differences will vanish.

By the practice of Karmic rites, antahkarams get purified. This purification will induce jnana. This jnana will induce the knowledge of Aham Brahmasmi; (I Am The Almighty).

When this Aham Brahma knowledge attains perfection, the self can be perceived in Maya as the moon's reflection is seen in still water.

By proper anushtaanams thro' Ganmas, the Antahkarams will get purified. It is this purification that brings about wisdom. Once wisdom dawns, you get the realisation that you are none but Brahma. When one gets such a realisation, one gets the true picture of oneself.

Brahma jnana is knowledge that the self is Brahman. When the self becomes self and enjoys the self in the self and when such things as body, senses and prana lose their form and name, when the great elements are destroyed and the self remains unchangeable, this knowledge is possible.

Once the realisation that 'I am the Brahma' happens, the differences of body, feelings and karanam vanish. You will attain a state which is inexpressible in words. The elements like the 'aakasam' (sky) will vanish. Brahma alone will stand. You will realize that you are none but the Brahma. Wisdom becomes Brahma gnanam. (Thathvam asi; you are that)

"The same fire manifests itself in different forms. In the same way, Brahma manifests himself in different forms or many forms or all the forms. It is there even beyond these." This statement is drawn from Katopanishad. We find in the worldly scene differences revealing in all the lives. Some say that all these were created by one Kartha from nothing. Anything that has been created is bound to suffer death or become extinct. All those things that appeared in this universe will disappear. The inner element will not go away. Non element will not appear. And that is what manifests itself as both the cause and the effect. Just as trees come out of seeds, all the lives in this world must have come from one primal thing.

It is this primal thing that is the truth. All the rest are but different manifestations of this primal object. Some scientists say that it is the manifestation of combination of atoms that became this universe and it is thus possible that all these combinations will again shrink back to become the primal atoms. Vedaanthis are of the opinion that the primal cause or the object behind

this universe is Nirguna Brahmam or the Brahma without any attributes, qualities or character. I am that and You are also that. Everything is that. Everything is Brahma. Brahma is without any symbol, identity, character, quality, shape, size, measures and boundaries. Brahma is the primal object, the ultimate one and that destroys itself and that has no movement nor change. It is full in itself. It is ever pervasive. Everything is contained in it. Even though, everything is part of it, it is beyond everything also. It cannot be comprehended by our senses. You cannot understand it by intellectual deliberations, discussions and arguments. You can refer it briefly as Sachithaanandam.

The physicists believed for a long time that the most primal thing behind matter was atom. Later they discovered oppositely polarised sub-atomic particles within the atom. They called the latter as the primal objects. Some found ether which is beyond nature as the primal thing. Today, they describe the matter is indivisible from energy and vice-versa. In latter times to come in future, they might see that it is something that remains dormant and not explicit.

Starting from the gross, it goes to be subtle, then becomes highly subtle and ultimately the one that is just dormant and inexplicit. Vedaanthi see the Nirguna Brahma as the ultimate primal object behind everything that we see. The world and the lives were not created by God. It is the Nirguna Brahma who created the Satguna Brahma (God) and the worlds and the species. The latter are not but manifestations of the Nirguna Brahma.

In a practical world, though everything appears different, all of them are but one and the same Nirguna Brahma in absolute terms. The latter is the most primal thing behind all. That is the ultimate truth. You can compare God to an ocean, and the

world and lives to the waves rising in the sea. Both the water and the water droplets are one and the same. The water bubble appears on water only and vanishes at last into it. Similarly, both the Paramaathma and Jeevaathma are but one and the same. They differ only in volume. One is immeasurable and the other finite and measureable. One is independent and the other is a part of the other.

We normally take life and mind are different and so is the body. Whatever appears as matter, wisdom and life are all but different manifestations of one and the same primal thing, viz. Nirguna Brahman. In the broadest sense, the Nirguna Brahman is the only ultimate reality. It is at once the wise and wisdom and what is comprehended as wisdom. It is at once the seer and the seen. It is at once the knower and the known. There is only one thing that is ultimate and it is the Nirguna Brahman. All things that look different from each other are but its manifestations.

Swethakethu asked his father, what the ultimate truth was. The answer that his father gave is as follows:

"The most primal cause behind all this visible universe is this. That is also the subsidiary cause. All of them appeared from one primal object. It is that object that is manifested as in the infinite forms we observe. It is that object which is the truth. You are also that. I am also that. Please understand."

It is the Brahma who at once manifests as Abrahma also. The Parabrahma is without any character, attribute, blemish and pure. The Aparah Brahma is another form of Para Brahma. It is the Brahma that manifests himself as the world and lives. There are two sides for Nirguna Brahma. One is in the form of infinite forms, boundaries, motion, dynamic and ever changing. The

other side is formless, a status of Sachidaanatha. The infinite species and the worlds are ingrained in the Nirguna Brahma. You cannot call them as Sunya.

Their evolution follows a cosmic law. The worlds and lives go through the evolution. They are getting born, they grow, stabilize and ultimately perish. When they perish, they change their forms. The change into stabilization also follows a cosmic law. They happen simultaneously. Yet the Nirguna Brahma which is the root cause of it stands alone unaffected by all these. That is permanent, without character, pure and without beginning or end. You can explain this with an example.

When two molecules of Hydrogen combine with one molecule of Oxygen, you get water. As the constituent molecules combine, the product attains a different character. You do not find hydrogen alone there nor oxygen. Yet they are the fundamental constituents of water. As water vapourizes, the constituents are still the same. The change is just physical. Similarly, for all things that undergo such transformations, the most fundamental constituent is the Nirguna Brahma.

Vedaanthis call this universe as 'Maya' or a product of illusion. Nature, Prithvi, Prapancham, Jegath and Maya are all but one and the same and they refer to the only universe. Sunya is not the meaning of the word Maya.

In the familiar example of the decayed plant leaf, the inner meaning of the rope leaf is not Sunya. We mistook it for snake in darkness. This universe and the lives therein are but manifestations of the Nirguna Brahma. We understand them by distinction as world, lives and God. It is this misconception that is Maya or illusion. Once when one attains the Brahma gnana, he shall realise that everything is Maya. Then Maya will vanish.

What is the reason behind the Nirguna Brahma to so manifest itself in different forms? Some would call it the cosmic law. Appearance and ultimate shrinking are but its laws, say the philosophers. Some others would call it 'a divine act' or a 'divine play'.

*The thought danced; Siva Sakthi danced,
The creation vast danced, the Vedas danced.
The Lord too danced; The dance of Ananda (Divine Bliss)*

– Thirumandiram

But it is difficult for elementary intelligence as ours to understand the reason behind such manifestations.

*He who has neither beginning or end
And the reason for His being without beginning or end
Except by Lord's grace, and service to Him only
No one understood by reciting* – Thirumooler

The great author Wendel Wells explains the vedic concept in his famous book, 'A Permanent life'. There are many forms of energy born out of the Paramporul (God). You may call them energy, praana or wisdom. They come down and go up again. They merge with the ultimate Almighty at last. Energy appears as the world of matter, electrical in form or magnetic in character. Or it apperas as the subtle world of hell and heaven. The Prana energy is but one of the forms of the Almighty. It is this energy which comes down to the world in the form of lives and go up ultimately to merge with God. It is Gnanasakthi that manifests in the form of Intelligence. An individual life is nothing but a spark out of the Prana Sakthi. You see different forms of it. As they come down, they mix with different forms of Maya and get differentiated. You attain such expressions as "I" and "mine" etc. They indulge in Karma and reap the outcomes. They go to places and different worlds.

As they go up, they become pure wisdom and merge with eternal God. God is none but a spark out of Prana Sakthi. You can find similar interpretations in the philosophy of Hebrews and Christianity.

From out of the flames of fire, come many sparks. You cannot call the fire as different from these sparks. Infinite number of light rays emerge from the sun to light the entire world. You cannot call the sun as different from these rays. Infinite forms and forms of energy emerge from out of the Nirguna Brahma. God represents an ocean of wisdom. An individual mind can be compared to waves rising from the sea. When a spark of wisdom comes down to earth, it mixes with Maya, energies and get differentiated. The reason behind variations of the mind is called Kanma or the fruit of the actions in the past. Once when one attains the wisdom, the Kanma vanishes and the differentiation between Jeevaathma and paramatha vanishes.

Aatma is without beginning or end. It was never born. It did not involve itself in any action or Karma. That is the real "I". Vedaanthis accept rebirth and fruit of actions or the effects of Karma. If there were no single entity by what we call 'Aatma', then what is it that undergoes rebirth? Who is that undergoes the fruit of actions? An individual mind is described as the spark out of divinity of Nirguna Brahmam. We also said that an individual life is nothing but a spark again that came out of the Prana of Nirguna Brahmam. When such lives come down on to the earth, they entangle with Maya and become different entities. It is these entities which involve themselves in action and they suffer attendant effects. They undergo experiences due to they various Kanmas. They travel round the world in different parts. They take re-births.

They say that the Bhagavad Gita supports the simple Advaita. Sankaracharya has written commentary for Bhagavad Gita. You

have commentaries for the Bhagavad Gita written in Visishtadvaitam and Dwaitam. In the second canto, Lord Krishna explains to Krishna about Aatma. He explains about his own Prakrithi in the 7th, 8th and 9th cantos. In the 11th canto, he appears in his own Viswaruupa – the grand vision. I am presenting a few excerpts from these cantos. The remaining cantos dwell on Karma, Bhakthi, Yoga and Gnanam.

The second canto. "At no time, I was non-existent. So, you too were never non-existent. In future too, the same situation would continue; that is we shall never cease to exist at any time. Aatma is ever permanent and imperishable. But the body carrying the Aatma is perishable. One who thinks that the Aatma is killed or a killer, you can take it, he has not comprehended the truth. Aatma is never born. Aatma never dies. It is ever permanent. Just as man changes his dresses, so too Aatma takes on new and newer bodies. No weapon can destroy this Aatma. Fire cannot burn it. Water cannot drench it. Air cannot dry it. It will always be there. It is constant. You need not worry about Aatma.

7th and 8th cantos. "It is my Prakrithi that divided it as land, water, fire, wind, sky, mind, intellect and ahankaram. That which supports this world is the highest amongst my Prakrithis. All materials are within me. I am the reason behind the creation and destruction of all the worlds. I am like the string of pearls where the pearls have been strung together."

"I am the light; I am the taste. I am the Omkara and the melodious voice. I am the majesty of manhood. I am at once the flower and the fragrance. All the basic attributes of Saathwikam, Rajasam and Thamasam are expressions of me only. I am beyond all these too."

"The one who crosses the Maya will understand me. It is the wise who comes to me at last. I know the past. I know the present. I also know the future. But no one else would understand all these. One who surrenders unto me, will understand everything and me too."

"Aksharam is the Brahman. All things that have boundaries and limitations are the swabhavam of the Brahman."

"One breathes his last chanting my name, he will reach me in the heavenly abode. I am the one who knows all. I am the one the foremost amongst everything. I am the one who rules all. I am the smallest amongst all. I am beyond darkness. I am the one who orders the effects of Karma. The one who meditates upon me keeping his mind on me with devotion, he will reach me."

"I am the one who is beyond all comprehension. But it is I who makes everything else comprehensible and understandable. Everyone of these is my manifestation. Yet I do not possess them myself. Just as the air is ever pervasive everywhere, all things are within me. I am the one in everything of this world."

11th canto: Arjuna could see the entire world in the body of Lord Krishna, the angel of angels. He saw the one in many and many in one. "O the Lord! I am able to see all the worlds and lives in you. You are there standing without beginning or end."

How much of support can you guess could be there for Sankaracharya's simple Advaita? These sentences seem to support Visishtadvaitam as converse postulates.

The word Advaitam seems to explain the relation between God and Aatman. In Hinduism, the Dwaitam is also at once

the Advaitam. God's states are described in three different ways. They are, Bedam, Abedam and Beda Bedam. There are many commentaries for Advaitam. One cannot explain all these in logical platforms or by intellectual deliberations. Only the words of the wise who had close relations with Godhood can stand as testimony for these sentences. It is the same Sankaracharya who wrote commentaries for Brahma Sutram, wrote the devotional hymns of Sivananda Lahari and Soundarya Lahari. In Vedantham there is nothing that negates the existence of Aatman. The entity called, 'I' is not a Sunya. The Jeevatma is but a spark that came out of the divinity of Paramatma. With its mixing with Maya elements, it looks a little different. In words of interpretation about higher realms of philosophy, though God and Aatman are one and the same, in the practical or literal world they are different. If only we understand the difference between Jeevatma and Paramatma, we shall have understood everything. "There is one thing called the ultimate truth. No one can say that he knows the ultimate truth; nor one could afford to say that such a truth is non-existent. Even the great Sankara could not see the full meaning of it."

– Yoga Swamigal

We shall now see the two interpretations from Vedantha for the two questions that we have raised.

- a. The Nirguna Brahma is the only truth. The worlds and the lives are but the manifestations of this Nirguna Brahma only.
- b. Who am I.? - Thathvam Asi.- That itself is you, Sarvam Brahma. It is only the Nirguna Brahma that is pervading everywhere in the entire world. An individual Aatma is a spark from the Nirguna Brahma. When it merges or mixes with Maya, this spark indulges in Karma. And

it suffers the fruits of Karma. In the broadest terms, both the Jeevatma and Paramatma are one and the same. I am that. You are also that.

- c. When the individual dies, this spark (one that is involved in Karma) flies from one world to a different world - i.e. from one body to another body. Again it comes into this world again. It travels around to various worlds.
- d. The human life thinks that God is different from self and this thinking is due to ignorance. Once wisdom dawns, the truth is revealed. The feelings of "I" and "Mine" vanish. The Karma will not affect the prana. The Jeevathma will remain as Parmathma.

Vedantha teaches magnificent disciplines of life. Discipline, greatness, penance, kindness and mercy are all advocated and we can learn them any number of times. We can learn them by heart. We can teach others also and explain to them. But so long as one is rooted in thinkings about one-self, it is difficult to follow these disciplines. Once when one realizes the meanings of "I" and "Mine", selfish ideas and egoistic feelings will vanish. All deeds must be aimed at serving God. When mind is rooted in such ideas as "I" and "Mine", it gets entrenched.

"Every one of us is basically a divine creation. One should strive hard to bring out the Godliness in every one of us. One should control desires and passions. One could attain salvation through Karma, Bhakthi or Gnana. You can attain salvation through any of them or all of them. All the shatras, scriptures and principles and following of the precepts might help intellectual explanations, but they are not the most important."

— Swami Vivekananda

"I came from God. I am God's possession. I shall reach God on death." Rev. Father Ignatius Loyola said these words. If one gets this Brahma Gnanan, life will become divine. Nothing is different. I, He and other lives are not different from each other. All are manifestations of that one single Brahma only. If only people realize this fundamental truth, love for all will enhance. Jealousy, hatred and enmity will vanish. Selfish attitudes will come down. Love for the society and people in general will germinate. People will stop working for oneself but enhance their outlook by trying to serve others also. They will get out of the myopic outlook of selfishness. They will attain a life of bliss. The differences such as the high, the low, the wealthy, the poor, "I", "Me" and such things will vanish. There won't be one to rule over. There won't be anyone to be ruled. No servant nor master. There won't be a capitalist nor a labourer. There won't be one to exploit nor exploited. There won't be police excesses. No false propaganda through radios. Everything is Brahma and everything is Brahma's outcome.

Thathwam Asi. There is no end for our ability. There is nothing that we cannot achieve. We are the mighty ones with enormous wisdom. We shall live a blissful life. We shall never suffer sorrows on any day. Life will be extensively pure. Endless love and extensive ability will be the order of the day. Thathwam Asi. No fears at all. There is nothing to be afraid of also. All lives are but manifestations of the one great Almighty and hence everyone is the same and alike. Anything wrong done to any single life is wronging oneself. Human beings are living Gods. The kind of service we do to them becomes service to God.

When we start serving with a social attitude shunning selfish attitudes, there is no sin nor virtue. No effect due to Karma.

Thoughts and deeds will be of high order. We shall reach God even while living in this world. For all this to happen, the social order and economic status must be suitable. Individual property rights must vanish. Economy should function as per the order of a supreme social outlook. People must look upon engaging in trade or industry as a part of their duty. The differences between the capitalist and the labourer must vanish. Labour according to one's ability and division of the proceeds according to one's need. This was what was contemplated as the social order from a religious point of view. There is no use in simply talking of Vedantha. Vedantha must be explicit in thinking and action.

4. MYSTICISM

"You don't see yourself. What you see is nothing but an image of yours. ... — Socrates.

The pleasures enjoyed by the groom and bride, what an eunuch will know. ...

The joy through God - enjoined will the ignorant know? What these fools will know? ... — Kabir

Whenever you see all books, those

Whenever we see the "God" ... — Thayumaanavar

I'm not, Jesus lives in me. ... — Saint Paul

O Father! O Hari! I call thee thus ...

Others call me a fool! ...

O Pearl, diamond, the germinating seed,

Would I leave your go unworshipped?

— Thirumangai Alwar

How true is the universe that we are capable of seeing and experiencing? What is the primal thing behind it? Is there anything more permanent behind this ever changing thing? Is there God? If He is, then what is His nature? What is the connection between God and Universe. Who am I? Was I there before my birth? If I am going to continue to be alive, when, how and where shall I remain alive? What do you mean by the good, the bad, the Karma, the sin, the virtue, the dharma and the adharma? Will the effects of Karma have an impact on the life of the doer?

What is the cause of sorrows in the world? Could there be occasions when there wont be any sorrow at all? What is that kind of a status that is sans sorrows? Most of the people choose to put such questions.

All such questions deal with a metaphysical world. We can get replies for these questions in three different ways.

a. By intellectual or rational philosophy. They try to get answers by rational philosophy or intellectual pursuits. We find a lot of controversial ideas and different philosophical thoughts. Could one see the real truth by just intellectual pursuits? Truth is something permanent. It is one and the same for all times and for all and everyone. "There is only one thing called the Truth". Intellectual ability varies from time to time and from people to people. It varies from place to place. Circumstances, habits and prejudices colour the ethos of the people. Even though one might be able to dissect and understand by intelligence, they cannot synthesize and generalise. One cannot understand the whole truth. One can perhaps differentiate and compare the facts.

"The arguments and postulates presented by philosophers are varied and different. They are all just words and carry no life in them." - Moulvi Rumi. Man is submerged in the darkness of illusion or Maya. He can seldom understand himself. He takes his body as himself. All his intellectual equipment are things of matter. How can he with the help of such equipment understand something that is beyond himself? Conditioned by illusion or Maya, he takes just appearances as reality. He is not in a position to understand truths beyond the appearances.

b. Religions. All religious persons swear by the scriptures which are written based on the sense of Godhood. On certain occasions, people take these scriptures for the very revelations by God. Every religion has one or more scriptures. Devotion,

self confidence and emotions form the basis of every religion. The sages of any religion are men of wisdom. There are umpteen religions in this world. The principles contradict each other. The wisdom of the wise cannot be explained in ordinary language. Laymen can seldom understand and explain to themselves what the scriptures mean. The wisdom drawn from scriptures, becomes principles of social discipline. They become debatable points. Sometimes the emotions reveal blind attachment. Just passions, feelings and emotions and prejudices including the feelings of "I" and "Mine" become the ingredients for religion. When religion attains the stage of debatable points, it attains a philosophical status. It stays with intellect or logical mind.

c. Mystics. They are those who have mystic experiences. They devote their lives for god - realisation and claim to have direct contact with God. The doctrine of such experience is called mysticism. No one can define such experiences or confine by principles.

*Among those grace blossoms,
Those who are blessed ones,
Are they that attain a stage of
Deathlessness eternally. Mutate o mind in silence!*

God or Truth is not there nor here. He is deep within. The sense of Godhood is something beyond the depths Aatma. This is beyond the comprehending minds and senses. This is beyond the comprehension by senses. This is beyond our thinkings and mind. We cannot comprehend by our intellect. One should control all his five senses in order to understand this Light of Wisdom. The mind should remain standstill in poise without any mental action.

*Attachment is discernable not by blind eyes
But by enlightened eyes.*

*When Lord who is unbeholdable by the physical eye
is beheld with the eye of gnosis,
attachment which is like mirage vanishes
and the soul gains the soft shadow of the Lords feet.
This when the panchachars is chanted!*

– Sivaganana Botham

*The Supreme God who is beholderable
neither through worldly knowledge nor wisdom eye,
is beheld only through Godly knowledge.
Then loving devotion ensures. Coming to know
The truth that the entire desire would be mirage,
soul quits it and gets poised in clarity.
Then when the soul chants the divine
Panchatshara as ordained, God Siva is
entempled in the soul which is now
free from flaws.*

– Sivagnana Siththiyar

*Where there's no day and night, only bliss
In the cosmos; to mingle and mix
Kick-start-fly yourself; hurry, hurry
To speed up, kick-off and fly yourself*

– Thiruvunthiar

*Let my little knowledge slowly wane
By my Lord's immense wisdom;
When shall such a day dawn?*

– Thayumanavar

*God is there seated in our heart.
The one in whose heart He blooms is fortunate."*

– Kabir

Foreigners call this as wisdom beyond senses. Vedanthis call this as Brahma Gnanam. Siddhanthis call this as 'Pathi' gnanam or the sacred blessings.

The seers are able to comprehend the mystic worlds. They are able to see directly the mystic things.

This is an experience of the past. This is a blissful state attained by the Aatma. You cannot explain what it is. The mystic seers are able to listen to the music coming from nowhere. They see the light. Aatma gets excited by the bliss and attains a blessed state. Through love, Aatma enters the different worlds as mystical destinations. They are all subtle worlds. Aatma is able to see the Almighty which is the purest, permanent, eternal, independant entity. It merges inextricably with that. This is a state much beyond mind, body and intellect.

The mystic seers are able to comprehend all the five states of man. 1. The subtle body. 2. The physical body. 3. The causal body. 4. The mind 5. The life. It is this life which is permanent and indestructible. After death, Aatma mixes with the subtle body and also the causal body. The effect of the deeds of Karma not done during life, are all there in the subtle body. Mind is the place for passions, inebriations and desires. This is called the world of the Maya. Aatma should get liberated from this world of Maya. That should directly link itself with the Almighty. The kind of feelings like "I" and "mine" are the basis of personal bondings. All such differences vanish when one attains the Godhood. There is no seer nor the seen. Everything is one and the same. Once this realisation comes, the Prodigal son returns home. This is our truest journey. It is our arrogance which stops this journey.

Both God and the lives are 'Chiths'. They are of the same nature. The lives get entangled in Maya and suffer. They forget who they are and wherefrom they had come. It is only through a sense of Godhood one could get liberation and get wisdom. It is not enough just to control mind. It is but the mind's nature

to get dependant on something. The mind should be dependant on God only. Aatmas go into sleep. The mystic seers adopt various methods in order to awaken them from sleep. One method is to continuously chant the God's name. We might call this as the Manthra. (Kabir). Ohm, Raam, Naam Harihari, Sivaaya Namaha are the manthras. God comes to the seers in the form of Guru. It is Guru who guides. Guru and the God are but one and the same. It is Guru who guides. The Gurutheetchai is but essential. It is Guru who takes the Aatma into himself, purifies and makes it merge with God. Aatma attains its own Paramapitha and gets bliss. We should all strive to reach our Paramapitha. But for his benign graces, we cannot reach Him.

"The wise wants to see the God. The God also comes down to receive the Aatma that has got enlightenment. The vision becomes a feeling.

Later the spirit becomes meditation. It is this meditation which makes the Aatma merge with God. There is no thought at this stage. There are no words. Everything is silence. There is no argument nor explanations. Both the birth and death are one and the same. Life becomes complete. The elements vanish. There is neither sorrow nor worry. The eternal principle only remains." – Sufi A.L. Junaid

"Aatma is the beloved son of God. God comes down with benign graces on seeing his son suffer. He comes down to bless us taking a human form." – Sadar Bahadur.

*King blinks at his son, grown separated
At hunter's place; confused young son too.
Like the former, knowing his son
Embraces and making proudly him his own,*

*The suffering soul, lost to five sensory 'Vetas'
 Without a helper - friend, is rescued
 His Guru the Lord becomes, his dirt (flaws)
 He removes, makes him His own at His Flowerfeet.*

– Sivagnana Siththiyar

The mystic seers have no religion. This is a wisdom which is beyond religions. No principles, no idol worship, no orthodox rituals and practices. No such distinction of religion and caste. All these have merged with God without any trace of distinction. They live with the sense of Godhood. They take everything as God's act and pull on.

*Wherever I see in whichever thing I see,
 In every being, you are alive,
 Live of lives; Aren't you who present
 In everything, O you Omnipresent?*

– Thayumanavar

We find controversies in the statements of the mystic prophets. But when one looks into them keenly, they are all just paltry differences in arguments and not in the real meanings. All the interpretations of these mystics appear one and the same. The materialists argue that the sense of God of man is but a perverse feeling or expression of the mind. Adolf Huxley describes it as the reason behind some chemical changes in the constituents of brain. Such feelings can be aroused by drugs also. Santana calls it a mental disease. Some call it a form of neurosis. Some say that it is all due to a passion and devotion for God. All these are but the guesses and presumptions of materialists.

*O! Father! Hari! when I call thee so,
 They call me mad;
 Pearl, saphire, germinating seed
 How I will leave you?*

– Thirumangai Alwar

There is nothing like the sense of Godhood in reality. Most of them feign. This might perhaps be true, because, we find many of them act like as if having the sense of Godhood. You cannot say that all the mystic seers are acting. On the other hand, they call us as blind and living in a state of ignorance, incapable of comprehending and attaining wisdom.

Men of wisdom, people with Grace, Godman, Godly volunteers, Sufies, Saints, Sithars are the different nomenclature by which these prophets are called and understood. We find a variety of such prophets. Some of them are simple Sithars without any sense of Godhood. Some are capable of performing miracles by sheer mental power. Some who lack such mental powers, deceive people by magic and mantras. They live by such tricks.

The meaning of the English term, 'Mystic' might be taken as Jeevan Muththar. These are the people who occupy a very high place in the divine hierarchy. They are soaked in divine feelings.

*Other than supressing all feelings,
shrinking within mind to naught,
And stay put in a state of slumber (trance)
Is there anything about them - tell!*

They are deeply immersed in wisdom, in a state of blissfulness within intellect and are Jeevan Mukthars. They do not indulge in any Karma.

*Like the supreme they do not the five
works or graft works; neither the soul's delightful works.*

Though the Jeevan Mukthars are fully the wise, will not worship any God other than Lord Siva.

*It's said the all - knowing spirited souls - they;
But they know only Sivam and nothing.*

*As the turtle pulls in all five parts within its shell,
Their spirit and souls will control their senses
And shrink they only towards God*

Just as tortoise shrinks all its parts into its tough frame, Jeevan Mukthars withdraw all their senses into themselves but direct them only towards God and remain in poise.

*No space without Him. When ego vanishes, spiritual soul
will align with Siva.*

There is no world without God. To become free from arrogance, the Jeevan Mukthars become one with Lord Siva and remain Sarva Viyaapaki.

*No Love, hate, attachment or affection,
For those who is enlightend
With 'agam' and 'puram' as one!*

Jeevan Mukthars who see Lord Siva in everything will not have likes, dislikes and passions.

*Those who work with ego, reap for their works,
spirited souls are they benefitting Siva's graces.*

Those who are egoistic and indulge in Karma, will be bound by the effects of Karma boomeranging on them. Because Jeevan Mukthars do everything in the name of Lord Siva, they get the bliss of Sivananda.

*Destiny commences when body is left, God's grace will give
benefit in between the inter period.*

What is praptham will disappear only when the body is renounced. The effects of whatever is done between the salvation and the renouncing of body, will make the blessedness vanish.

*The enlightened who are unaffected
By the deeds of three flaws (dirts)
For them this world itself is heaven come down!*

The Jeevan Mukthars who are almost on the point of ultimate salvation will not be affected by the deeds done by mind, body and intellect. They will attain salvation even while they are alive.

*People suffer with ego, out of ignorances
enlightened souls pity them with grace*

Even to those people who suffer by their ignorance, the Jeevan Mukthars will show mercy.

SIDDHARS AND SUFIS

*Good status attained, being adapt in
Vedantha, Siddhantha and 'Samarasa'
Are the wonder people, these Siddhar sect*

Since time immemorial, there were traditions of these Siddhas. Quite a few of them still exist. In certain foreign countries also we come across, the traditional Siddha ganas. It is difficult to believe all the stories about these Siddhars as most of them are exaggerated. We have failed to understand the inner meaning of their sayings. No one can explain them except on the basic premise of Vedic wisdom. Most of them look averse to our common sense and wisdom. Like institutionalised religions the Siddhars have not codified their sayings into a logical platform. They just tell their inexplicable experiences.

Most of them are illiterates. They are not pandits. They are a type of those blessed people, touched by God. They live with the sense of Godhood only. They have become one with God. They have renounced the feelings of "I" and "Mine" etc. Or at least they have mostly conquered such feelings. For them gold and earth are alike. They found the truth behind the Vedas which are normally incomprehensible by the senses. The common folk take them for mentally deranged people. Amongst those Siddhars, some of them have attained sidhis like anima, mahima,

karima, lakima, praapthi, etc. They performed miracles. Some of them were wonderful doctors. Some of them were good alchemists. Some of them were magicians. There are quite a few works on medicines written by Siddhars even now.

There is frequent mention about Siddhars in the Indian works. They seem to belong to varied religions. There is no religious differences in their states. Most of them were yogis. Patanjali sage was a siddha. The works on yoga, grammar and medicine written by him are still in vogue and practice. Sage Nagaarjuna, who created the Mahayana branch of Buddhism is considered to be one of the Siddhas.

Nine famous Siddhars are known to have lived at the foot of Himalayas. Amongst the nine crores of Siddhas, Bogar is considered one among the great Siddhars. Some of the works say that Siddhars like Erakeshra Siddhar could preserve their bodies for a very long time and lived for centuries. Mahesra Siddhars were of the opinion that our bodies could directly be transformed into souls and when so done, one conquers death. This is called transmutation. You get a reference about these Siddhars in Tamil literature.

There is also a work called 'The Verses of 18 Siddhars' in Tamil.

Idaikadar, Romamuni, Konkanar, Sivavakiar, Pattinathar Who are called Siddhars? One who has attained Sidhi or the salvation might be called a Sidha. They are of three kinds – kaya siddhis, mano siddhis and Aatma siddhis. Those who have attained Aatma siddhis might also be having Kaya siddhis and mano siddhis. But the one who has attained the real wisdom will not show that he has that. People with no Aatma siddhi might have attained Kaya siddhis and Mano siddhis. Thirumoolar explains in his verse who these Siddhars are -

*In yoga samadhi there is space infinite
 In yoga samadhi there is light abiding
 In yoga samadhi there is Sakti omnipotent
 They that delight in Yoga samadhi
 Are verily the Siddhars befitting.*

Most of these Siddhars do not believe in external rituals and Poojas, Anushtanams, Acharams and worshippings. They try to have direct contact with God, by keeping mind in poise, cross beyond any philosophy. They do not care about yoga, religion and gnana principles. Just as the commonplace materials are important for common men, God and Godly experiences are important for these Siddhars. Quite a few Siddhars say that they have actually seen God. They refer to blissful experiences they had which could not be explained. We shall now see a few of the Siddha verses.

*I sowed the seed of brinjal
 And the shoot of Balsam pear arose;
 I dug up the dust,
 And the pumpkin blossomed.
 This wonder struck the groundlings and witnessed not
 Who scattered full well ripened the fruit of plantain.*

— Thirumanthiram

One gets the power of strong will power the more one practises yoga. Sivam appeared because of Gnanam. Once Sivam appeared all the five senses vanished. I enjoyed the bliss of Sivanubhuthi in full.

*For the bounteous Lord
 This heart is the sanctum holy
 The fleshy body is temple vast
 The mouth is the tower gate
 To them that discern*

Jiva is Sivalinga;

The deceptive senses five the lights illumine.

You fools with false robes you deceive people

Your pretension but helps you

gorge yourself fast with food,

Well you may sing and dance and weep and wail

And thus may Siva seek

You never, never, shall you glimpse His feet!

– Thirumanthiram

Most of the Siddhas resented external disciplines, anushtanams and rituals. Without the sense of God and kindness, there was no use of indulging in these rituals, they said.

You recite four vedas, won't know Gnanam

As ghee mixed in milk; sinners won't know thee

The God who swallowed poison is in your heart

You speak of death. God is not even in your dream.

Where is temple? Where is tank?

Temples and tanks you pray

Temple is your mind; Tank is your heart;

Creation and death none, none and none.

Plant stone, presume God and place four flowers on

Go around it muttering mantras;

Will planted stone speak God in your hearts?

Will heated vessels know the taste of food?

– Sivavaakkaiar

Aroor Lord is in here. Holy days of other villages

You toil yourselves one after other - strait

You delve not into yourselves, ignorant fools

When have lamps you search for fire!

– Pattinaththar

Some of the Siddhars condemn the differences in religion and caste and also religious rituals.

*As ancient Kapilar told in Agamas
When are we to live without caste divisions?*

*Burn the shastras, negate all four vedas,
Find new formulas to end sufferings - when?*

*Getting rid formalities, affection and rituals
And getting lost in an enlightened state - when?*

*Where is caste? All body water is alike;
Five senses alike; five elements alike;
In ear-ring, bangles, etc., gold is alike;
Preach then caste - creed differences?
What kind of talk it is!*

*Love not; grace not fellow lives; purity nil
In heart, sans all moral value and seek
pleasure in torturing others; however
Smear they holy ash entire body,
Bow and wish others as if holy,
and act Formalities - abider
What contradiction! this is the religion!
O my heart, think of these, it pains!*

– Thadangan Sithar

In order to understand God, they say, Aatma should cross over the worlds, senses and mind.

*Pride and fear removed, with knowledge
You without sleep slept and got bliss O my heart!*

*Without love or hatred, in cosmic space
Existing is only bliss, that you dream of O my heart!*

*As with water its soft invisible vapour returns, mingles
Align O! my heart with the particular Addressless, nameless
God!*

– Pattinaththar

*Great light of happiness, surpassing six senses,
When will I get such a gift,
the blessing of worshipping thee face to face?*

*Researching all arts, after that finding truth there's
None except you; when shall dawn such time?*

– Pathirakiriyar

*Suppressed ego, burnt five senses
without sleep slept; when to get happiness?*

*Razing down the forest of corrupting senses
And setting afire, you can achieve paradise.*

– Kaduveli Sithar

Sufis were also the people who lived having merged with God.

Though these people were muslims alright, belonging to the Middle East Asia, they were above religion. You can make a specific mention of Mullas as those who were considered great amongst the Sufi community. Sufis never argued on religious principles. There is nothing as existant nor inexistant. There is nothing as truth nor false. It is only the experience of Godliness that is important for them. They always lived with the sense of Godliness. They saw God in everything. They had gone above commonplace arrogance and egoism. They maintain a poise. They talk out of Godly wisdom or Godly experience.

God is one beyond comprehension by our senses. You cannot find him in books. You cannot read him in books. You cannot prove him by arguments and debates. God is beyond everything and expansive. He is there in our hearts. If you try to explore within yourselves, you can not only find Him but also yourself. Man is a combination of life and matter. Aatma is bound within the body matter and the subtle matter. One should free himself from these bonds and see God for himself. Sufis were able to see the God who cannot be comprehended by commonplace senses.

We shall now see a few thoughts given by Sufis on the Godly wisdom.

"It is service to mankind that is responsible for the spiritual growth. If you want God's blessings, you start loving the people."-Shiikkaadi.

"It is heart where God dwells. You unravel the mysteries of your heart. You cannot reach God by wearing saffron robes, rudraatcha strings and chanting mantras."

"You are not the body. You are not the tools of the body. You are separate from them. These are nothing but external coverings."

"My body goes to sleep. But my Aatma never goes to sleep."

"We can see only those things that are visible. You can see all the worlds by your third eye of wisdom. If only you open this third eye, the entire wisdom of the Vedas you can see."

"Man himself is God's resting place viz. the temple"

"For all external purposes, it looks like death. But in reality, it is a new life. For all external purposes, it is the death of the body. But in reality, it is the time for Aatma to grow." - Mowlvi Urumi.

"God is within you. He is nearer you. You move around without realising this. Your heart is God's temple. Keep it pure." Mcgraphie.

"Both the head of the family and the woman are lying in the same bed (God and Aatman). The woman sleeps. The head of the family is always keeping awake."

-Suki

"Man's all five senses are like the doors that open out. There is a wonderful window inside. It opens out into a world which you have not seen."- A.L. Kasali

God's name is the only salvation to reach Heavens. Your heart should be pure in order to spell his name.

- Nabikal Nayagam

OCCULTISM

We go through a lot of experiences which we cannot explain by scientific understanding. Some people call these illusions or tricks. Some others call them as wonders. There is at no circumstance anything that could be called as wonder. What we call wonders are child's play for the mystics. Some others call them as para normal or belonging to the realms of para psychology. All scientific pursuits have limits to reach. What science can comprehend, analyse, measure, understand and derive are all totally materialistic in nature.

Science cannot go beyond materialistic world and explore. How do we get after all the comprehensive ability through our senses? All the materialistic things are in permanent state of action or dynamic in nature. Different forms of energy waves emanate from out of these materials in perennial motion. Our senses too are tools of the material world. You get waves of energy from them also. When the frequencies of both the things in the external world and our own senses are one and the same, we then say that we comprehend. If they are different, we cannot comprehend. We cannot feel. What we cannot comprehend like this, we choose those things which have the same frequency and try to understand. Though belong to the material world, the extent of our comprehension is quite too small.

Things beyond the realm of materialistic world, say spiritual, subtle, mental and siddhas' cannot be comprehended by human senses. One can understand about these by transcending beyond the materialistic world. You can call this anything. The third eye is the eye of wisdom. God's blessings and the feeling of self, and the eye of wisdom have no connection with the mind and other senses. They can be only bliss, devotion, will and happiness. Next to the world of materialism, is the world of mind. The scientists have not yet fully unravelled the secrets of this world of mind. Freud's theories are yet guesses or tentative ideas. He has not fully explored the mind. In fact, there is no one who has fully understood the depths of the human mind. Some of the mental faculties are expressed explicitly to the outer world. Some remain dormant. If only we bring out our full capabilities, there is no end to them. The following list is just illustrative and not exhaustive.

Though we cannot fully classify the mental faculties, we can broadly categorize them into four big groups.

- a. **Materialistic forms.** All the physical abilities of the human body can be classified under this one head. The atomic power that has been discovered in this century also comes under this classification. We have not yet begun to use fully the various forms of energy from the materialistic world. For example, we have not yet begun to fully tap the potential of the magnetic energy that is within us. When some of us are capable of using this magnetic energy, we call them as wonders.
- b. **Mental Energies.** There are lot of energies dormant in us as mental energies. Most of them lie in the depths of our consciousness without being used. Most of the mystic powers are from this dormant world.

- c. **Spiritual energies.** Our Aatma is lying bound. But its faculties are limitless. If only you unleash these energies, you can express all these. The energy of Pranayama is a form of this energy. All works on Indian Yoga systems explain this. This form of energy is born out of the Kundalini form of energy.
- d. **Cosmic forces or the Divine Power.** When Aatma merges with God, it becomes God himself. Jeevan Mukthas are those who have these divine powers. The miracles that Jesus was able to perform are divine powers.

Those who possess the powers of the Aatma and divine powers will be equally good in bodily energies and mental power. But the vice-versa is not true. Some of them could be bad also. They will be highly selfish at times and after money. They will not hesitate to do bad to people. They will seek the help of ghosts and devils or bad spirits. But those who have the divine power might be those who possess Aatmic wisdom or magicians. They might also be well versed in Tantric tricks. Mostly these are mental powers as revealed in the following verse of Thaiyumaanavar.

*You may control rut of an elephant,
control the mouth of bear, tiger,
Ride on the back of lion, charm snake
with chariot of fire ride five Worlds
and sell and eat you may go around the world
without being sighted by anyone
win Heavens for service, live young always.
Reincarnate in another body, walk on water, sit on fire,
win yourself.
How difficult it is! controlling mind and stay in poise
O Wisdom God you ruler of Supreme stillness!*

Some of the following things are considered miracles.

1. Seeing without eyes. Hearing without ears.
2. Removing the poison through Mantra.
3. Kaaiya kalpam.
4. Telepathy, sub-conscious worlds, getting in contact with a distant person through telepathic methods.
5. Capability to read others' minds.
6. Extra sensory perceptions, understanding events that occur at distant places through extra sensory approaches. Sweden's Boag Keller was an example. This faculty is called Gnana Dhrishti.
7. An aura of light glow around the body. Some are able to see this. One can understand the status of one's body and mind from this.
8. One can get the mental poise by mental control.
9. **Clairvoyance.** Our puraanas talk about sages who knew all the three periods like past, present and future. With this faculty the element of time and distance vanish. Bishop Letpeter says that if only one could read what is written in 'Akash' one can understand fully about the past, present and future.
10. **Clairaudience.** The faculty by which you can hear what cannot be heard by normal ears.
11. **Hypnotism.** When any person is capable of being hypnotised by another, the latter could read what is in the mind of the former. Anybody could thus be controlled. You can bind the mouth of a tiger. You can cure incurable diseases. There are quite a variety of such overpowerings. All these

are possible by the electro magnetic waves emanating from one.

12. **Mesmerism.** Mesmerism and Hypnotism are ancient faculties of our country. There are quite a few treatises on these subjects. By these, doctors are capable of curing a lot of diseases. One who is hypnotised is sent into a state of deep sleep. His external mind then goes into rest. But the depth of his sub-conscious and Aatma are awake. Aatma is able to see without any eyes. Aatma is able to hear without ears. It understands whatever had been forgotten. It performs miracles.
13. **Trance.** This is a faculty of wakefulness even in sleep.
14. **Precognition.** This is the faculty of understanding what is going to come.
15. **Retrocognition.** This is the faculty of understanding the past. Allowing the mind to fly to the past. Bringing whatever lie buried deep within the sub-conscious to surface of consciousness. Some are able to come out with remembrances of whatever happened to them in the past. Gaiez was able to elaborate fully in a state of deep consciousness, as to whatever happened to the lost continents of Atlantic and the former birth details of some of his fellow men.
16. **Psychometry.** The faculty of telling about one by touching or smelling any article or thing used by the concerned person.
17. **Psychokinesis.** Trying to displace an object from one place to a different place.
18. **Leviation.** Making things fly in air or oneself flying.

19. **Walking on water.** Living buried within earth, alive without getting poisoned by toxic substances.
20. **Mental healing.** Curing diseases by mental powers.
21. **Creating things you want.** All these objects are created out of eather, say some. Showing oneself in different places by choice. (Materialisation).
22. **Endless grace.** Just by a handful of rice, feeding thousands of people. The 'Atchaya Paathra' of Manimegalai. Jesus was able to feed thousands with a single 'appam' in hand.
23. **Standing beyond the body.** Entering somebody else's body from without. This is called out of body projection.
24. **Attacking other materials by mental powers.** You can bend iron rods. You can break things. You can unlock the locks. Keller was an example for this faculty.
25. **As the medium to pass through bodies.** If one could become himself the subtle body, he could achieve this.
26. **Make changes in natural conditions.** You can make the wind blow at greater speeds. You can raise a storm. Or you can stop storm from blowing. You can make the rain fall more vigorous. You can make gold out of earth. Or you can make earth out of gold.
27. **Create something by your looks.** People call this 'kannuuru' or 'Dhrishti'.
28. You can lie without being seen by others.
29. **Conquer all three worlds.** You can arouse devils and demons. The talk of Pilli Sunyas prevalent in our country is a familiar example.

We have adequate knowledge of the scriptures to answer both our questions, because all these are dormant energies of the material and mental world. But what is explicit from the above is that there are worlds incomprehensible to our senses. The kind of worlds that we know, is too insignificant. The segments of the world we cannot comprehend is too large. The point is that one should not be beguiled into a frenzy on understanding about these worlds and their existence. The real world is still far from these also. That is the most real world of God and the subtle world.

Today they argue about the spiritual forms of energy. Some scientists call it magic and tricks. No one can deny that quite a few of them deceive people by magic. But most of the times, these energies and abilities might still be dormant in quite a number of them. They belong to both the body and the mind. We need not refute them; nor wonder with a sense of exaggeration. Those who possess such energies are not angels or god's manifestations. It is ignorance to think so. Some of them could be really people of wisdom. The sages have all wisdom and knowledge. They have all the mystic powers. We can never conclusively say anything about what we do not know.

5. HEBREW RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

The Old Testament is the basis for the Hebrew religion. These scriptures reveal the history of the Jews. From time to time, great prophets, thinkers and sages were born in the Jews' community and formulated social laws, code of conduct, etc. They laid down the religious principles also. Amongst them, Moses and David were community leaders, religious leaders or political leaders. Some of them were servants of God. Hebrew religion was one of those ancient religions born out of traditional societies. One could compare this religion with that of our own Rigvedic times. Now we shall look into those ideas of this religion relating to our prominent two questions.

The Book of Genesis elaborates on the birth of this world and lives. In the beginning there was only God. He was there everywhere. There is nothing without Him. There is no movement without Him. No sound nor voice without Him. He created this earth and the sky by His words.

The world was a dilapidated mass and covered by floods. "The earth was formless and empty, darkness everywhere. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. He ordered light to come and shine brilliantly. There was light. God separated darkness from light. He called the day and night.

These were the creations on the first day. On the second day, God separated water in many places. He created sky above water. In some places He made water to come together and created the earth. Later He created plants, trees and the like. On the fourth day, He separated light from darkness in the sky and created the day and the night. On the fifth day, He created the marine lives and the birds. On the sixth day, He created the animals first and later the humanity. On the seventh day, He took rest.

Why did He create Man? He created him as his own image. Some of those angelic persons who he had created started rebelling against Him, and so were driven out. The foremost and the leader amongst them was Lucifer. Once they were driven out, Man was created. God believed that Man would be loyal to him and would remain always devoted to Him.

He created this world and the rest of the lives in order to have fellowship with man and his love. He gave all the comforts and wealth to Man. He blessed him with an eternal life. Adam, on listening to the advice of Eve, transgressed God's intentions and orders. He acted in a selfish way. Right from that day sorrows and death became the order.

(The reason behind the fall of Man was due to his forgetting about God and love for God and he gave room to passions and desires. Hence sorrows ensued.)

God created Man as His own image. He created the forms of gender as the male and female. He gave them human bodies and blew spirit into the bodies. Thus was born the man. No one can call the body or the spirit exclusively as "I". Man is a combination of both the elements. No one can divide this combination. When the body disintegrates, the spirit also

disappears. There is absolute Sunya after death. The ancient Hebrew religion talks about this Sunya. The following words reveal that: "You live according to your desires. You satisfy your desires and wishes. Enjoy with good food and merriments. Drink to your will and satisfaction, lead a contented sensuous life with women. Do whatever you like with full vigour. Your body will be buried after your death. In the grave, you will not be there; no intelligence; no faculty or ability; no action; no wisdom. Death will supersede all."

If that is the case, how could one say that we can live a permanent life with God? The Jews who lived by the words of Yahovah will, after death, rise for once on the day of the judgement. Those who had lived a life without obeying God, and other religionists will not wake up. God will blow the spirit again into the bodies of the dead and awaken them. God will create the world with the gross body. God will live with them as one family. This is the reason behind the Jews' practice of burying the dead bodies and not burning them. Those who will not wake up will end up with death.

Even before Christ, the Hebrew religion underwent some metamorphosis. The Jews when they had been imprisoned in Egypt might have been influenced by the ideas of souls. Or they might have taken it from Babylonians or Egyptians. The theories of the souls did not get stabilised amongst them as yet.

They thought however that the souls continued to live as shadows in some obscure caves for some time before they ultimately disappeared. This under-world was called Sheol. Like the Hades of the Greek this was a very chill and dark place. This was beyond Jehovah's conceptions and rule. Here bad elements were ruling. Those souls which had been imprisoned here could never find escape.

They disintegrate after suffering sorrows. Only a few souls reach the Heavens. They live as shadows in heavens and after a period of happiness disappear. Therefore, the souls are not eternal entities. In fact, death is the beginning point of the soul's death. Yet those of the souls which had faith in God, and loved God will reach God's palace. Prof. Louis Fingelsein, a great theologian and master of Hebrew religion, says, 'the soul is eternal. It can never die. During the period of salvation after death, this merges with God in the intervening period which lies beyond space and time.'

The Hebrew people saw God differently and in different form. Some of the prophets said that they conversed with God. The Hebrews of very ancient times believed that the Jehovah king lived in some obscure hillock and was ruling a kingdom. The Hebrews of later times thought that God like the kings on earth, was ruling over a kingdom in heaven.

The God of these people was the traditional God. That means, He belonged only to the Jews. His name was Jehovah. When compared to other traditional Gods, he was the most powerful. Jehovah was the most real God. It was He who protected the Jews. He will destroy other people and their Gods. He allied himself with the new people supporting them and will destroy their enemies and got victory for them. When the Jews had been jailed, he fought for them and got their release.

The Jews believed that Jehovah alone was singularly responsible for all their successes and defeats. When they disobeyed God's divine orders, they were defeated. Even today, for victory in wars, people pray to God. After victory they feel thankful to God. This is the traditional religious practice of the Jews. This was also the kind of practice of most of the religions of those days. For example, when the nomadic tribes wanted

to win over the Thaausus in India and covet their wealth, they prayed to their traditional Gods of Indra and Varuna.

The Jews had the fear of God. They admired his strength and abilities. They took it as their duty to obey God's wishes. As time went on, the God's wishes changed hands with the temple priests. There was no mercy nor kindness. The Jew leaders issued instructions impulsively from time to time by whatever pleased them for the moment. The leaders of the Jews, made treaties with God on behalf of the Jews. The Jews agreed to obey Jehovah's orders. They agreed to love him and worship him. God also agreed to protect and support them.

"O the people of Israel, our God Jehovah is the only true God. One must love him with all his heart, strength and spirit." This is the first of the commandments.

The Hebrew people never bothered about the next birth, nor salvation. All the kind of blessings and boons they prayed for came from Jehovah, were related to life on this earth. Wealth, progeny, protection from enemies and victory in wars were the blessings they sought for from Jehovah. The Jews were deeply ethnic in spirit. They bothered only about their clan. They prayed to God incessantly for victories in war and protection from their enemies. The kind of kingdom they dreamt for was the kingdom in Jerusalem. They prayed to God that the Jews established this kingdom of theirs and must conquer other countries. They believed fully that God would help them achieve these ends by sending a Messiah as their saviour."

"The Messiah" or "The God's son" was the idea of Hebrew's religious doctrines. The history of the Isrealis was sorrowful and pitiable. Many a time they were conquered by aliens and ruled over. They lived as slaves in their own land. At times they were

made prisoners and taken to foreign lands. Ultimately they were driven out of their own lands. They had to roam about the entire world. And in those countries where they were taken, they were subjected to cruelty and robbed of all rights. They were persecuted from time to time. The kind of sufferings they had undergone finds an echo in one of their prayer songs.

From time to time, quite a few prophets appeared in the land of the Jews. Commandments and orthodox principles started taking roots. During the period of Jews, the Hebrew religion became a dry religion of pure orthodoxy. Jesus condemned the two different kinds of Jews. The first amongs them was Pharisees. They were addicted to external form of orthodoxy. They believed in pomp and show. They could be compared to the ritualistic segment amongst the Hindus. For them, only the Hebrew religious doctrines and laws were supreme. The orthodoxy had its own ramifications at every point and everywhere. There were myriads of them. Orthodoxy throughout life. Orthodoxy without any sense of kindness, righteousness, mercy or social sense. They followed these principles of orthodoxy meticulously. They openly condemned those who transgressed these principles even by a very small margin. They were the symbols of arrogance and egotism. Only those who followed the principles enunciated by Rabbis alone would continue to be alive, they said, and that they alone would go to heavens. Such were those deeply immersed in orthodox religion, were like some of those of our own land who belonged to Mimasa cult and like them, ultimately started denying God Himself.

Sadducees were the second to come in the group, closely on their heels. These people were the traditional temple priests of the Jews. They were temple priests by birth. They were like the Brahmin Poojaris of our Hindu temples who perform Yagas

and Aradhanas. Mostly the temples were Sadducees personal properties. They converted the temples into commercial centres. They amassed great wealth by selling things that were meant for Yagas and Poojas. They exploited the common people by spreading superstition. They made people believe they could help them, see God for themselves. Though people thought this was true, the Sadducees by themselves did not believe in God.

Prophets belonging to the period of the Old Testament are those who belonged to the period before Christ. Moses was the first of those prophets. The Commandments pronounced by Moses were ordained by God. "No one should worship any Commandment other than what has been pronounced by me. No idol worship should take place. The common folk should not be wronged in my name. I shall punish him, who chooses to commit that crime. I shall punish those who worship other Gods. I shall love those who love me and worship me and obey my commandments. I shall help them. On the sabbath day, no one should work. They should all take rest. Every one should protect their parents. No one should commit any murder. No one should have any illicit relation with neighbour's wife. No one should depose falsehood in a court of law. No one should become abitious to covet others' property."

"Believe with all your full strength of your mind that God exists. Love him. Treat any stranger as you would like to be treated. (They gave the definition as the one who was not a Jew as the definition for the word 'stranger').

Some of the rules were of the retaliatory nature. They might appear as very harsh for people of these days. Probaly Moses might have explained the laws of Kanmam. Amongst the Commandments issued by Moses, some of them were the rules of orthodoxy and some of them were social laws. The social

laws related to building temples, conducting rituals, worships and methods of doing yagas, festivals, principles of justice, crimes and punishments.

The people of Hebrew religion believe that God exists and so does the soul. But they did not take soul as the truth. Those that indulged in doing crimes or sin ultimately perish or disappear. And those who indulged themselves in doing something good or being righteous ultimately reach God. There in the heavens, they live as angels.

Special principles of the Hebrew religion are: A very firm faith and belief in the existence of God. Devotion to God, Love of God, living with a sense of godhood, devoting oneself through life to God and also shedding all traces of selfishness, passions and reducing desires.

CHRISTIANITY

Christ was born about 2000 years ago from now. (Certain researches put it as roughly about 2007 years during the month of September). Christ was born to bless the world and the people and protect them. He was born as the son of virgin mother Mary. He became a wise man even when young. He performed quite a lot miracles. He cured some of the incurable diseases for those afflicted. He brought back the dead alive. He restored eyesight for those who had lost their eye sight. He made the lame walk. He drove away devils from those who had been affected. He could make enormous food available from a little amount of the same in his hands.

He walked on water. He appeared at a point where he had desired to appear conspired with each other and killed Jesus.

They crucified him. He was buried. But he came back alive from the grave. He appeared before his disciples. He returned to heavens. He is son of God. He died for the sake of protecting the people. He talks with a passion to God in order to help the poor and all. Those who live by contemplating on His grace, will reach God and the Christ. There are many who refuse to believe in Christ. Some Christians too refuse to believe in Christ. Certain things appear as unbelievable for common sense. I do not want to enter into arguments and indulge in explanation in this context. It is needless to explore whether these things are historical facts. Faith is the only basis for religion. On the basis of the 5th chapter of the scriptures, it is not difficult to accept these and get explained ourselves.

Jesus was born in the land of the Jews. He lived as one amongst them. He himself says that He was not born to destroy the religion of the Jews. He says, "I have not been born to destroy whatever was given by Moses and other prophets and their laws. I have come into this world only to persuade people to follow whatever has been said by them." Jesus never formulated any new concept of theology or cosmosology. Most of the Christian ideas on these aspects have been derived from the Hebrew religion. The Christians swear by the name of the Old Testament also. Later when Christianity spread to Egypt, Italy, Greek and Rome they absorbed some of the local concepts also. The first and foremost disciples of Christ were illiterate and commonfolk of the Jews. They just wrote down whatever they saw. For them whatever Christ did appeared miraculous. Whatever he said appeared wonderful and awe-inspiring. Sometimes Jesus talked in terms of parables.

Paul was like our Thiruthondar, who became one of the disciples of Christ in the later days. Paul, earlier known as Saul,

was a rebel and spread the message slowly against the principles of Christianity. He hurt the Christians and perpetrated violence against them. Once on his way he was stopped by a blazing light (from Heaven) and he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." And the voice further said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

He was awakened, embraced Christianity and became a leading apostle of Christ, spreading the religion far and wide.

A few excerpts from the Bible:

"Those who commit sins, whether Jews or others, will have to undergo suffering. Those who are virtuous, and look upon others with kindness, sympathy and mercy will ultimately become happy. They will live long."

"Those who live with selfish desires commit sin. They will die. Those who live with the spirit of Christ will not suffer any sin nor death."

"Man's body frame is the temple of God. You find the spirit of God therein."

"What is getting buried is the gross and physical body. What will be awakened is the indestructible and Aatmic body."

"Christ lived with the spirit of God. He lived in God. God lived in him. People should live in the spirit of God. It is not we who should live in our body but it should be Christ who should take over and live in our body."

"I am not living in my body, it is Christ who lives in my body."

"Just your efforts will not give you salvation. Place your faith in God. Surrender yourself unto him. Only God's blessings will protect you."

"Not just certain laws nor orthodoxy can take you to the point of salvation. Just pure faith in God alone will take you to heavens."

The people of Hebrew religion looked upon God as different. They found him in different form. They found him as many in one. Jesus sees God as one, many and different and also in him. He is able to see Him in different and without difference, and multi-differential ways. He was the veritable spirit of God. He lived in God. God lived in Jesus. The idea of "I" disappeared. The idea of God stabilised. Jesus' words are the words of God. Jesus' actions are the acts of God. Jesus and God are not different people. He is son of God. He is one of Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The sentence, "Myself and my Father are one and the same" reveals the oneness of God. "The body is the temple of God". "God's kingdom is within you." And the spirit of life that appear in different worlds, is nothing but the purest spirit of God". All these sentences reveal the God's status of being one with Jesus. In some places, Jesus talks of God as one who is different.

God is not just the king who would dispense justice of good or punishment or who rules the world. His mercy is for all. It is for blessing the humanity that he sent his great son. Out of his great love for the people, Jesus sacrificed his life. He died for us. God is always helping us. He is our Father and everything. God lives in our hearts. He reveals himself through kindness and mercy. Those who have the love are the fortunate. They will reach the kingdom of God. They will see God face to face. 'Everything is his blessing. Everything is his act. Whether they take food or dress themselves, whether they are going to sleep - whatever be the circumstances, Christians will pray and thank God. The reverend fathers of Christianity consider their worship as service to humanity.

When his disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he gave into them this prayer (St. Luke II)

*Our Father in Heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our sins
as we also have forgiven others
And do not bring us to the time of trial
but rescue us from the evil one.*

God's great son was born to protect us all. He was unjustly treated and crucified. Even in the cross where crucified he was, he said: 'O God they do not know that they are committing the sin. Pray protect them' and wept. He died but rose again. He won over the death. He talks always in favour of us all to his Father.

*Good ethics introduced, bad thought, vanish,
Difficulties will disappear, prosperity comes
You'll be purified, you'll be corrected path
All benefits will by the name of Jesus.*

*When thy holy body was in torture, thee helpless;
Amids suffering too grace swells as from mother
utters thee, in ignorance they err in this act
you graceful great from thy month forgiveness flows*

- Iratchanya Yathrigam

The Christians look upon God as one who is transcendent and also immanent.

"God only is the truest being. Only to the extent of His being in us and ourselves being in Him, we are true."

"If our lives must become true, we should sacrifice ourselves fully to God."

"O the one who is above all, the spirit of the scriptures, the one who is everywhere, the one who is the most powerful, the beauty of beauties, the one who is permanent and for ever, the one who cannot be comprehended by mind, body and intellect, the one who is changeless and without any place or direction - and yet the one who is solely responsible for everything - my God, my life, what shall I call you? Whoever could describe who you are?"

– St. Deen

Comprehension by senses, intellect, logic and arguments is not at all possible. It is an audacious attempt to think that one could understand about God by one's own abstract abilities.

One should control oneself and must first become devoid of one's ego. You should be humble. You should realise that your knowledge is but meagre. One should shun arrogance and egoistic disposition. One should have faith in God. Mercy, kindness, love of God, sacrifice and meditation must be the guiding stones. Briefly, one should shun selfishness and take up social outlook. The one who will so change himself shall be blessed.

Christians accept the existence of Aatma and that they are many. But they are not firm about that Aatma is permanent. Aatma was created by God. It was not there before your life. The principle of next birth and Kanmam are not believed by the institutionalized religion of Christianity. Besides, God may choose to destroy the Aatma. People commit sins without Faith in God and spirit of godhood and ultimately the Aatma suffer

in hell and then become dead. Only those souls which could be awakened by God go to heavens and start living with Him. Rev. Father Yone explains about such souls as below:

"These are the people who do service to God. They will never suffer due to poverty or hunger. Light or heat will not affect them. Because, Jesus, who stands just beside God's throne will feed him. He will guide them to where springs are. God will wipe the tears of their eyes."

Yet, many amongst the present day Christians, believe in the eternal nature of the soul and also re-birth and Kanmam. The examples following in the next chapter given by the researchers of Biôle will explain what I mean. Because of the scientific development, the westerners have started taking mind itself as life. They call the soul as 'psychic'. Some call the sub-conscious as the soul and call the super consciousness as God. God exists with the soul in the mind.

The Hebrew people believed that by doing the yagnas and adopting orthodox rituals one could reach God. Jesus says that there is no use of such meaningless statements. "Those who cry hoarsely on top of their voice as "God" "God" are not going to reach heavens or the kingdom of heavens." Fear or faith in God, the spirit of godhood, mercy, kindness and blessedness are the only things that will help one reach God. Love God is the second commandment. People are the Gods whom you can see with your eyes in reality. Service to humanity is worship of God. One should be less egoistic and less selfish, and more godly in outlook and improve their sense of social good. The Christian faith exhorts them to say, 'my lot is to serve humanity and nothing else'.

When compared to other religions obtaining during the times of Jesus, Christianity made a big revolution and there is no doubt about it. Though the Christians themselves had not started

following the principles of Jesus Christ, Christianity started getting stabilised as the key religious doctrine in most of the countries of the west. Democracy, freedom, socialistic brotherhood and social service were the outcomes of Christianity.

"In the presence of God, all our worldly knowledge becomes nothing. One who takes himself to be a wise man in the world, must consider himself to be an ignorant one. He will really become wise if he starts taking himself to be that. Because, all this world knowledge reduces to nothing in presence of God."

– Rev. Fr. Pole

"One who renounces his children, parents and lands and wealth, he will become hundredfold fortunate. He will attain an eternal life."

– Jesus

"The Lord of Christ was a spirit. He found God in himself. If only you possess the spirit of Christ, you will find Christ and God at once."

"One should scrub the last of egoistic impulses in himself. One should live in Christ. If only one chooses to practise this faith, instead of living in oneself, the Christ in one will start living."

"It is not "I" who lives in me but it is the Christ who lives in me."

– Rev. Fr. Pole

The way of reaching God is through love and blessings. Love is righteousness.

"All commandments will but become one with the commandment which asks you to love your neighbour as thyself. If only you obey this commandment it will be like obeying all the commandments."

'What if I talk in the human language or the language of the angels; the talk without any sign of love is going to be mere

noise. What if I am a prophet or a perfect wise man, what if I understand all the scriptures or capable of turning mountains, I shall become nothing if I do not have the spirit of love. What if I sacrifice everything and all of me, what if I offer myself to be burnt in fire, there is no use if I do not possess the spirit of love. The one who possesses the real love will not be lured by the bad. Only things that are good will go to satisfy them. They will have the highest forbearance. People might forget prophecies. Our own faculties might vanish. Our fame will disappear. We might even forget the education we had. But love will never disappear. There is no end for love. It is love that will be eternal. It is love that is the best of all."

– Rev.Fr. Pole

"Belive that God exists. Our goal must be to reach God. Love is the only path of that salvation. We move around like blind sheep having come out of our homes. We should go back home."

"I came out of God. I am God's property. I shall go back to God."

– Rev. Fr. Ignatius Loyola

It is the orthodox religious fanatics, the hypocritical tribe who talk in terms of law and justice - these are the people who killed Jesus. Every day they kill Jesus. But Jesus comes alive again. It is love that got alive. We shall deter ourselves against death. If only we choose to live in Christ with the spirit of Christ, Christ will start living in us. We shall conquer death. We shall come back alive. We shall reach the kingdom of God or heavens. We shall become one of his angels. Our lives will become blissful and it will be eternal.

6. SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is not an institutionalised religion. The ideas are not new. Amongst those who are spiritualists, most of them are Christians. These people accept Christ as the Son of God and the protector of people. But these are the people who condemn some of the principles of Christianity as an Institutionalised religion. They say that the Society of Jesus has interpreted the mystic words of Christ in a casual way. The religionists have by selfish ideas and hatred have misinterpreted Christ's ideas and principles. For instance, the spiritualists accept rebirth and fruit of actions which are not accepted by the institutionalised Christianity.

The ideas of the spiritualists are almost synonymous with the principles enunciated by the Indian Agama sastras. Yet, one cannot say that they derived those principles from the Agama principles. That is because, these principles are time-honoured and have been in vogue amongst all kinds of people. Though the institutionalised religions spread these principles were secretly adopted by masonic lodges. Most of Christians belonging to masonic lodges said that the God of theirs was the only true one, and they believe that non-Christians would not be protected or blessed. The spiritualists do not entertain such a narrow view and hatred towards other religions. Briefly their principles can be enunciated as follows:

There is one God. The spirits are many. The spirits are eternal. They never die. They were there before birth. They will continue beyond death also. Death is defined as life getting out of body. After death, the spirit goes to a different world. It gets into another body leaving the former. The one spirit which gets devoid of attachments and passions, gets enlightened and after living in many heavens ultimately reach the heavens of God and starts living along with Him.

The spiritualists are of the view that it is possible to get in touch with those spirits of the dead. Such a communication is not possible for ordinary people. Only a very few are capable of this. Such people are called the medium. There is a material called ectoplasm which ekes out of the people called the medium and the spirits are able to communicate with those on the earth with the help of this ectoplasm. It is not that all the spirits could get into communication with this aid. Only those who had lived with a high growth in spiritual affairs could afford. Such people are called guides or teachers. In fact, this sort of contacts are called the ones between the medium and the teachers.

The guides tell us about the other world and also the spirits living there. At times, they talk about the mystic wisdom. At some other times, the medium people are able to talk to other spirits. They talk to the spirits of the dead people belonging to other families. Such conversations tell us about the kind of life they see in the other world. They also talk about things that were known secretly between the listener and themselves.

At sometimes, certain spirits of the lower world (devils and demons) intervene and talk. If you ask them who they are they say that they are none but some of the most eminent people who lived on this earth. They tell lies and deceive. Besides, the guides and the spirits could tell only about the world in

which they move around. Their knowledge is not complete. For instance, some of the answers got from them about the world of God, is follows as:

"We have not yet reached the world of God or God himself. Hence, we are not in a position to say anything firmly about God. But we believe alright about that God exists. We understand the truth of His. Our ideal is to reach Him alright.

Some of the people belonging to the group of the medium play a drama of falsehood and it is possible they could exploit the gullible and the common folk. Falsehood shows its head everywhere. Even where religion is supposed to dominate, we find many people enacting dramas and cheating people. Hindus also accept the possibility of establishing contacts with those in the world of spirits. But they feel it is undesirable to continue these contacts for the following reasons.

1. It is very difficult to first establish the contact. There are many amongst the medium who are acting fraudulently and exploiting the people.

2. While the contact is just getting established, some of the devils and demons of the lower world, interfere and commit mischiefs. They might also give bad advices. It might be possible to get some salvation through these devils, yet, it is advisable to avoid them.

3. Salvation is our ultimate aim and not the life in the other world. To attain salvation, love, kindness and righteousness are the only ways. We must devote completely our thoughts and deeds to God.

There are plenty of clubs obtaining abroad, which establish contacts with the spirits of the outer world. These contacts are established in dark rooms and hence there is enormous room

for fraudulent dramas. Yet you cannot call all those in the medium as frauds. Scholars have exhaustively done researches on these medium people and their contacts and brought out their works. Most of them are scientists. Mayes, Gechvik, Kerni and Oliver Loj could be made special mention of. There are quite a few works in English about spiritualists and spirits. As most of these have not been translated into Tamil, I make a passing mention about some of them at the end. We shall have some of the principles given by the spiritualists.

The Worlds. We normally take it that there is only one world of this kind. There are quite a plenty of them like electrical world, magnetic world, light world, electronic world and the world of spirits. The kind of souls in varied states of these world live in different bodies. Wherever they are they always progress towards God. Rest of the worlds are not visible to us and cannot be comprehended by our senses. Our world also is incapable of being comprehended by the spirits or lives of the other worlds.

Today we know that an atom simulates the solar system. Within atom there are oppositely charged electronic particles circling in tremendous speed and we now know about it. Though the material things appear as full solid, they are porous and have minute holes in them. They are made by the combination of billions of oppositely charged electron particles. They appear to us as solid things because of the interaction of some electromagnetic waves. It is thus possible that X-rays unlike normal light rays could pass through the so called solid materials. The worlds which we mentioned above could pass through other media and reach other worlds. There may not be space in between.

Space and spacial dimensions have been conceptualised by us only. Things in one world cannot be comprehended by things in another world. It leaves the gross body and gets into the subtle

body. Such subtle bodies are after all part and parcel of our own gross bodies. Every life depending upon its status reaches the world. If by any chance, it goes to the upper world of pure light, and unable to bear the conditions there, it might come down. When a life enters a world, there it gets born. When it leaves, it dies. There is no beginning nor end for any life.

There are worlds above and below ours and also around and across. Mayes refers to the seven worlds. According to our puraanas also there are seven different worlds. There are certain spiritualists who refer to 14 different worlds. God is one who stands away from all these. At the same time, he is found mixed in all these worlds. There is no place where He cannot be found. The spirit crosses all these worlds and reaches God. The upper worlds which are bright with joy are called the heavens. The ones that are darker and obtaining below are called the hell.

The spiritualists talk exhaustively about the hell. These hells are surrounded by misty smoke and darkness. Though there is some light in some corner of these hells, it is faint. One cannot bear the cold in the hell. There are massive, very high mountains and deep valleys – all of them of frightening dimensions. They are almost in a highly dilapidated stage. The toxic vapours of anger, jealousy, desires and passion surround everywhere. There are trees but they do not grow. There are no leaves, fruits and flowers. The dirty rivers and decayed plants combinedly give out unbearable smell. There is no drinking water. The air is full of foul smell. Crowds and crowds of devils and demons live in hills. They move around with a false image about themselves under the impression that they are Gods. These demons have no intelligence. There is no light. They never realise themselves. They move around in their own image of arrogance.

The unruly and the sinful, the bad, the exploiters, those who commit adharma in the name of dharma, those who are dictators in the guise of democracy, the egoistic and the arrogant, the power mongers, the fraudulent, the malicious priests – the spirits of these people go to the hell. Just the death do not change the character of these spirits – their thoughts, words and deeds never undergo a change. Those who are bad in this world will continue with their character in the hell also. Those who are drunkards will continue to drink in the hell also, to their heart's content. There is no dearth for money. Those who are passionate over money, land and women will continue the same kind of life there also. Those who lived the life of exploitation in this world, will continue the life of exploitation in the hell also - operating on fellow demons. The dictators would like to dictate in the hell also. The police and the army will continue their atrocities in the hell also. Those who spread religious fanaticism will continue their activities blissfully in heavens also. The atheists will remain atheists there also. The egoistic will continue to be egoistic. In short, the life in the hell or heavens will be just a continuation of the life in this world. It will not be just like an accident.

Demons will be fighting with each other in the hell. The selfish ideas are going gay with devilry. The one is avaricious about the other's things. They tell lies. They steal others' possessions. They snatch others' belongings. The property rights, exploitation and the high and the low continue blissfully in the hell also. The feeling of ego and "mine" are common to devils and demons also. The demon in the hell will never accept when it is dead that it is dead. Most of the demons do not like to live in the heavens. Some of them commute between this world and the hell. Those some of the spirits living in the hell want to go

heavens, the other demons prevent and block them. From time to time, angels visit the hell and take with them those spirits which want to go to heavens.

The guides tell us only those things which we want to know about these hells. The guides and the contacting spirits are those living in the heavens. These people are incapable of telling us about the life of the spirits after their death out of experience. Mostly, they talk about life in the heavens only.

Their experience can be broadly classified into two.

(a) While they die. and (b) Life in the heavens after their death.

Those spirits and guides living in the heavens say that they found a brilliant atmosphere of God's graces in the heavens and found angels and big prophets. But nobody ever said that they were able to see God. God is still away from them.

The experience around the period of death is given very elaborately by some spirits: "I was bedridden for long. As I could not walk, they kept me in a wheel chair and pushed. I detested it. The disease worsened and I was obliged to be in the bed for some more time. Tiredness ensued. I became thinner. I wanted permanent sleep. One day I felt that I was floating in the air. I did not know that that was death. Just for a while I woke up and saw. I could find many people around me and I saw my dead father near me. "Don't be afraid. Be silent," he said. I fell into sleep again. When I woke up again, I found myself in a river. Now I could see that I had no body. "My disease had disappeared. I saw trees, birds and plants." This was the kind of narration of the experience of a spirit who went to heavens.

As one nears death, one faints. Senses slowly lose their powers. At certain times, the subtle inner powers function very effectively and clearly. The spirits go very far. They are capable of seeing things that take place at a distance. They are capable of listening to what is spoken at a distance. They are capable of comprehending certain friends of theirs who are in a distance and who are going to become shortly dead. When one is going to become dead, the spirit is just able to see his father and mother, friends and relatives also. The spirits of these people go there to take along with them the spirits of those who will shortly become dead.

At the time of death, the soul leaves the gross body along with its subtle body. Yet, death does not occur immediately after its exit. It is only the subtle string like connection, when it gets cut, causes the death. As this is going to happen, it is just possible that it enters again into the gross body. This is the proper reason behind certain cases of some people coming back alive after death. Normally life goes off the body when one is in a state of fainted consciousness. Though one suffers all the pains of ill health and diseased conditions, death itself is not painful. Body suffering is different. This might also perhaps be a consoling factor. The subtle body floats in the sky. The spirit will sleep inside these subtle bodies. The state of the spirits is one and the same both during the time of birth and at the time of death.

Those who had indulged in criminal activities and were constantly in enmity, jealousy, fierce passions get visions of frightening scenes at the time of death. All the bad things they had committed appear before their eyes. Even after death, they suffer due to frightening visions and get confused. Others who were by nature peaceful, kind, merciful, humble and charitable in outlook and deed do not suffer such bad visions. They leave

their bodies without any confusion. Before the bodies are going to attain the state of sleep, they get to their mind all visions of whatever happened in their lives. All bad things they committed in their lives unfold themselves at the point of death. Such memories get implanted in the subtle bodies of the spirits, surfaces to mind during the next birth. They also become the roots of the next birth. Mind follows the subtle body after death.

As it leaves the gross body, life gets tired and fatigued. Whatever gave the stability in life now looks absolutely helpless. It slumbers until it gets life in the next body. In the new world and birth, it might take some time for the spirits to get adjusted themselves. Every spirit enters the world consistent with its own nature. The spirits of the bad people reach the hell. The spirits of the good people reach the heavens. This is called the final judgment. Every spirit finds its own judgment. It suffers the effects of its own doings and undoings.

Nobody need be afraid of death. One should practise to contain his senses and be peaceful at least for some durations during the course of one's life. If one does that, death will be easier. Most of the people die in wars or accidents. Some are murdered. Quite a few commit suicide. These deaths are of the most testing things. The souls of such deaths are able to tell out their experience. Even after death, such spirits never realise that they are dead. It might take a long time for them to realise. Such spirits move around in the lower worlds. They do not immediately fly to heaven or hell. They are in a fully wakeful state even after death. The spirits of those who died in war continue to be involved in the fight; they continued the war fighting with the same implements which they used while alive.

Murder is something against God's laws. Committing suicide is a most sinful thing. The souls of those who have committed suicide will feel very bad for a very long time. They will never find solace and be roaming about in lower worlds. Very soon they will get rebirth. The souls of those who die in accidents are very wakeful. They are able to see the damaged vehicle and also their bodies being removed from the mangled vehicle. They take it that it is someone else who is involved in the accident. They are also very surprised about who else could it be involved in the accident. At first the spirit gets shocked and surprised. Later, they faint and get confused. Such are the spirits that will never go peaceful. For most of the time, they move around in this world and in the lower world.

Some are able to see such spirits. Some of these spirits cause something bad to certain people. At the end such spirits get into sleepy states and go to other worlds. Because of the accidental death, the subtle bodies of these spirits might also get hurt on the sudden loss of its gross body. Most of the spirits look surprised on finding nothing of those that one would normally expect in the heavens. Those who do not believe in God, do not believe in Aatma say that there is no life after the death. The spirits get surprised as to how they are still alive even after leaving the gross body. The religious fanatics are those who arrogantly think that they alone know the real truth and that their religion alone is the truest. When they go to heavens, they look surprised on not sighting their God there.

Some believe that God would protect them or God would show mercy and open the gates of heavens. Some believe because of the virtuous deeds they did on earth, that angels would bring a palanquin to carry them to heavens. Some think that they could buy a place in heavens through their wealth. Some take

it that by doing yagnas, and spending on religious rituals, they could wipe out their sins and get redemption. All these people, despite their virtuous deeds and their entry into heavens, cannot stay there for long. They will return to this land not before long. Some of those spirits of the bad people are really bad characters. They are the handlings of Satan. These spirits only long to be in the hells. They expect it too.

There are many heavens. The spirits slowly advance and go from one heaven to other heavens. They take bodies corresponding to every heaven. This again corresponds to death and birth. Those of the spirits which have crossed the third heaven, do not get reborn in this world. It is not possible to get in touch with them also. Those of the virtuous souls who crossed over the third heaven, out of sheer mercy and for the cause of protecting people, they might get reborn in this world again. This is not as an effect of whatever they had done in their past births. Jesus was in heavens sitting along with God. He was born into this world for the cause of protecting the people. All those prophets and religious teachers get reborn in this world for the cause of spreading goodness. God who is everywhere and the one who is beyond everything does never get reborn in this world.

The spirits which live in the first three heavens could possibly get reborn in this world. Even though they live in heavens, they do not forget these wordly passions, desires and ambitions and contacts, fully. Though they reach heavens by virtue of having done certain good deeds, the self consciousness and selfish ideas never disappear in them. These spirits are attracted by the worldly desires of this world. They want to indulge back in action filled life, reap the fruits of actions and get new experiences. They get the desire of living once again with those whom they like. These are the attractions which cause their rebirth into this world.

Even the heavenly life is not permanent. The first three heavens are hence alleged Maya worlds by Meyes. Only those spirits which cross beyond these Maya Worlds, firmly direct themselves to the kingdom of God.

What the spiritualists, the guides and the spirits able to tell us about are the heavens which are the first three in number. Mostly it is about the first heaven. The guides and the spirits talk exhaustively about this. A heaven is a brightly lit world. Love and righteousness are the laws of heaven. Those spirits which live here spend their time in virtuous deeds, meditations, worships and divine lectures and selfless social activities. Yet they find themselves unable to give up the desires and passions they had while they lived in this world. They get desperate by longing for them and not getting them. But slowly they mellow down to peace. Just like ours, the spirits need not struggle themselves in order to satisfy their passions and needs. There is neither commerce nor trading. There is no necessity to amass wealth.

There is no necessity to exploit other spirits. Just by imagining, the spirits could create things for themselves and enjoy. All practices learned here in this world cannot be by overnight avoided nor all wants stopped. Hence the spirits enjoy the old desires still in the heavens. But very soon they get tired. They realize that there is no big advantage due to such small pleasures and give up, in order to seek pleasures of the higher realm of experiences. This, they are able to obtain through selfless social services and worshipping God. The self consciousness coupled with passions, desires and such other things slowly come down and ultimately disappear. The spirits which thus advance will go to the next heavens. If they continue without any break, it is certain to go to next heaven. If the wordly thoughts continues, it is certain that the spirit will take another birth. The spirits that

move around in the heavens do not need any sleep or food. God himself becomes their food and rest. In heavens also, the spirits meet together.

There are mass joint prayers. They learn spiritual wisdom from masters and teachers. Universities, temples and joint-prayer halls are many. It is God's name that is being chanted everywhere. The spirits worship him and fall before him. All are equal in the heavens. All spirits live with a sense of freedom. There is no caste, creed or ethnic differences. There is no race or religion. There is no capitalist or labour. There is neither exploiter nor exploited. No poverty nor diseases. Neither happiness nor sorrows. Love is the light. God's blessings fill the air. No question of injustice. No Government. There is none to rule nor ruled. No police nor politicians. No cheatings. No radio nor newspapers. No false propagandas. These very things make this world into a hell.

Though the heavens look just like this world, it is a little subtle, shining brilliantly as if lit everywhere. Everything is gross here in our world. Everything is subtle in its form in the heavens. There are seas, oceans, hills, continents, islands, rivers and forests in the heavens also. There are myriads of species in the heavens also like – bird varieties, kinds of animals. But there are no fierce animals like lions and tigers. All the trees are looking full grown over fertile lands with plenty of healthy fruits, flowers and unripened fruits, etc. Most of the spirits love loneliness. But the spirits live in groups. You could see there quite a large number of mystic personalities, yogis and sages. You cannot find egoists and fanatics. The spirits of such personalities go only to the hell. There are quite a large number of cities beyond villages too. You find everywhere temples for worship. There are centres

of art and education. Everything corresponding to those on earth, could be found there amongst things available. But they are exceedingly beautiful. There is beauty in heavens. There is joy in heavens. Enmity, jealousy and such things are not there.

The spirits move around with the speed of mind. They swiftly move from place to place in the matter of just moments. No need of vehicles to travel. But if the spirits need, they could create vehicles from out of their own imaginations. No language, they convey their thoughts directly to other spirits without any need of a spoken medium. The intuitive abilities of the spirits are in the high. They use their intuitive wisdom and understand many many things. There is necessity of this intuitive ability to understand God and the relation between God and the spirits. Some of the spirits of those who were teachers in this world start teaching about principles to other commoner ones. Most of the spirits indulge in religious activities, spiritual discourses, prayer meetings, service to other spirits and the like. The sense of Godhood grows and the sense of ego comes down. At the end there is a complete disappearance of the ego.

Raymond, son of Oliver Loj, was dead in the first world war. The message sent by his spirit, briefly is as follows. "There is no day nor night in heavens. It is day all through. If any of the spirits desires darkness, then it could ensure that for itself. The spirits have all organs like we the ones with life. But all these are subtle in nature. Those who were blind in this world, get their eyesight restored when they reach heavens. Those who were deaf in this world get their hearing ability restored when they go there. The crippled get back moving ability. The lame get their legs restored. Even if one were killed with his body cut into parts he gets all the parts duly restored. Alike is the

state of those who were killed in wars with serious injuries and bullet wounds.

"Those who were killed in accidents never realise that they are dead. They take it that they are continuing with their gross bodies. But it would take some time for these spirits to realise the truth.

One of the spirits, called Yunanis, sent a message as follows: "There is no animal like dog, cat. No animal like lion or tiger. No bird like vultures. Those who died young on earth, grow into young men here. Those who died as old, become young again. There is no spirit which is suffering from any wants here. There is no disease to affect them. Most of the spirits tend to move towards God only. They remain in contentment. It is always bright with sunshine here. But you do not find anything like the sun which illumines the world. This brilliance comes from heavens only. There is no death in heavens. The spirits live an eternal life. The spirits of those who had committed suicide remain steeped in darkness for long.

Though the body becomes dead and becomes a non-entity, the soul and the subtle mind do not die. So far as the material world is concerned, it is death. So far as the other world is concerned, it is re-birth. The question of food to sustain the bodily life is not there in the other world. The spirits live there in big crowds. Each and every spirit understands what the other spirit thinks directly. The question of conversation is meaningless. When the spirit leaves the body, passions and desires do not leave totally. They continue in the heavens. Sudden spurts of changes do not occur in the world of spirits and also in the material world. No wonders. Everything is by evolution. There are plenty of heavens besides the one we discuss. For the spirit

to advance, it lives the kind of life depending upon its spiritual status. But the God who is the cause of all, remains still hidden and dormant in this heaven also. When the spirit advances further, it will cross many a heaven still, becomes absolute with wisdom and reach the kingdom of God. One could find enormous consistency in what the spirits convey despite a few inconsistencies here and there. The knowledge exhibited by these spirits does not appear to be fool-proof and complete. Only when the spirits reach the place of God, they get fully enlightened.

Seer Oliver Loj was a famous scientist. In the last days of his life, he developed faith in spiritualism and the views of spiritualists, in several sittings he formulated theories on this and presented papers on them. He says, "One cannot attain bliss without love and devotion. Love is the basic rule of this world. We cannot call everything that we have learnt by way of scientific truths as the ultimate truths. Many of the scientists of our times accept that the scientific findings are not totally satisfactory for acceptance.

The scientific discoveries tell us about findings of the parts. We dissect everything and understand. The scientific conclusions are but relative truths and not absolute in character. In order to understand the absolute truths, one should unravel the mysteries of the natural world.

One should have a holistic view of things. We have in our concepts divisions of time and distance. Our senses suffer limitations. They are superficial in their understanding. The really true things are not what we could have seen and experienced as vision and sound, but they seem to lie beyond the visions and the sounds. They are the truest. What we could see are

nothing but imperfect reflections of what we could not see. There are plenty of things still eluding our comprehension and visual power. Electro magnetic waves, positive and negative sub-atomic particles, atoms and such other subtle entities, are things which we could not have fully comprehended. We are able to understand about some of them through sophisticated instruments. But there are many still remaining which cannot be understood even by sophisticated instruments. It is foolishness to conclude that such unseen things or incomprehensible things do not exist. I am not this gross body. This is a transient or temporary assemblage or formation of giant molecules. When these molecules disintegrate, body dies.

Though it is our verbal practice to call the mind as "I", the mind is not 'Me'. The mind is a subtle matter. It is but one of those tools of mine. The spirit takes the help of many subtle tools. There are spirits much too distinct from these. That is what is "I". Again, it is also wrong to say that this material world alone is reality. We have many like our internal and external worlds. The internal matter of the spirits is indestructible. It was there before. It is there now. It will continue to be there in future also. It is only the cover, the external things and the circumstances that vary. Our ordinary senses and intellect are not capable of understanding this. One should go beyond our mind that has limitations. Only when you cross over, you can understand the Infinite. One should develop love, devotion, faith and kindness in order to stand the truth. One should have god's blessings. One should have the wisdom shining at the depth of his heart.

One of the Mediums by name Mrs. Isleen says:

"When we die, a portion of us does not follow the death. I have understood this from my experience. The element of "I"

and "me" continues to live beyond death. This is like our passing out class after class in our schools. We have many lives beyond what we go through. Every life is but a step in our long journey. Due to an inbuilt wisdom, I am able to visualize all the three periods of time. I have been born many times before. I have died many times too. The journey of the spirit leaving this body and this world in order to reach other world and other body is what we call death. The spirit continues to live in the other world also. God's love and blessings are alive expanded over all the worlds. We reap the fruits of our own actions. There is no one to punish us or trouble us. Every one must understand oneself and God, and conduct oneself on the path of love. Love and devotion are the only ways to attain God. We shall now see briefly the views of the spiritualists.

a. There is one God. He is beyond all the worlds. He is present in all worlds also. His love, kindness and mercy are all there everywhere. His angels and emissaries involve themselves in saving the spirits in all the worlds.

b. There are many kinds of spirits. They always direct themselves towards God. This might be a very long journey lasting for many a long time.

c. The spirit never dies. It is permanent. When death occurs, the spirits leave this body and the world and reach different worlds. It starts living in a different world. There are quite a number of heavens and hells. The spirits get reborn in this world.

d. The spirits after reaching heavens, move step by step through many heavens and ultimately reach the kingdom of God. The one spirit which has crossed the third heaven never comes back to be born in this world again. The spirits which live in

the intervening three heavens, when and if attracted by passions and desires of this world, can get reborn.

e. In those heavens beyond the third one, those divine souls and teachers, at times, might get reborn into this world for the purpose of guiding the masses and protecting them. They have no 'janmam'. Their births are like divinely ordained. They have no worldly passions. The son of God, Jesus, was born in this world in order to 'save' the people.

f. Those of the spirits living in hells, might also get rebirths. So long as the desires and passions of this world do not leave them, the cycle continues. One could understand God, realize and reach the heavens.

g. The spirits reap the fruits of their actions or Karma in this world and suffer the effects in other worlds also. This is the law of the present world. This is a retributive law and follows a cycle.

h. Love, righteousness, love for God, divine thoughts, selfless services, true wisdom are the ways of reaching God. The spirit becomes the spirit of godliness and surrenders itself to God and deposits itself at the altar of God.

i. The spirit has always the blessings of God. But the spirit can never advance without attaining a level of wisdom. It will start living in a world according to this level.

(The word, 'Spirit', 'Aatman' in Sanskrit, 'Aatma' in Tamil and Soul, mean one and the same)

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14. When Your Child Dies - Sylvia Barbanell
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16. Across the Gulf - Maurice Barbanck
17. Before Death - Flamanon
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20. Home Circle - A.W. Austin
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34. A World Beyond - Ruth Montgomery
35. A World Before - Ruth Montgomery
36. Life is Forever - Miss Susy Smith
37. Confessions of a Psychic - Mrs. Susy Smith.

7. ANCIENT PEOPLE'S CONCEPTS

(A) ANCIENT EGYPTIAN

Egyptians of the ancient times considered the human body to consist of four segments.

1. **The gross body.** They referred it as 'Khat'. The meaning of this term is that human body is one to perish. After the death, man's body becomes one with the earth. Yet, the Egyptians preserved the dead bodies by applying oil over (embalming) the dead body and keeping them inside tombs. The reason behind this was the Khat was residing in Kha, the subtle body. Both of them are different. The latter continues to reside in Khat even after death and burial.
2. **The subtle body.** They referred this as Kha. This is just the duplicate of Khat. Normally Kha resides in Khat. Even after death and until Khat disintegrates, the Kha will continue to remain in Khat. But Kha has independent personality, faculties, intelligence and freedom. It is capable of functioning independently. When it desired it came out of Khat and could enter when it wanted. There is a story that Kha on occasions visited the heavens, entered into conversations with the heavenly personalities and returned. Hence Egyptians of the ancient times, kept along with the dead body, jewels,

ornaments, food articles, dresses and such other things for the Kha to enjoy. During day time, the Kha lived inside the tombs and into the Khat and during nights, it had the habit of coming out and moving around. Some of the people could see Kha doing this. These Khas might indulge in doing bad things to people.

3. Soul: Aatma. This was called 'Bha'. This resided in Kha., Which is a cover for the gross body. Bha cannot be seen and has no shape nor figure. Yet it is a subtle matter. It is independent. It is not visible to the naked eye. It could take any form it liked – ethereal or material. This is called metamorphosis. Egyptians of the ancient times, pictured Bha as a vulture headed man.

4. Sacred Spirit or Intelligence. This was called 'Koo'. The Koos do not have any physical form but were shining entities. The koos belong to the class of heavenly personalities. Bhas live within Koos. At times, these are getting buried along with the dead bodies into the tombs. But the gross body that we referred to earlier, the subtle body, Aatma and the Sacred Spirit are all important. Man is a combination of all of them. (khat + kha + bha + koo). Bha, being an entity of this combination is what is "I". One could compare these ancient Egyptian concepts along with the Saiva Siddhanta concepts of ours. But there are certain differences. As per the Saiva Siddhanta concept, the subtle body goes along with the Aatma. It has no independence of its own or intelligence. It is one of the tools of the soul. God is the only entity. God lives along with life cells inextricably connected with the atoms. As per the ancient Egyptian concepts, the subtle body follows the gross body. It has independence and intelligence. Egyptians of the ancient times worshipped many Gods.

They do not entertain the concept of only one God. Their Gods could be equated to the Devars of our own concept. It is man who ultimately becomes a Devar. The great Oregam lived as a human being once who ultimately attained the Deva padam. Egyptians of those times were afraid of these heavenly personalities. They asked for boons from them. They were afraid that these heavenly beings would punish them. They considered them powerful.

On the occurrence of death, both the Soul and the Sacred spirit go separated from the gross and the subtle bodies. Kha and Khat go into the tomb. Bha and Koo get out. The Bha which committed sins on this earth will be punished in the hells. The Bha which lived in virtue will enjoy the heavens. This is the belief and faith of the ancient Egyptians. The Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' talks about the hurdles the Soul faces, punishments meted out in the hells and how the Bha should conduct itself.

The dead man's soul is subjected to enquiry before the Devas. It calls forth its own heart to give evidence for itself. It prays to the heart not to give it up. It invokes the benign graces of the heart to speak on its own behalf. "Let the enquiry and the judgment go in support of me. Let no one give a wrong evidence in presence of the great God Amener."

Later, the heart of the soul is made to appear before Senir, a smaller Deva. This is being done by one 'doth'. It is the same doth who after conducting the enquiry will pronounce his judgment also. And the pronouncement will be thus: "O the Devas, listen! The heart of this soul has been brought over here. The heart has deposed this soul has not committed any sin; it never lived the life of a scoundrel; it is pure and straight forward. So we decree."

After the judgment, Kores, the son of Odyssey, will take the Soul to where Odyssey is seated. Along with him you will find 42 Devas who all would be worshipping Odyssey and praying. In this assembly Kores will read out the judgment given by Thiras.

"I have brought this Soul to Your Honoured presence. This Soul is pure and straightforward. It has only involved in virtuous deeds. It has not committed any sin. This is the judgment of Thiras. This Soul has never conducted itself against the Devas. Therefore, take him as one amongst you. Let this soul enjoy Your Honoured assembly." Later the Soul will be offered some wine to drink.'

Later, the Soul takes Thiras' papers and prays: "O Amen, I stand before you. I have never committed any sin throughout my life. I have never told a lie to the best of my conscience. Never in my life time, I have acted in a malicious way. O' the Devas, make me as one into the assembly of Thiras and bless me." The Soul greets everyone then who is assembled there.

One can find this prayer in the "Book of the Dead" of the Egyptians.

"O Devas, I know you all and your names. Please protect me from becoming a prey for your swords. Even if I had committed small sins, please do not make a mention of it here. I pray that you protect me. I have conducted myself throughout life with a deep spirit of righteousness. I am a straightforward person. Please affirm that I am an honest person. I kneel before you, please protect me from the devils who give trouble to the souls. I performed my duties alright. I respected elders' words. I acted according to Devars' wishes. I fed the hungry. I quenched the thirst of those who came thirsty. I clothed the poor who remained without clothes. I worshipped the Devars. I performed

all the rituals for them. I duly performed the obsequies. Pray do not tell anything odd before Odysis and protect me."

On acceptance of the pronouncement, the Soul gets duly recognized and accepted by the Devars. It becomes one with the group of Odysis. The Egyptian works also explain in detail the sufferings of those in the world who had committed sins on this earth. And those who had committed very serious sins are killed once and for all.

Such theories of the ancient Egypt were changing from time to time. The same ideas spread into ancient Rome, Greece and Balsrein. The following gives the essence of this development.

a. The ancient Egyptians did not accept the concept of One and only one God. They worshipped many Devas. Most of these Devas were once upon a time human beings only and by dint of virtuous deeds had attained the status of Devas. Even Odysis, the greatest of Gods was once upon a time a human being who lived on this earth. Devas were looked upon as the most powerful, doing justice, punishing the sinners and conferring the heavenly status for those who were virtuous:

b. The society of the ancient Egyptians was one of priests. No king could continue for long without their support. What the priests said was the law. People were scared of the priests and lived with fear. That was a society steeped in orthodoxy and rituals. This is not a wonder. Even today in this twentieth century, there are politicians who are afraid of the religious heads. Yet, the Egyptians' religion is a pure orthodox religion given to unkindly attitudes.

c. The ancient Egyptians belived in Aatma (Bha). Bha never dies by death. It either enjoys the heavens or suffers the hell as per the deeds they commit. There is no reference to rebirths

in the works of the Egyptians. Khats perishes. They are not permanent.

d. Orthodoxy, discipline, righteousness, charity and worshipping gods – all these pave your way to attain the heavenly status.

(B) SOCRATES AND PLATO

In the very ancient times, the Egyptians followed many generic religions. They were worshipping many Gods. They were afraid of these Gods. They believed in what the priests said. They took natural happenings as acts of God. They thought they could attain happiness by appeasing Gods. Their main aim was to enjoy worldly pleasures. They worshipped the Devas only for this purpose.

But in Greece, intellectual renaissance started growing even before the 7th century B.C. People refused to blindly believe in the priests' orders. They tried to find the real reasons behind natural happenings through a thorough understanding of Cause and Effect. Thinkers born even before Socrates started giving intellectual explanations behind natural happenings. They started exploring them under scientific basis. They were materialists. They believed that man could understand things through his intelligence. Thales and Milletus were important among them. The essence of their materialistic philosophy is given in the following lines. "All matter is by the combination of atoms. Matter is indestructible. They are permanent. The combination only collapses."

"When matter disintegrates, it decomposes into atoms. No matter comes from nothing nor just ideas. The atoms are continuously operating in the sky. Our body is nothing but a combination of the atoms. Aatma is the truest thing. It is a subtle

thing composed of subtle atoms. Atoms easily pass through the medium of subtle atoms. When the gross atoms and subtle atoms collide, life, sensations, feelings and thoughts emerge. Everything is either subtle or gross matter. These things indicate the beginning stages of materialism.

The Greeks started exploring nature in the external world and Gods. The common folk followed the pagan Gods. The foremost among the Greek philosophers, Socrates was the first to turn the attention from the external world to internal wisdom and started with questions like, "Who am I? What is life's goal?" He induced people to think. He explored everything minutely. He could point out mistakes in logic and arguments of others. He believed that one could understand the truth through clear thinking and intelligence.

He wanted to understand the fundamental nature of man, himself and also the purpose of human life. Research on lifeless materials was not going to be of any use. The world is not an engine. Its existence is not an accident. There must be some intelligent connection between the world and its existence. You could call it God or the Almighty or any other suitable name. It is life that actuates the body. Life is one thing. Body is another. Both are not one and the same. Life is permanent and eternal. I am that life. There is some purpose for my life. Attaining bliss is the aim of this life. Thoughts, words and deeds must be benign by outlook. One should not commit sins. If one lives such a virtuous life, the soul will get salvation. Everyone should understand who he is. He should take salvation as his life-aim.

The way of attaining this is through the path of discipline, good thoughts, good character, good deeds and such things. Money, wealth, degrees, profession, power and fame are not important. Man forgot about himself and the aims of life through passions

and desires. The way indicated by Socrates was the one meant for realisation of life and truth. By a sense of true wisdom, the soul will understand itself and God. It will understand the purpose of life. By the birth of wisdom, one can distinguish the good from the bad and the sin and understand what is virtue. The conscience will reveal what they are. It requires true wisdom and mental grit in order to understand the truth.

"The gross world is a little confusing and baffling. There is another world which cannot be seen by naked eyes. This is absolute wisdom. It is far above the normal human mind. The way to reach this world is through wisdom. On the birth of wisdom, the worldly shadows will vanish. You will get light. You can understand the truth."

Socrates was born in 469 B.C. He was a great philosopher. He was condemned to death by the government in 399 B.C. He was 70 years old when sentenced to death. He did not teach any new concepts or theories; neither he wrote Philosophical treatise. His teaching were oral in the form of question and answer. But he pointed out the mistakes committed in the name of the institutionalised religion of his times through logic, justice and intelligence. He was able to point out the lack of definition in terms before people started using words. They did not think coherently. They came to their own conclusions taking examples along with examples for arguments. They wanted to win arguments and that was their only aim.

Socrates condemned strongly the sophists, priests and politicians. He exposed their falsehood. He burst the illusive balloons of their ego and exploded them. He thus became their enemy. Ultimately he had to meet his death when he was administered poison by them. That was not the first time in history when a religionist, politician, or a wise man was killed. That was not the last time also. Things like this have always been there till now.

Arrogance is the root of people's degeneration. It is the darkness of ignorance that propels them towards such perishings. Delphi, the oracle's word it was that Socrates was the wisest man of his times, who lived in Greece those days. Socrates himself was surprised on hearing these words. He visited many other intellectuals of his time, in order to test this statement and held discussions with them. "There are plenty of things which neither of us understood. But they say that they knew even those things which could not be comprehended and which eluded our thinking and intelligence. I know my limits and the ignorance. Hence, the Delphi's word which called me wiser than them was really true about me." To know about one's border of ignorance was the true wisdom.

Though Socrates emphasized on human intelligence and wisdom, he was not one among the materialists. He believed in the immortality of the soul. There is one God. There are infinite number of souls. The ultimate aim of life is the salvation of soul. If only people were to avoid false images and arguments and chose to think in straight forward fashion, one could understand the truth. It appears that Socrates belonged to the religion of Orphics which was practised during his times. The essence of this religion is:

1. Soul is permanent. It never perishes.
2. It came from above and came down to earth. It is found imprisoned into this body. It has got itself entangled in the cycle of births and deaths.
3. It should get out of this cycle and reach heaven back again.
4. The wordly life is full of sorrows. The kind of worldly pleasures, passions and desires are detrimental for spiritual growth.

5. All people are brothers. People should live freely, sociably and with fellow feeling. Dictatorship will spell ruin on people's life.
6. There was no use by false ritualistic practices and pseudo orthodoxy. The path of salvation is only through fair thoughts and fair deeds. Only character is wisdom.

PLATO

Plato was Socrates' student. He was a philosopher and a great poet. He used logic as his main platform to discuss principles and he wrote them too in his books. He believed in God and the souls were infinite in number. He believed the existence of many worlds other than the one we live in. The mystic things were incomprehensible. One could understand about them only through some internal wisdom and spiritual knowledge. He believed in such a theory fully. In the essays he wrote in his initial days, he gave first place to Socrates' words by and large. In order that soul attained bliss, it should be stabilized step by step. For this soul should live with character, fair thoughts and fair deeds. It should follow justice ruthlessly. One could not define what justice was just in words nor explain.

Nobody could point out what justice exactly was. Yet there is one thing called justice. It may not be difficult to define it in ideal terms. Justice, according to Plato bordered on what the Hindu philosophy stressed on the lines of righteousness. Soul understood justice. The conscience would dictate what justice was. But this wisdom was not that easy to understand. It lies dormant. One should bring this wisdom to the common level of understanding and live. Socrates was one who lived like that. Simple bookish knowledge and comprehension through senses

would not do for this understanding. Only when senses are under control and one talks to oneself by soul, one could understand the truth.

Plato added the views of Pythagoras along with those of Socrates in essays of his latter days. Pythagoras lived 50 years after Socrates. Though he was a scientist, he was a philosopher and a blessed person. He was a big mathematician. He believed that numbers and sound waves had some magical power. His religious views are briefly summarized below.

1. There is only one God. He is above understanding by mind and body. He is one without beginning nor end. He is the purest. He is absolutely formless. He is a pure spirit.
2. The souls are infinite in number. These again are permanent and eternal in nature. They do not perish. Every soul is a subtle entity. It has feelings.
3. There is continuity amongst all lives. The human lives are none but sparks from the-divine. They are godly in nature.
4. The souls live both in this world and the other. When they leave one body they get into another. They thus get reborn into this world again.
5. When there is oneness in both its outer world and inner world, the soul gets enlightened. Ultimately it will reach eternity. Once it attains eternity, there is no rebirth again.

In the dialogues Plato wrote, he gives quite a few details about death. He might have probably obtained such details from the religions of Egypt. When the soul that is formless gets separated from the body, you call it death. The soul lies interlocked within the body. These bindings vanish when the soul gets liberated from the body. The soul gets freedom. The dimensional aspects

like time, distance, lengths, breadths, etc. are those belonging to the materialistic world only. When life gets liberated from body, these dimensions lose their meanings. For instance, all the three states of time-periods vanish without any distinctions amongst them. We cannot even comprehend such a state. This body is nothing but a place of imprisonment for the soul. Getting born into this world is but an entry into this prison and death is the freedom. When it gets born, the soul comes from above, a higher platform. When it dies it returns to the higher plane again.

While it gets down, the soul forgets its original and true nature. While it ascends, it gets back its sharper vision, wisdom and clarity in thoughts.

After death, the soul goes to other different worlds. It meets the souls of its own erstwhile friends, relatives, women, sons and such others. While one dies, the souls of his relatives who had already died, come and take him to heavens. They pacify him. They guide him and give him their company. There, the angels would enquire into the virtuous deeds and the sins committed by him and deliver their judgment. In the court of justice, only his heart would depose. It would be absolutely impossible to hide or cover anything.

Plato describes the story of valour of one dead Greek warrior by name Are, in his work of "Republic" written in Greek. The hero's body was placed on the pyre for cremation. Just before cremation, Are got up and gave an account of his experiences. His soul went along with those of others to the other world. They crossed through the hills, valleys, rivers and forests and reached the other world. He explained very elaborately on the impediments and hurdles he faced while crossing to the other world. Ultimately he with the other souls reached heavens.

The heavenly dignitaries enquired every soul about their doings and undoings while on earth. They could find out the truth easily. No one could tell a lie there. The judgment was based on the virtuous or sinful things committed by them on earth. Heaven was the destination for those who remained virtuous and hell for those who had committed sins. But for reasons unknown, the soul of Are was sent back to earth. He returned alright, and just before cremation, he entered his erstwhile body and became alive again.

Such stories describing about the return of some souls which had been inadvertently carried away and getting back alive abound in some of our Puraanaas.

Plato also describes about the sufferings of those souls that suffer in the hell. He is able to give an extensive picture of the unbearable scene and the torture undergone by bad souls. One finds a mixture of the poet's philosophical ideas along with his imagination. But he was never a fanatic. He was honest enough to ask the readers to take his views as the most probable things. Yet there is God. There are infinite number of souls. Body is different and life is different. The soul never dies. It flies to other worlds and lives there. It suffers or enjoys according to a virtuous life or a sinful life that it led while on earth. That the soul attains salvation was firmly believed by both Socrates and Plato.

Plato was a politician also. He looked forward for a clean Government. He also tried to form one but iniquities in the field repelled him. His idea about governace was: The duty of the government was to establish justice and peace. All were alike in the eyes of the government.

The people could note that the republics in vogue at their times, which were under the cover of the rule by the priests,

could not deliver justice. This was an incontrovertible fact. Only a truly wise man could become an able ruler. He believed certainly a philosopher king would be a perfect administrator. He even helped to establish the rule of such a philosopher king. But once he got the power, such a philosopher king became power drunk and a dictator. He became cruel also. People were disappointed. They could see with their own eyes that power corrupted human beings. Once given the power, Man could not afford to continue the position of wisdom and peace he had. Plato did not realise that in due course of time such philosopher kings would lose their power. Exploitation, falsehood, ridiculously inversion for arguments, false propaganda, selfishness alone would ultimately rule and be the basis of politics. We find the same to be true in all the countries.

THE VEDIC PERIOD AND PURANAS

Western scholars like Max Mueller defined the period of Vedas as anywhere between 399 B.C. and 1500 B.C. They considered the creators of Vedas as the Aryans who had come into India from other lands. Today such theories are disproved as nothing but guesses of western scholars and not true. Even those people who lived in the north of this country referred to themselves as Aryans. The Indian books say that Vedas were written by the Saptha Rishis who lived on the banks of the Saraswathi river. Whatever it is, Vedas was the series of verses sung by those sages and poets of India. One could also find ordinary verses mixed along with those describing high principles. During this period of time, the religious doctrines attained a big change. When one tries to research upon the matter of religion during the Vedic period, one should avoid the 10th canto of Rig

Veda. The Vedic religion was called the Vaitheekam or the Sanathana Dharma.

Keith says that the songs of the Rig Veda mostly represent the inspired feelings of a fairly immature people and common folk of a undeveloped period. Those who had contributed these songs were nomadic in life. They moved from place to place along with their herds of sheep. They fought with other groups. They had no permanent stay at any place and particularly, not staying in towns, they lived mostly almost with nature. They were stunned by visions of nature. They were afraid of them. They considered them as divine acts. They worshipped Indra, Varuna, Vaayu and Agni. They worshipped other angels also. They got worried about problems of living in this world. On one side, they had to face their enemies and on the other, they found the enormous losses that nature wrought on them.

They took the Devars as the most powerful blessers of boons. They also believed in worshipping them. By appeasing them they thought that they would be spared of any harm. The kind of boons they wanted were after all the wealth of this world and happiness obtains in this world. "O the Devas! let me pray to you and sing in praise of you. I worship you. I do the yagaas for you. Bless me with whatever I want from you." This is the essence of the Rig Veda prayers.

"O Prajapathi, we worship you. You are the most powerful. May our wealth increase. Please grant us the boons we want."

"O the God Varuna! We salute you. We prostrate before you. O the one of wisdom, please grant us the boons that we desire. May the plants that we have planted in our fields grow to immensity and yield in plenty. May our cattle wealth grow Pray kill the demons and bring all their wealth to us."

Salvation, reaching God, devotion or kindness were not to be found in these songs.

Some of the songs were of the groups. When the Aryan groups came to India, the local people opposed them. They prayed to their own Devars for their own victory. We find casteistic and religious differences and antagonisms. They refer to Devars as having helped them when they won over Dasuras. People and Devars enter into agreements. It was man's duty to worship the Devas and it was the latter's duty to satisfy man. Those who belonged to Vaideeka religion or the orthodox religion opposed temple worship and idol worship. This happened upto 5th century A.D. There was no place for righteousness, love and non-violence or blessedness in their religion. They considered power alone as the ultimate goal. This was like the old Hebrew religion.

Step by step and slowly then onwards, the Rig Veda songs brought out the religious ideas. Life do not perish even though bodies perish. Life was there even before and shall continue after death also. The soul takes many births. One could not find any such views as merging with love, godhood and devotion. In accordance with their deeds, lives went to the land of Devars, or gandharva or the dead or the hell. They suffer sorrows or happiness. The status of the Devas was the highest. You find in Vedas frequently, the prayer which seeks such a status to be given to them when they die. There is a mantra which states that there was one Aatma which went to the world of the dead, returned and pushed itself into a different body. The Yajur and Sama vedas has stotras that are sung when yagas and homams are conducted. Ordinary people rose to the heavenly status. There are stories which talk about the Devars becoming ordinary human beings.

One finds songs rendered by the Aryan groups after mixing themselves with the local Indian people have been added in Atharvana Veda. One can find the practices, culture and beliefs of people of that period have been included in the Atharvana Veda. You also find references on lives leaping from one body to the other, devils, demons, meeting the souls of the dead, different kinds of worlds, attaining divine status and other manthras. Those who performed Yagas and penances, it has been written, would reach heavens with their gross bodies themselves.

During the days of the Brahmins, the duties of the caste and orthodox practices were defined. Caste controls and Varnashrama culture also started rearing its head. There were broadly three different castes of people in the Aryan society.

- a. **The priests:** They had the practice of developing homam. They performed yagas and other rituals.
- b. **Kshatriyas:** These are the people in charge of defence of the country, including ruling it.
- c. **Vaisyas:** Agriculture, commerce, rearing cows and sheep were the avocations these people indulged themselves in.

Sudras: Those of the Indians who were conquered by the Aryans were taken as the fourth Varna people – Sudras. They made some of them as untouchables. They defined the duties of every sect. They extensively defined all the duties of every sect commencing from birth upto death. Those things which were considered as virtues are: Involving in giving charity, worshipping the devas, doing penances and yagas. The Sudras could not be expected to reach high status in the other worlds also. The power of penances and yagas have been over exaggerated. Even devils and demons

have acquired limitless powers and status by performing yagas.

Karma Kanda is one of the sections in Vedas. Purva Mimamsa explains about this. There is no God. The world was not a created one. It is always there. Vedas are timeless works. If one followed the rituals prescribed in Karma Kanda and conducted oneself as per the kuladharmas, one could go to heavens. The rest would go to hell. There is a mention about the visit of Brighu Rishi (Sage) to Heaven and Hell. It is said the Sage has seen with his own eyes how those who had committed sins were suffering in the Hell.

In the field of religious works, the period of Upanishads is a big point of research. In place of Bhakthi, beliefs and rituals, you find arguments, discussions abounding in Upanishads. New hypotheses took their place. Some of them did not take Vedas as their basis. One could find materialistic, non Soul and atheistic philosophy being expounded in some of the Upanishads. The question of anything becoming alive without character was ruled out, as per the Upanishads. Most of the Upanishads explained the Vedagama views. The Aatma was permanent. Even though bodies perished, the Aatma would not. Aatma lives in this world as well as the other. They get continuously reborn. They go through experiences in accordance with the merit of their own deeds. They go through the cycle of births and deaths and suffer. After death, Aatma takes new bodies and start living in other worlds as per the Katho Upanishad. The Aatma leaves the body on death. The effects of the Karma that it did on earth go along with the Aatma, says the Brihadharanyakopa Upanishad.

"When the Aatma leaves the human body, oxygen also leaves. Intelligence and subtle senses and the effect of the deeds done on the earth go along with the Aatma. In the other worlds and

next births, the Aatma will undergo the effects of these deeds. Yagnavalka says that the Aatma in accordance with the deeds on earth, would go to the world of Devas or the dead or the Gandharvas or hells. Upanishads also explain the three different status of God, viz. one, inseparable and different.

Some of the Upanishads describe God as indistinguishable from Aatma. Individual souls are the sparks from the divine anvil. It is God's power that manifests as different worlds. Hence the Brahma who is without any attributes is the only truth. God cannot be comprehended by human senses. He is not one among things understood. He is not again one amongst those who was understood. He is not a collection of wisdom or knowledge. He cannot be imagined by the human mind. One cannot describe him in his own words. He is beyond them. You can say, 'He is not that' or 'He is not this' and so on. An ultimate and firm definition will always elude you.

Along with ritualistic and orthodox religions, and Upanishadic doctrines, the Agama religion also formed a part following the path of devotion or Bhakthi. The sage Pathanjali lived in the 8th century A.D. He was the one who formulated the Yoga sutras. Yoga is one of those Indian works. They refer the souls as Purushas and call God as Mahapurusha or Easwaran. Easwaran was the one absolute being with the fullest knowledge or wisdom without any binding. Purushas and Mahapurushas are timeless people. Purushas get born in this world. They die. They live in the other worlds also. They get also reborn. Easwaran is one who never dies. Salvation lies in attaining the feet of Easwaran. Though in salvation, when the Purusha and Mahapurusha merge, they are not one and the same. It was possible that people could reborn in this world even after attaining the Easwaran status. The meaning of the term, 'Yoga' is to unite.

Merging with God was the meaning behind this. All varied paths leading to attainment of God is called the Yoga. Karma yoga, Bhakthi yoga and Gnana yoga are some examples.

Though Puranas were written in Sanskrit during the latter days, they are reflecting the central ideas of the traditions and ancient times. Religious views were explained in common man's language for his understanding. One could find mystic wisdom presented in Puranas. Such ideas were lost in the world of the common man. For instance, though since time immemorial, the fact Kandan and Sivan are one and the same, the common people take Kandan to be the son of Siva. Valli is the Aatman. Kandan's marrying Valli signifies individual soul's merging with God. But the common folk took this marriage to be just ordinary and earthly happening. Puranas describe religious ideas in an exaggerating vein with loud imaginations. These are but symbolic notations of the mystic wisdom. No doubt about the fact that Puranaas spread religious message of Godhood and devotion amongst the gullible and common folk. It cannot also be denied that the priests by virtue of their knowledge and status exploited them and lived off merrily. Religion perished. Crude rituals remained. The Puranic ideas can be restated again as follows.

1. There is one and only God. There are infinite number of souls. There are Devas, Naragas and Gandharvas. There are worlds other than this one also.
2. The life-time of every soul is determined right at the time of its birth. Everything takes place according to a pre-ordained law. Even Devas cannot escape these laws. In the domain of Yama, Chithraputhran maintains an account of everyone's righteous or sinful deeds.
3. The Yama's assistants come down in order to take away the Aatma once the gross body dies. They are of frightening

disposition. Some say that they have seen such Yama's assistants. While one dies, only God's blessings could be one's best help. Those who are God's devotees need not be afraid of death or sufferings. They will not accompany the Yama's assistants but will go with God. The Markandeya Purana and the story of Sathiavan Savithri explain this.

4. Some of the Puranas say that the Aatma would be taken away immediately. While dying, the Aatma suffers a shock and faints. They say that this loss of senses will continue for some time and the soul will remain for a period of 31 days on this earth. That is what some other Puranas also tell us.
5. After death, the Aatma loses the gross body. It lives in the subtle form locked up within the subtle body for some time in this world. Passions and desires developed in this world continue to be with the Aatma for some time. The soul longs for edible things and rich dresses also. That is the reason why such offerings are given to the dead by those who live.
6. The charity done in the name of the dead, the mantras chanted and prayers given would go to satisfy the Aatma wherever it is.
7. It takes about one year for the souls of the dead to reach the land of the Yama. They cross over many worlds before they reach their destination. They also have to pass over many hurdles and devils and demons, who throw enormous obstacles. They stay at so many places, rest for a while and continue their journeys. The details of places where they stay for a while for resting and such other particulars have been described in great detail. The Mahalaya

ceremonies done during the end of every month after the death signify the fact of offering for food for the dead souls during their journey towards the land of the Yamas.

8. A detailed enquiry commences in the presence of the Lord Yama once the souls reach his land. The enquiry is about the righteous and the sinful deeds of the dead. Chithraputhran gives a detailed account of the deeds from his ledger, Yamarajan gives the judgment.
9. At times, some souls are inadvertently taken there by mistake. They are promptly returned. If they return before the gross bodies are burnt, they enter into the bodies again and become alive. If the bodies are burnt away, then they move around as spirits until its due period is over.
10. After the judgment and in accordance with the deeds the souls had committed on earth, they are sent to Devas, Pithirs, Gandharvas or the Naragas. The punishments meted out to them in Naragam are detailed elaborately.
11. After undergoing the punishments in the Naragam or enjoyments in the heavens, the souls get reborn into this world again.
12. Most of the Puranas are about God's blessings. They describe various sacred games (cosmic dramas) played by God.

LAMAISM

Though Tibetans are considered to be Buddhists, their religion is different from the Hinayana cult of Buddhism. It is called Lamaism. Important points about Lamaism are as follows:

1. There is one and only God. People could expect justice from him. It is foolishness to expect mercy, love, blessings

and help. There are infinite Devars. Devars are souls higher in status than those of human beings.

2. Aatma are infinite. These are timeless and imperishable.
3. Death is like changing dress. At the time of death, the soul takes a new body and leaves the old. It goes from one world to the other. Death in one world means birth in the other. Depending upon its deeds in the earlier birth, it gets a body in the new birth.
4. The wheel of life is the cycle of birth, death and lives in this world and the other. The souls get involved in this cycle and cannot find escaping routes. The cycle of life is by nature full of sorrows and sufferings.
5. One cannot escape the effect of bad deeds. The one who indulges in Karma is bound to reap its effect. No one can escape. The law of Karma is not one of punishment. It concerns justice. The souls which had committed sins, realize after undergoing punishments. This is essential for the advancement of the soul. What one enjoys or suffers is the effect of his deeds of the past. Some of the rebirths might be corrective in nature of the mis-deeds of the past.
6. Step by step and slowly the souls get fuller wisdom and attains salvation. Until then it struggles through births and deaths in the cycle. Once it attains salvation, it is free from this cycle. There is no rebirth again. There is no sorrow. Wisdom is the only path to attain this status. There is no use by doing charity, chanting mantras and tantras, worshipping Devars, offering poojas and such other things.
7. Radiation from Aatman appears like an electric field around the body. It is possible to find an aura around the head. Tibetans say that they are able to observe such halos around

the heads of divine people. One could understand deeply about such personalities from these auras. Once the Aatma leaves the body, this halo also disappears.

8. Tibetan people fully believe in re-birth. The rebirth of those divine persons are recognised by the Lamas with signs certain indications during their rebirths.

In the conscious state, the soul lies entrenched within the body. Sleep gives rest only to the body. The Aatma never takes rest. During sleep it was quite possible for the Aatma to get out of the body and return. This is called the state of the dream. There is a thing very much like a string of pearls, which continues to link the Aatma and body during the state of the dream. So long as this link continues, the body does not perish. The Aatma would return to the body. At the time of death, this string is cut. At samadhi state the Aatmas of the sages go out and return.

10. At the time of death, the Aatma goes out of the body in the form of spirit. It faints out of the shock as the Aatma leaves the body. Without understanding things fully, it floats in the sky.
11. There are crores of worlds and Aatmas living there also. They get into bodies, every one suited to its own requirement. Some of the Aatmas might be in a state better than human beings.
12. Certain Tibetan Lamas became great by divine acts. Even when young, these Lamas get training in Yoga and meditation. They open the third eye in the forehead by some special operation. They preserve details of this divine act in a very carefully preserved volumes secretly. Some of these powers help them fly in air, travel in sky ways, appear at places

of choice, move from body to body or go into any body of one's choice, control devils and demons, order rain, snow or darkness and use the third eye. We take them as wonders and feel awe-struck. But it is all child's play for the truly wise. Some of them are sheer mental powers. Some of them are the powers of the Aatma.

13. While one is at death-bed, the Lamas circle round him and give advice to his Aatma. They would explain to him the Bado state that his Aatma was going to attain. They would guide the Aatma to go on the right path. They would follow it with a prayer to the heavenly personalities to guide him alike. If the Aatma were not to listen these advices, it would stay back controlled by passions and desires. They would be moving around as demons and devils and would get reborn again. It is Lamas' duty to help free Aatma from these bindings.
14. Though Lamaism accepts God and Aatman, it is not one of the theistic religions. There is no room for mercy, blessings and devotions. There is room for justice and it is only of one kind. Pure wisdom is the path to attain salvation. Aatma should get liberated by its wisdom. Amongst the theistic religions, it is the blessings of God that pave the way for salvation.

8. A FEW OF THE MODERN WESTERN SCHOLARS

A. Edward Carpenter

This philosopher lived in the last period of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century in England. He was well versed both in science and religion. It appears that he was well read in Saiva Siddhanta. He gives his ideas on love and death, in his work of 'Love and Death'. Let me give below some of his views briefly.

It is a fact proved by common knowledge and experience, that there is intelligence even in microbes. They are complex organisms. You cannot understand the truth just by dissecting them and trying to understand. It appears that some portion of these microbes are still eluding us. Their silent and secret growth, peculiar psychology of plants, sharp sensibilities of certain metals, wireless telegraphy, radium, radiations from radio-active materials, hypnotism, mesmerism, the fully awakened subconscious, and such other phenomena are not comprehensible to our normal senses.

There are principles and worlds much beyond our senses and equipment. We can understand only the materialistic world through our senses. We cannot comprehend non-materialistic

things. There might still be realms which are fully electro-magnetic in nature and mental in character. They might be as layers above layers. They might be planes one passing through the other. There might be still living organisms and intelligence in other worlds. Organisms alive in one world may not know about others in different worlds. For organisms to leave one world and leap into the other, was, as a matter of principle considered as 'death' so far as the earlier world was concerned. It was 'birth' into the latter world. Both the birth and death were one and the same. The lateral life would not perish. Life does not die with death. Appearances and disappearances were just changes.

We lack senses during sleep. But the Aatma never sleeps. It is in a subtle form. It is awake. Death is like sleep. The one who is going to die never becomes conscious of the death. The senses slowly give way. There is a slow loss of senses. There might be a sense of bliss in the depths of consciousness. One gets the unfolding visions of the past. They would be clear. One could also see the present. One could see oneself just going to die, also dead relatives. The consciousness and wisdom might expand. One gets the feeling of flying and floating in air.

However we look into all these things, one cannot avoid one's becoming conscious of his disintegration. Death causes degeneration or perishing. The bio-components of the dead scatter away to non-existence. Such a decomposition might be harmless or without any pain under certain circumstances. Our bodies are getting renewed every time without our own knowledge. Snakes and insects have the habit of removing their covering skins and get renewed. While on death the body by nature shrinks, it is easy for the Aatma to get out. The Aatma becomes

bright on death. Though there is degeneration on death, there may not be any breaks and divisions. Life goes apart to a subtle place while the body would shrink into nothingness as a dried skin. One could see animals and some sages become dead in the above manner.

But on many occasions death would be a real struggle. Life would restlessly try to go the way the senses drag. Passions and desires pull it in. It struggles without peace. Uncontrollable warring centres spread throughout the body. There are struggles at every point. They appear either as mental diseases or bodily diseases outside. They break away the body and the mind. Such experience varies from person to person. The kind of death and experience are determined by individual natures. Death is not as miserable as birth throes. But people are unnecessarily scared of death. It is this fear which is at the root of many complaints. Scientists and medical fraternity do research on birth. They have discovered new methods of easing the system during births. But they do not do any research on death. They could also make death painless. People do not know much about this. One could die without pain. For that one should do some exercise in order to make death painless. One should develop control over senses and attain poise. At least for some durations, one could afford to pray, do meditation or yoga.

We could point out many of the human faculties. But principally they are four in number.

1. The gross body.
2. Mind or the animal mind.
3. Aatma or life or Soul
4. God or Parmaathma.

The gross body is the material segment of man. All the materialistic tools are part of this. Arrogance, ego, pride, desires, passions and love, sensuous impulses, enmity, jealousy, like and dislikes form part of the animal mind. We call some of the impulses as human or human character. They are love, fearlessness, fraternity, freedom, charitable outlook and devotion to God. Love for other beings form the basis for culminating selfish individualism and point towards social good. Every human being attains the real human status when he looks upon the entire society through love and a sense of social good.

When he conducts himself by his own natural mental forces, he becomes an animal. God is the root of all things in the world and lives. He is everywhere. He is in everything. There is nothing without Him. He is without a beginning or an end. He is like life within life. This body is nothing but His temple. God's kingdom is within us. Though He is within the material body, the latter cannot affect Him. He is beyond any affectation by mind.

Though He is wedded to Aatma, the latter would not touch Him. He is not the Aatma. Aatma is a dependant entity. It would be there as a reflection of its dependance. If it is dependant on mind it would have reflections of mind. Normally Aatma exists with dependance on mind and body. It works through them. Mostly it takes the body to be itself and remains with such an opinion. It never understands that God is with it. If it really does so by cutting off its relations with the body and tries to merge with God, it will get Godly qualities. It will forget itself and become God himself. In order to attain this only love is the way, said Edward Carpenter with so many examples. Love is the ultimate law of this world as well as the other worlds.

Love alone is the rule of religion. There are no orthodox bindings on love. No ritualistic bindings. The question of purity nor impurity is not there for love. No limitations. There is some inextricable connection between the body and the mind. The organs of the body do whatever the mind wants. It satisfies the mind.

What of these elements could be called, "I"? Some put it as the combination of all the four. Even if one gets separated, then, the "I" vanishes. Some would like to call the body as "I". But we either call the Aatma or the life as "I". At the time of death these constituents get separated. While they so part and degenerate what happens to every component? There is no doubt about the gross body which starts decomposing. The gross body which is after all the combination of atoms becomes atoms again on decomposition. The material tools of the body stop their functioning. The senses lose their power. The connection between the mind and the body disappears. Therefore we must think only about the mind and the Aatma only.

The mind has a very close connection with the body. It stays in the body for getting satisfaction. It uses the body. It expresses itself through the body. Mostly it has to take the help of the body. Yet mind is not a direct component of the body. Here, the mind is a subtle entity. Yet, the mind cannot function without the body. After death, the body decays and decomposes. It breaks into molecules. If the car breaks down, what would the driver do? Hence the mind which was so far functioning dependantly fades. It struggles and looks aghast. It is pained. It looks forward to its own death and gets depressed. It struggles to express. It is like the painful sensation of one locked up inside a burning house. There are quite a few layers of mind. The uppermost layer is the material one. This is the layer which burns

along with the body. The bottom most layer is a subtle one. This is the principle of intelligence. Most of the western scholars call this as the life Aatma. But this is not Aatma. This is but one of those subtle tools of the Aatma.

The mind has got personality, creative ability and enormous freedom. Mind never dies down like body, that easily. Though one cannot use the gross body, it will try to create imaginary bodies and would try to satisfy itself of its peculiar desires. This is the reason behind the weird visions at the time of death. At times, the subtle mind might enter into Aatma and will go silently with Aatma. If it happens, then the death would be painless. One who has control over mind, would be able to control the mind at the time of death also. This is what happens to sages, seers and philosophers who die without any mental struggle. At the tombs, their Aatma leaves their body with the fully awakened state. Those who are ruled by their minds, and have passions and desires would be controlled alike at the time of death.

Deaths of most of the people are not that painless. There is a spur of enormous feelings at the time of death and they want to get freed from the body and Aatma. They explode and are thrown out. They dance in a wild passion. They make the Aatma look aghast. The kind of psychological uprisings appear as spirits. These are the things which people call demons and devils and imps. You can see that they are nothing but the passions of the uncontrolled mind. These are not just shades or shadows but realities. They are capable of causing harm to the living people.

What is the state of Aatma at the time of death? Until now, the Aatman relied upon mind and body. It took them as true things. It also worked relying mostly upon them. It was a pleasant

reflection of the body and the mind. These things formed the basis of the Aatma. The Aatma did not care to look upon God who was always its Helper. The Aatma can look to two different directions for help at the time of death. (1) The body and the mind. (2) Practices die hard. Therefore the Aatma first look at the mind and the body. It does not want to leave them. What is it that it finds in this direction?

Until now, the mind which was swelling in arrogance of the ego is slowly decaying and the body which has been enjoying happiness is also decaying.

A few of the mental faculties have got into the Aatma. The other portion, not being controlled just explode and go out. The power of the senses and memory have faded. Senses of the outer world have come down. Brain disorders attack the Aatma. A vision of the spirits appear and disappear. At these moments, the Aatma should not be shocked and become dazed, but its attention must be concentrated. The body which has been so far obeying your commands and the mind too slowly lose their powers and refuse to obey any more. The Aatma should get a stable support and must get out. God alone is the one stable support now. He stays there as the atom within atom, the life within life. The Aatma recognizes this fact.

The Aatma which has been so far looking out for support now looks within. It finds that God stands within. Those who were living with a sense of Godfear and loved Godhood could now easily have the vision of God. Those who were arrogant and took themselves to be too big and led a selfish life would find it difficult to perceive God now. The practice of singing devotional hymns, worshipping God will help one to realise God's presence and support. All the mental faculties are contained within

now, and purely with the support of God the Aatma gets out of the body in the form of spirit. It goes from one world to the other. It leaves from one plane to the other. What are things that accompany the Aatma? They are God, subtle mental faculties and Kanma body.

The Aatma was there even before birth. It had come from a different world. It will continue beyond death also, it is going to go to a different world or different plane. It might be possible that it would come back into this world again. The question of its taking rebirth is a function of its passions and desires that it had possessed in its earlier birth. These pull back the Aatma into this world like a magnet. When one indulges in Karma or deeds, the effect of these Karma get into his subtle body and sow the seeds for the rebirth. These seeds grow into trees, start giving fruits both in this world and the other world. The Aatma might undergo the effect of the deeds after many rebirths also. Perhaps immediately also. The law of these deeds could never be escaped.

The Aatma would stay together. Getting to go with God is the salvation. There won't be any further births. Love, righteousness and devotion and God's blessings are the only ways to reach God.

The Aatma lives in the body. One might ask, where is it exactly that the Aatma seated in the body? People point towards various locations in the body. Aatma is an invisible and subtle entity. It does not need space to be within. It lives there in every atom of subtle body and mind expansively. It is the Aatma which makes every segment of the body or the cells function in its own way. In the absence of the Aatma, these things will not work. It is the Aatma which stands as the life of life.

B. Cayce

He lived in the latter half of the 19th century. He was born in the United States of America and died in 1944. There are a number books on him. He was a person capable of seeing things beyond our bodily senses. He could see all the three periods of past, present and future – all at once. He was thus a prophet. He possessed miraculous powers. He had studied only upto the 8th standard. Later he was engaged in the profession of movies. Due to some disease affecting his larynx, he suffered voice disability. No medicine could cure him. He took treatment under one who treated by means of hypnosis. The hypnotist taught him the methods of cure by hypnosis. He first used the methods to cure himself.

He could understand that he had miraculous mental powers by exploring the depths of his sub-conscious. Once when somebody's name and address were read out, he could even see the latter's body and components. There was a stenographer sitting beside who noted everything said by Cayce while he was in trance. Later these replies were sent back to the one who had asked for it. All such statements were preserved in a file. Quite a lot of books were written about Cayce's ability. His fame spread throughout America. Thousands approached him for his help.

Even doctors examined his findings and approached him for consultancy.

Cayce had complete faith in God. He lived with fear of God. He was devoted to God. He believed that God had given him that power to serve humanity. He believed that if the miraculous

powers were used for earning money, they will vanish. Later, he not merely discovered the reasons behind diseases but also prescribed medicines. Most of the medicines he prescribed were based on herbs about which the Americans had very little knowledge. One who was not qualified in medicine, spoke at great length in a medical language about the medicines he prescribed, while he was in trance. When he came out of the trance, he did not know anything about his own prescriptions. When they were shown to him and explained that they were the very things which he had given during his trance, he struggled to decipher his own statements. The miraculous power surfaced only when he was in trance. It was the knowledge kept in the depths of his sub-conscious mind. During his completely wakeful state, he was no better than an ordinary person, quite too unqualified in all that he could tell out during his trance.

Similarly when some of his friends, who were well versed in philosophy, put him questions on the past and future and the scriptures, he could answer them all very effectively. When he was in trance he came out with details of the ancient Egypt, Athiland and such other countries. He was able to exhaustively talk about the submerged lands and the people who lived there. He could talk about their culture. He said that there were some more diseases which were born out of the bad deeds of the individual in his past and they could be cured by devotion to God and His blessings only. He could read through his eye of wisdom the past life, the virtues and sins committed by the people and the like. He could explain the effect of the deeds.

The theory on the effect of the past deeds and rebirth are opposed to the faith of the institutionalised Christianity. He was hence startled. This was his response when he was read out

what was there in typing of his talks during the trance. He said that he had committed a sin. He tried to stop predicting anything while in trance. His friends pacified him and told him that it was not he who was talking but God himself through the powers He had blessed him with, was talking. They also advised and convinced him to use his powers for the benefit of the people. Satisfied, Cayce continued his service of talking about the diseases which people suffered from and prescribed the cure for them.

We are here concerned mostly on Cayce's views on God, Aatma, the natural world, rebirth, effect of the deeds, salvation etc. We shall talk about them briefly.

There is one and only one God. He is without a beginning or an end. He is there everywhere. He is there in everything. He is changeless. He is the most powerful. It is His blessings which direct this world and all happenings. There is nothing in which He is not there. There was nothing in the primal world. It is only His powers which made him expand into the universe where there was nothing before. There was no movement of any sort. There was nothing dynamic in action. No light nor sound. A deep silence. Later slowly and slowly some movement came about there was some expansion and some contraction. In the vast space, God's kingdom started expanding. Things that were positive and negative started appearing. There came about attraction and repulsions. There was growth and decay. This was all the result of the divine will. Later God brought forth the lives from Himself. We just do not know why He did it. Probably we can never know about it. You find a big logical plan and discipline in all His creations. All that He created have an evolutionary growth. He made it as a cosmic law.

All that has got life were none but divine sparks from the greater divinity. An individual spark in combination with the materialistic things of the world, attained self consciousness. It starts taking God to be different from itself. It stays as an individual with expressions of "I" and "mine". Yet it depends on God. It always travels towards Him. Ultimately it will reach Him. It is God's act that man has two kinds of consciousness – one is consciousness of oneself and the other is consciousness of God. The more one becomes self conscious, the consciousness of God diminishes. Ultimately the feeling of self consciousness will vanish and the life will merge with God. That is, the spirit of "I" should die with God. The Aatma will return to where it came from. This is called the salvation.

Though in salvation, the Aatma becomes one with God, God is different; Aatma is different. As the spirit of the Aatma and God live together harmoniously the difference between them is negligible. Yet, the Aatma never dies after salvation. The Aatma is able to see its own image in both God and other lives. It is able to find the image of other lives in itself.

Experience is the root of wisdom. By experience, the Aatma recognizes the truth. Aatma gets the same experience in many worlds and many births. It is born again and again in this world. It dies and gets born again. When it merges with God, there is no further rebirth. The idea that the Aatma goes into the sky, returns and gets reborn again is wrong. This is a kind of materialism. Normally the Aatma continue to live in its worlds for a very long time and then only gets reborn again into this world. For instance, Cayce says that it is the people who lived in Athiland once upon a time, now get their rebirths. (That means that the Aatma take centuries if not millenia by living in other worlds get reborn in this world. At times, the rebirths take place immediately.)

In those days when people had just started appearing on this globe, they were conscious of their connection with God. They spoke to God directly. Slowly they lost consciousness of God, being caught in the maze of passions and desires of this world.

Yet, this consciousness of God still remains dormant in the human mind. Love, devotion and righteousness will bring this dormant sense to the upper layers of consciousness. We said that every Aatma is but a corpuscle of the Divine spark. But every corpuscle has independent body and mind. The Aatma do not get born by accident in this world. They get born only to wash off the effect of their misdeeds in the past. They wash off, realize and slowly and slowly advance. The Aatma has got the freedom to either improve or stagnate. The depth of its own thinking and expressions tell upon the advancement of the Aatma.

One should have the faith in God. He should pray upon him, meditate and exist. One should love God. He should treat others like himself. The self consciousness must wane down and the consciousness of God must loom large. He alone is light; He alone is life. The end of all religions and the ultimate of all aims is Him only; the sole creator and the protector. He is the father and the mother at once. He alone is the basis and eternal support. He is be-all an end-all. He is the peace factor and wisdom factor. He is the ultimate of salvation.

The effect of all the misdeeds of one will certainly go and attack the one who did them. The Aatma will definitely suffer the effect of the misdeeds both in this world and the other world. It will take the body according to the deeds. Cayce says that it is God's blessing to see a connection of the deeds with the Aatma. The effect of the misdeeds is continuous and retaliatory in nature and also reformative in nature. No one can escape

this law. This law of Ganma is not merely true for individuals but for countries also. Those who had taken away somebody's eyes will be reborn blind. Those who had broken others' legs will be born lame in the next birth. Those who had spoilt the virginity of women will be reborn as a woman and condemned to lose her virginity. Those who ran after others' wives will lose his wife in this birth. Those who perpetrated violence through authority, will lose their independence in the next birth. Those police officers who would put people to serious sufferings for unjust reasons will be punished by armymen to untold suffering in the next birth. That will be the same case with the corrupt and exploiters.

C. Dr. Kalanidhi

He was not merely a doctor by research but also a doctor by medical profession. He was at the bedside of many a people when they breathed their last. He researched on their mental status while on death bed. Primarily he interviewed three kinds of people and presented papers.

1. The kind of people whom the doctors had declared dead but came back alive.
2. Those who were driven to the last dying stages after prolonged illnesses and were given up by doctors but who got cured.
3. Those who heard what the dying told them, having been close to them at the point of death.

All those who had interviewed were westerners and mostly Christians. Their experiences did not show much of variance amongst each other, by and large they were alike and comparable.

Dr. Kalanidhi compiled them mostly in the Christian parlances and published the work called, "Life after Life" wherein he makes a brief mention of all things. Dr. Kalanidhi specifically deals with the status of the Aatma just before death and just after death. There is an entity called the Aatma it never dies at the time of death are the essence of this book. We shall briefly go through the views expressed therein.

1. At the time of one's death, his body undergoes some pangs, suffering and gets tired and fatigued. Senses become faint. Mind gets baffled, confused and concerned. The doctors' verdict that the person is dead goes and settles at the bottom of the mind. Detestable sound of the bells ringing for death is heard. This is a kind of noise.
2. By accident, the Aatma is able to find itself standing out away from the body. It looks at its own body lying motionless. It observes all that the doctors do in order to bring the body back alive. It is able to hear the wailings, weepings and loud cries of all relatives around. It is able to see some shedding tears out of hypocrisy. First it gets baffled. Later, it pacifies itself on the conviction that the death has occurred.
3. The Aatma is able to hear what others speak. It can observe them and their actions. It is also able to see that nobody has taken cognizance of its presence and hear what it wants to say. This infuriates the Aatma. Later, with experience, it cools down, settles.
4. The kind of tiredness, restlessness and the dazed condition, slowly disappear, after it has come out of the body.

5. The experiences of those who were killed in accidents, murdered or who lost their lives under unusual circumstances, were different. For a moment, they experience excruciating pain. A sudden jolt. The Aatma finds itself standing away from the body. It never recognizes for the moment that the body is dead and that itself was obliged to stand out. It won't accept these as true. The Aatma is able to see the cart that has come for carrying the dead body, some carrying the body out and placing it inside the cart and people gathering around. The Aatma looks at its own body with a big surprise and curiosity to know who could it be that died. It would take some time for the Aatma to realise that the dead was none but its own self.
6. Though there was the pain of sufferings due to diseases that had affected the person before death, all signs of the diseases disappear immediately after death. The Aatma gets pacified and becomes peaceful. The feelings are mostly soothing and bring happiness. There is a feeling of great relief.
7. Though it has left the physical body, it feels its presence inside a subtle body. The injuries and diseases that had affected the body are no more there in the subtle body. Nobody is able to clearly say anything about this body which is in the form of spirit. This is absolutely a free entity. It does not have any hurdles. It is capable of passing through gross bodies. No other gross body can cause any injury on this one. Nobody can cut this subtle body. The Aatma travels with the high speed of mental dynamics. It is capable of reaching any of its destination in a moment. The moment the gross body dies, the subtle body loses any trace of dimensions like distances, time affecting it. The subtle body has no weight. Ordinary people cannot see this subtle body.

8. Death brings a revolutionary change. Yet, all the passions and desires which had affected the physical body do not suffer any change. Though the gross body is not there, desires do not leave. The same kind of desires which were controlling the gross body continue beyond death also. The Aatma gets concerned about the welfare of its own children, their properties, monies and the like. It is not capable of dissociating itself from these worldly passions. Of course the Aatma is proud with its own subtle body. That is why the Aatma of the dead people try to get back into the respective gross bodies again. They are too eager to do it. They go round and round the dead body. When the dead body is buried, the Aatma stays at or around the burial spot for some time. Then with great sorrow and inevitable sadness, it travels towards the other worlds. Once the dead body is burnt, they realise that there is no point in further sticking around and leave for the other worlds.
9. There are some who never become slaves for worldly passions. Or they reduce such traits once they become old. The Aatma of these people understand about this very quickly after death. They leave peacefully.
10. The Aatma of the other dead relatives and friends come down to this earth in order to take with them the soul of the latest dead being. Some of them are able to see them even before death. They are able to observe them coming and standing near themselves just at the time of death.
11. There is some mysterious light appearing from nowhere and guiding these souls. As the persons whom Dr. Kalanidhi had interviewed were mostly Christians, the latter took the bright light to be Jesus or his Holy Ghost. You could call them

- as their own chosen deities. This grand light appears before the death. Some say that the Aatma is able to read its entire life in this bright light.
12. Some said that they were passing through a dark tunnel very speedily. This appears to be the experience of most of the dead people. Some called it dark vacance and that they were rolling on and progressing. Some others called it as a dark mine and that they were going on by continuously sliding.
 13. Later the Aatma emerges out of the mine. The journey continues with the guidance of other Aatma, who also come along with it. At last, it comes and stops at the boundary between this world and the other. If the Aatma crosses the boundary the chances of its coming back to occupy the original body are not there. Especially in the case of those who died due to some unusual reasons find themselves unable to cross this boundary.
 14. All those souls which found a return could not get into the dead bodies. Some do not like it. Before they attempted re-entry the bodies would have been reduced to ashes. Until the regular period was over, these souls move around wandering in this world only.
 15. Dr. Kalanidhi explored further about the kind of experiences of those Aatmas which could successfully re-enter the respective bodies. Some were not able to give out their experiences clearly and suffered. They said that they could not put them in their own words. (Remember, the vocabulary which we use have been set to explain the material world only.) Some kept silent because they thought they might be ridiculed or made fun of. As time went on, those who

had this experiences lived a life of absolute control of their emotions.

16. Dr. Kalanidhi's book is not able to say anything about what there was beyond that boundary. That was because, those who had been interviewed by Dr. Kalanidhi were the ones who could, without being able to cross the boundary, had the chance to return and re-enter into the body.
17. It was one of the conclusions of his research that the Aatma was there as a reality and that it did not die with the death of the gross body but always went to the other world.

The recommended books are:-

1. Life after Death - by Dr. Moody.
2. Reflections on Life after Death. - By Dr. Moody
3. Death - the Final Stage of Growth - By Dr. Kuble Ross.
4. The Evidence of Life after Death - Martin Ebon.

D. Emanuel Swedenborg

He was a professor who had studied the human physiology and psychology. He authored many books. He lived the life of a sage after he got deeply involved in spiritualism. He had the ability of clairvoyance. He said that he left his body quite a few times, visited the hell and heavens and returned. He explains in his book at great length about whatever he saw with his soul outside his body and the experience during the travails of his Soul. He seems to have met quite a few of the heavenly personalities. He conversed with them. He narrated whatever they had told him. He mentions about other worlds and the lives of the souls living there. He wrote commentaries

on the mysticism. His ideas could be put briefly in the following lines.

There is one and only one God. He is beyond all. He is above mind and thought. Those who live in the heavens say that though they are heavenly beings, they have not yet found God. But his emissaries could be found everywhere.

The Aatma are infinite in number and nature. These souls, like God are dormant entities. They live both in this world and the other. The worlds differ in nature and construction. When they live in this world, they use the gross bodies. They use the subtle bodies when they move around in the other worlds. Aatma is imperishable. While on death, it leaves the gross body. It leaves one world and gets into the other. Only after it left the gross body, it could talk to people of the other world and heavens and in a language hitherto unspoken, said Swedenborg. Because of inherent ability of the direct transfer of ideas amongst them, it was not necessary for them to confine them to any single language. One is able to understand the other without any spoken word.

The Aatma on exiting from the gross bodies, lose ordinary and common feelings. But the subtle mind starts acting vigorously and clearly. The Devas asked him whether he had died and he learnt from them that. Aatma would never perish, writes Swedenborg. The one who is dead does not immediately realize that he is dead. The Aatma continues to believe that it had not yet left the dead body but continued to remain there. That is because, the gross body and the subtle body of the Aatma are almost one and the same. It takes some time for the Aatma to realize the truth. The subtle body has greater freedom comparatively. After death, the subtle body passes through gross bodies.

One is able to meet dead relatives of his and his dead friends. Their Aatma come down to take his Aatma along with them. They give sound advices to the latter and try to pacify him. All that happened in his life just unfold themselves in the form of a vision at the time of his death. Even ordinarily people during their life time, tend to forget their past by the passage of time. Though such things go off the upper strata of the mind, they are embedded in the lower strata of the mind. Swedenborg says that God's shining brilliance of light fills the heavens and God is seated there as the purest, Sathyam, the truest and the happiness of pure wisdom.

Swedenborg was a big sage and a Yogi. He had miraculous powers. We find certain contradictions in his visions he wrote about.

1. He was a great scientist. He explained scientific truths in the light of his spiritual wisdom. The scientific researches which were undertaken after his death, proved that he was wrong in many instances. He could not cross over the physical boundaries of state, country and the land and also the times he lived. This was but natural.

That is because, until and unless the contact with the gross body was completely severed, one could not fully comprehend the subtle worlds and things beyond. The intelligence of these sages was also not complete. God was the only most enlightened.

2. Swedenborg totally detested hypocrites and hypocritical dramas. He condemned them. He said that he had visited the hells and could see plenty of souls who were big here. Somehow his prejudices started influencing his visions. Religious hypocrites are there in plenty in every religion. But

Swedenborg never mentioned anything about such people. A real sage has no passions nor prejudices, hatred or enmity. Hatred is after all a different form of passion. Mostly such passions arise out of self-consciousness and inferiority complexes.

However big a sage is, one's ideas are coloured and influenced by the ethos of one's own country and the surroundings in which one is placed. That is what Swedenborg's history reveals. The Yogaswami of Yaazppaanam himself says that Mahasankarar himself could not comprehend the real truth. He was the one who had a thorough knowledge of everything and a Jeevanmuktha.

The essence of Swedenborg's wisdom is as follows:

1. There is one and only God.
2. Aatma are many and infinite. All of them are eternal in nature.
3. There are hells and heavens and other worlds apart from this world.
4. The souls of the dead people go to other worlds.
5. The souls of the dead people who were sinners in this world undergo sufferings in the hells.
6. The souls of the dead people who were good in this world enjoy the heavens.
7. Salvation lies in reaching the kingdom of God.

CONCLUSION

*You might hear so many things from so many people,
But you must discern the truth
from them only by your intelligence*

– Thirukkural

We have read so far about God, Aatmas, other worlds, life after death and such other things and philosophical ideas and religious views. I have tried to be as dispassionate as possible in putting them all in their own words. It is not my intention to run a debate on these points or accept or reject them. Debates and arguments might perhaps explain a problem. But I do not have faith in explaining anything or proving anything by debates and arguments, because, all arguments can be one-sided only. The basic stand taken by anybody is a function of their pre-conceptions. Arguments ultimately become propaganda. The newspapers and the radio of the modern times are examples. Both of them put together might make falsehood into truth or vice-versa. By sheer propaganda, you could control the popular views. It appears that at no time, one could come out with clear truth on anything.

How could anybody try to argue on things that are beyond the comprehension by mind and body? If only you have the political power, it is possible to 'establish' ideas that you want the society to accept and that is born out of experience. Where is the truth? You might call this as dictatorial democracy. You might call the racial prejudices as Maithiriyam. You might call the atrocities of Police and Army and the Capitalistic exploitations

as Dharma or righteous things. You might describe the hypocritical and cunning dramas and circus games as religions.

We saw in the first chapter about Materialism which says that there is no Aatman nor there is God. Have the materialists found the truth? I give below once again the essence of materialism.

1. There is nothing beyond materials. Everything is nothing but a form of a material.
2. Concepts like God, Aatma and life after death are nothing but the offshoots of the human ignorance or fear formulated for the basic urge to satisfy oneself and imaginary things and superstitious in nature.
3. Duplication, emotions, life, self consciousness, thinking and common sense are but the characteristics of an evolved character of the materialistic world. Molecules react one with the other and decompose and bring about life and self consciousness. This is followed by auto regeneration. Aatma is nothing but a reflection of the evolved materials and nothing else. People take body to be different from life out of ignorance. They believe in the propaganda perpetrated by religionists.
4. If the Aatma is not there, then the question of any life after death does not arise. People only want to be alive always. It is this basic urge which is responsible for the corollary story of life after death.
5. Righteousness is nothing but the idea perpetrated by religionists and the ruling class. Power is the natural outcome of law. This alone is the world law.

What is the principal difference between materialism and religionism? The materialists say that the worlds and lives and people are hundred per cent products of the material world. The

religionists describe man as the product of combination of the material and ethereal things. The material is different. Life is different. There are two subtle things as God and Aatman. The material has no life. The one who drives it is God. The human body is material. When life combines with the body, life structures appear. Life never perishes. We call the above combination as birth. When the life departs, we call it death.

"Whats in won't extinct; whats nothing won't appear." Let us take the man as an example. Is he a lifeless material? Or is he a combination of Aatman and the body? This alone is the fundamental question to be answered. If one could answer this question, other things can be easily explained.

Have the materialists come to the ultimate conclusion that there is nothing else in this world apart form materialistic things? How did they come to this conclusion? Have they proved everything? Only after thoroughly understanding about one thing, any one could talk about the other and specifically affirm the non-existence of the other thing. That means, our intelligence must be complete and wholesome in order to talk about non-existence of anything very assuredly or affirmatively. One cannot talk about it in such a fashion just from experience. One must honestly accept that our intelligence is not the be-all and end-all in the field of concepts and conclusions. Could there not be things beyond our ability to see the visions and comprehension by our senses?

What we have learnt is but just a handful of measure. What we have not learnt is quite large – as large as this world. Just the sunlight is not sufficient to help us see things. Even taking for a moment that things such as Aatma and God, subtle things do exist, if we do not have power to see these things, we can never comprehend them. Scientists of our times like Ian Sreen say that senses and intelligence can only talk about

qualitative truths and not complete truths. What is observed as vision is a function of not only things that are seen but also a function of the beholder's tools. How do we get knowledge after all?

1. External things are duplicates of external materials. 2. Nerves or tools of intelligence take the data of these to the mind. 3. The mind comprehends. 4. The intelligence starts thinking about these. 5. The self ultimately decides about their nature. We shall take intelligence, mind and self combinedly as one. The possibility of mistakes looms large at every step. Our external organs are not capable of comprehending everything that is external. Only those things which have the same frequency as our comprehending tools are understood. Besides, our senses are but the reflections of material things. We are thus able to understand only a portion of the external world. Our own senses are incapable of understanding the inner world and self. These days, scientists have come out with sophisticated instruments to explore the subtle external things. There might be still both external and things of the inner world beyond the capacity of these instruments. Things that are ethereal in character can never be comprehended by these instruments. Our senses are not that infallible pieces of tools. Their findings are incomplete, faint reflections of reality.

People's ideas are modulated by prejudices and traditional thoughts and habits and culture. Thoughts could be diverted to different ways and thoughts. By just propaganda, one could have a serious impact on the popular thinking, conceptualising and formulating their ideas. What is sweet for one could be bitter for another. For one staying within a ship, it looks as if everything is stationary. What all we see many not be true. Whatever we cannot see may be the truth. Prejudices and our own passions,

pre-conclusions are the hurdles preventing us from seeing the truth. One should have a clean mind without any obsessions or prejudices. This is called the pure mind or the completely clear and open mind. To reach conclusions within the normal boundaries as per the accepted norms is called common sense or intelligence. Scientists say that there is something superior to this common sense or intelligence.

This might be called the intuition or blessed wisdom. Today we know that people have certain special powers both by their bodies and mind in themselves. Probably powers even beyond these might still be dormant in us. If only we were able to cultivate them and express, most probably we could still unravel the mysteries. We could see those still unseen. We can hear those voices that are now not heard. We can still understand what today remains unknowable.

Our knowledge through senses and conclusions might be erroneous. Truth definitely is something that stands transcended beyond the barriers of these sensuous world. We take the already derived conclusions as the basis, add further to them and ultimately reach the same conclusions. For instance, the materialists start with the basic premise of saying that there is nothing beyond materialistic things and arrive at the same conclusion after arguments after arguments. They call their conclusions as scientifically derived truths and do the propaganda that they are progressive. The world of science researches only upon the materialistic world. Again even their conclusions within the limited arena are not fool-proof wisdom. Theories of science go on changing from time to time. Scientists cannot go beyond these boundries and cannot say anything about those things beyond these boundaries. If they start giving some theories about things beyond the normal boundaries, then we could call them

only as their personal opinions and not as universally accepted theories.

There is yet another fundamental aspect about the way scientists answer. They are only able to explain "how" things function and not "why" they should function in a typical manner. We observe so many things in the world which science cannot explain. Some call this hoax or mysteries. The materialists just evade by saying that these things are but the off-shoots of evolution.

The Newtonian principles of physics form the basis for materialistic arguments. Today science has gone very much far ahead from the Newtonian world. Sheer revolutions have taken place in the field of scientific theories. Even the concepts of the sub-atomic particles have undergone serious changes. The more you try to explore, the more they become elusive for understanding. What we observe are just but relative truths and not absolute truths. Today scientists call matter as energy and that one is not different from the other. The matter becomes energy and the latter becomes matter. We are not able to comprehend fully the external world. There might be still forms of energy much too different from matter. There might be manifestations of mental power, God energy and life energy.

People have for long been taking Darwin's theories as irrefutable and totally acceptable. Even religionists have accepted these theories let alone materialists. But the point is that Darwin never proved anything. This theory was at best one of his guesses. Today some of the scientists refute them. Materialism is different. Life principle is different. Self and matter are different. Life was there even before the appearance of this world. After the emergence of this world, life came from different worlds and

merged with the local lives. The laws of evolution cover the self also beyond matter as per the cosmic law.

The one who talks about God without the sense of Godhood is a hypocrite. He is a fool. If on the other hand, one takes a stand that in the absence of such a spirit, there cannot be God, then he is ignorant. He is a double fool. You can guess about things which you cannot understand. But no one can afford to give a conclusion. The sages say that our senses suffer limitations. There are many and plenty beyond our intelligence. The vision is of two kinds – one that is blurred and the other not blurred but clear. The ethereal world and things therein cannot be comprehended by our senses. You need special powers to understand. They say that you can comprehend through Bhakthi, yoga and wisdom. These are our dormant faculties. We must be able to express them and bring them out. Religions tell us how to bring them out. The materialists have never proved that there is nothing in this world beyond matter. They cannot do it anymore also. This is just a possibility or a basic premise. You might believe it or not believe it. It is not wrong to refute what you cannot understand. On comparison, the materialists are far superior to religionists in their intellectual honesty. They are incapable of any hypocritical dramas. They have love and righteousness in their character. It is the religionists who talk out of arrogance and throw abuses on the materialists cursing them to go to hell and frightening them.

Now let us see how the religionists behave. They believe in God, Aatman and life after death. That is what these people say. Have they been able to find the truth? If so, how? Do they have the powers to see these? The world priests argue about something that cannot be argued. They try to prove something that cannot be proved. They gloat over a supposition

that religion and God are the most supreme things. They do a propaganda alike. They indulge in mudslinging at other religions. They swear that they alone are the protectors of race, language, religion and country. They vie with each other to earn money.

Today there are lot of politics based religions or religions supported by political leaders. These religions have become part and parcel of politics. The political power has corrupted. When religion mixes with politics that too gets corrupted. In certain countries, religion is taught compulsorily in schools. Who are the teachers? Is it religion or the religious principles – which one do they want to teach? Or is it that they are intent in developing arrogance and dictatorship in the guise of teaching religious doctrines? Even those political leaders who had killed thousands of innocent people – did they not talk of religion and righteousness? Are these religious doctrines? A religion is nothing but a way of life and not a hypothesis. There is no use nor place for arguments in this. People should live the life of religions. It is their lives which will indicate which religion they belong to.

The religious arguments to prove the existence of God are of four kinds.

1. **The cosmological argument.** All effects have got causes. The former is the product of the latter. The primal cause behind the creation of the universe is God.
2. **Ontological argument.** All the materialistic things have got appearance, they suffer changes and they perish. The most primal cause behind all these is God who is without any beginning nor end.
3. **Design Argument.** We find a lot of discipline in the way natural things function in this world. That is not an accident.

The world functions according to a definite plan. There must have been somebody who must have been behind such a dramatic picture. The one who has created and who is directing the functions is God.

4. **Experience.** There are a lot of sages, hermits who talk about their divine experiences. The experiences of these seers bear evidence of God.

There are many who act as if they have seen God. You cannot deny the fact that there is some truth in this statement.

Some might have an impression and feeling that they have really seen God. But this is not the sense of Godhood. This might have been the result of bio-chemical deficiency or vitaminous deficiency. Some of the intoxicating medicines also might give such a feeling. Santana calls it as mental disease. Some call it neurosis. Some call it a dream spurred by feelings. All these are but the guesses of the materialists or presumptions. Whether materialism or the religious ideas which were not accepted by sages or the wise, both of them were but guesses or hypotheses. Nobody could say affirmingly that God existed or God did not exist. It is upto the people to either accept these hypotheses or reject them. Just by believing one thing, falsehood is not converted into truth. Nobody can say that there is one thing that is true. We have not been able to unravel it or fully understood it. Those who said that they saw it could not explain fully what it was; those who gave explanation of it fully, could not be said to have seen it in reality. Nobody could tell the truth completely. "There is one thing called, the truth. There has been nobody who has been able to come out with the truth fully. Even the great Sankara has not completely explained it. There is certainly one thing called the truth. The moment you open your

mouth to explain, you will reveal your ignorance. You cannot say that there is God nor you can say that there is no God."

— Yogaswamigal

In all religions and in all times and in all countries, there have been seers and apostles of God. Their utterances are the most sacred. Would it be wrong to take their Mantras as correct? They had merged with God and lived with the sense of Godhood. It was not a fantasy nor hypocrisy they acted. They were beyond egoism, arrogance, passions and desires and selfish ideas. They treated happiness and sorrows alike, treated gold and sand alike. They saw God in everything and love in everything. They could find God in themselves and found others in themselves too. They attained an inexplicable bliss. Were they mad? Whatever be the religion in the world, one finds a similarity in their utterances. That is the real religion. Orthodoxy, rituals and hypotheses were the creations of priests and pundits of religions. Some of them are useful for righteous living; many of them are useless. They must be shunned. Orthodoxy and ritualism and hypotheses are outer covers. They are not religions.

*Aroor Lord is in us; you run elsewhere
Villages and towns for festivals and toil!
Open fact – you fools understandeth not
You who search fire with lamp at hand!*

— Pattinathadigal

*What is temple; what is tank?
Worship thee temple and tanks?
Tank is in your mind; Temple in your heart;
No creation or destruction, none, none*

— Siva Vaakkiaar

Kingdom of God is within you

– Jesus

The religionists fight for the chaff while they find the rice alright. Now we shall see what is common to all religions. The Buddhists say that Nirvana is a state of complete effacement of self, all desires and passions arise out of the self consciousness and they were the reasons behind sorrows. So long as the self consciousness continued, sorrows will not leave you and you could not escape from the cycle of births and deaths. You are that and that is you. If one gets this wisdom, that is salvation. Once you shun selfish ideas, do not expect fruits but take it that everything is His action and do your duty, that you will be free from the effects of your actions. That is what the Vedanthis say. "Believe in God. Be the essence of God. Sacrifice yourself unto Him. You live in God. Let God live in you. If you follow these principles, then you can go to heavens." These are the words of Christ. The Saiva Siddhanthis say that shunning the self consciousness, getting the God feelings and surrendering yourself unto Him is called the salvation.

*I whom self was swallowed empty,
Self stayed O God!*

– Kanthar Anuputhi

*At the shadow of your Golden feet
when I'm to enjoy happiness – when.*

–Thayumaanavar

The consciousness of self and the arrogant thought of "mine" and selfishness are the reasons behind all problems. Saivasiddhanthis call this as the shit of arrogance. Passion, desires selfishness, jealous, arrogance are the characteristics of this shit.

Even when Ganmam and the sense of illusion vanish, this shit will persist. This is called the most primal shit. It will ultimately vanish. This is the reason behind arrogance, passions, desires and selfishness. Enmity, jealousy, racial and religious prejudices, avariciousness, power mongering, dictatorial impulses are all born out of this. It is the ramification of ego that stands behind all problems of economy and social problems. The same ego is the problem in religious field also.

*Those who renounce their ego in self identity and
Vanity about their action shall easily attain salvation.*

– Thirukkural

*Thou shalt attain spiritual wellbeing
the moment 'I' die*

–Yogaswamigal

The principles of righteousness is the religion. Hypotheses, principles, principles of orthodoxy and ritualism were principles formulated for guiding people to live according to religious principles. There is no point in talking about religion and teaching religion. People should strive to follow religion in living practices. There is no point in talking about renunciations. A very large majority of people try to live a life with spouses and children only. It is foolishness in trying to think that you can shun religion while you are with family and follow it when you become a Sanyasi. The life of family is the righteous one. Think of God at any moment and time. Live with a sense of God. Try to reduce feelings about self and its ramifications to the best extent possible. Act with a social sense. Live with love. Live righteously.

*Family life runs as ordained in the principle of
Family darma with love shall have the benefit and glory*

*Family life itself is sacred
More so when it is free from flaws*

*One who lives with name and fame in this world,
shall be treated on par with 'devas' in heaven.*

- Thirukkural

*Being in married life with controlled heart
Such talented one is great saint you say.*

Being saint with mind as a monkey

He who cannot understand ethics is spiritually ignorant

- Thayumanavar

These are principles which materialists also would accept. Even when the materialists try to live such a life without accepting God and Aatman turn into the wise. They become sages. They are the hermits.

If the religions were not to help people live righteously, and the religious principles were not to help them towards such a life, there is no use of religions. Some say that all religious principles could not be followed. If so, then why talk of religions at all? Whom are they trying to cheat? Some religion at home and some other at the temple? What is the point in teaching renunciation to those living with family? There are people who talk in terms of economy saying that selfishness is at the core of human thinking and that it could never be effaced from the hearts of people; it would be only wise to satisfy certain common passions to the best extent possible and get on. If that were so, no question of any salvation in life. There was no room for religion in life. When they say, "man", what do they mean – the matter in body or the life in Aatman? If they call the mind or Aatma then there is some meaning. If what they mean is Aatma, then how could they have found it? Aatma lies dormant with all the characteristics of God. 'Know thyself.' The

body and mind, being the tools to express the Aatma would not work. Whatever has been said above are the characteristics of matter. These characteristics vanish. Illusion will disappear. The Aatma will become the Paramaatma. This is the view of Vedanthi. The Aatma does not have any characteristics of its own. It stands coloured by that on which it depends. If something is dependant on matter, it becomes matter. When and if one relies upon Sivam, that becomes Sivam. This is the view of Saiva Siddhanta.

One cannot change the characteristics of Aatma by chanting Mantram or doing Tantram. The Aatma should undergo evolution. Right in the beginning nobody can kill desires and passions completely and the shit of arrogance. Would it not be possible to reduce them slowly in steps? Our life has an aim. We should attain salvation. We should be completely enlightened. We must eschew the wrong and follow the right. Love should spread. We should treat others like us. Freedom, equality before law, justice and fraternity should spread. There is light. One need not argue for the rights to get the light. We shall go up the hill of efforts in order to reach the pinnacle of wisdom. Our next step is our real problem. The more height we reach, we shall understand all about things that are there in the hill. Once we reach the top we could see whatever is around. There need not be any worry about things at the top now. For one who is in the valley, he could just imagine what would be there in the top. While on the ascent, if one chooses to argue endlessly, he might slide down by accident. Love and righteousness are the only sure ways of reaching God.

*It is darkness everywhere. O the merciful light!
show me the path.
Kindly bless me to put my steps forward.*

*I am not desirous to know what is
at the distance and beyond.*

*Enough if I understand how and where
I shall put my step further.*

- Cardinal Newman

*If one who detests people but avers that he loves God,
then he is talking something that is untrue.*

*If he could not love whom he can see, how can he love
God whom he cannot see?*

- Rev. Father Yeon.

*Believe there is one God. Love Him above all.
Love even a stranger as you would do yourself.*

- Jesus.

Though there are plenty of religions today just for the namesake, religious doctrines and religious feelings have by and large disappeared. They register the names of their religions alright while statistics is collected. They feel happy to know how many belong to their own religion. Nobody follows any religious doctrine. They do not have any intention to do that. One religion has got itself established in this world today. The religion is Economics, born in the 18th century and found its growth in the 19th and 20th centuries A.D. has stabilized itself. The day that this principle started getting its root, people's ideas started getting diverted towards it. Economics became the new religion.

The principles of materialistic utilitarianism forms, enunciated by Lok and Bentham form the basis for economics. The principles of economics consider man as a material tool. It denies his spiritual good. Today we measure the amount of goodness in society by per capita income. Depending the amount of oiling that we do for this material tool, it gets satisfied. The basic

elements of research are these material tools and not people. The economics take people also as a form of capital just as land and capital are taken for the purpose of production. They mix up these along with other basic elements and reach its own conclusions. The popular needs are natural. People become happy by satisfying their natural needs. Or they reduce their sorrows. There is subtle mathematics behind the economic plights or happinesses. The aim of life is to live a life of happiness with enough to eat and enjoy. People by nature are selfish. Nobody can change this. Intelligence helps one to maximise this selfishness. With the computers aiding the wealth to increase, the ratio of human benefits will increase. When everybody works hard to maximise his selfish benefits, the social benefit increases. There are no finer distinctions like the good, the bad, discipline, culture, ethics and virtues. These are all but pigments of weak imaginative minds. Individual initiative is the basis for development. Whichever thing is useful for the society, it is good and vice-versa.

One could go on maximising his selfish benefits. In a market of free society without any shades of competition, God, money, wealth, power, fame, selfishness and worldly pleasures are things which we worship. Whether materialists or religionists, economics is their sole religion. The books on economics form the scriptures. The economic principles alone form the basic premises. Development is our theme. The brokers in the economic world are like the evil minded 'Sakunis' of Mahabharatha. Politicians are the sages and seers. 5000 years ago, Viyasa the great seer could predict and prophesy what would happen today. In his famous Sreemad Bhagavatham:

1. O the king! righteousness, love, mercy, wisdom will diminish day by day when the times move towards Kaliyuga.

2. The sense of religion will almost come to total negation. Temples will be closed without people going in to worship God. Worshipping God will come to a standstill. At the same time, pseudo-religious dramas will increase.
3. Love, mercy and righteousness will disappear from the life platform. Ego and selfishness will come to the fore. Jealousy and religious fanaticism will spread. Racial prejudices will spearhead.
4. People will be rated according to the wealth they possessed.
5. People will try to get more money, more power and more fame. They will value only these. They will take it that they could grab all these in any manner of their choice.
6. Power and wealth alone would become justice and righteousness. People will exploit people and amass wealth. There won't be any justice for those people without money. No legitimate life for them. Money and power will help them escape with the most heinous of crime.
7. People will perform marriages of wealth. They will forget the family discipline. Sensuousness and sensuous living will rise to the fore. Divorces will increase.
8. Litigations will increase. People will live without any sense of religion. They will indulge in religious arguments. They will fight with each other on the basis of their own religious gods. They will enact pseudo dramas. Religions also will become institutions.
9. Both men and women will prefer luxuries. Men will grow hair for exposing their charm. Ladies also will cut their hairs, wearing the dresses of women, will walk around like men.

10. Corruption, seeking for money, pseudo orthodoxy will spread. They will go to Ganges for bathing. But they won't cleanse their hearts. They will wear saffron robes. But they will not forget passions, sensuousness, and desires. Pseudo missionaries of religion will appear and make money. Everything will become trade, everywhere advertisements will become the order of the day. Religion also will come down to become a trade.
11. Corruption will become rampant in politics. Dictatorship will spread. Hatred, jealousy, enmity, selfish competitions will become the order of the day. Politicians will get votes by cheating the people in the garb of democracy. The moment they get into the power, they will start earning money. They will take bribes. They will rule without any iota of righteousness. The rule of law will die a natural death.
12. They will deny God. They will deny righteousness as a principle of life. They will deny themselves. They will say that everything is matter. Man will become that on which he would rely. The life principles on which he would depend would be the function of the economic and social structure of his days. If people should live a righteous life, then their social structure and economic base should change. Even in individuals' lives, love, equality, fraternity and freedom should spread. Egoism and selfishness should disappear. People should get freedom from the debasing selfishness. They should act with a sense of social good. The wealth of the country is an absolutely common property. It is the sense of individual property that allows the ego and selfishness to grow. In an economy run on the basis of collective rights, there is no room for individual rights on property. At least one should try to bring about such an egalitarian society. The religionists do not try to do these but just feign to do.

What is it that we see on the other hand? Since days immemorial, the priests and religionists and the saffron robed gents, were bearing the torch and spreading movements of wealth making. They were supporting dictators. They talked in terms of religion and race differences. They converted the virtues and sins as trade materials. They killed crores of people in the name of religion. They told untruths. They became arrogant with a feeling that their own God was the one ultimate. They indulged in a wild frenzy of proselytisation either by giving money or threatening with a sceptre in hand. They joined with marauders and exploiters. They opened their hearts for money. They gave special privileges. They performed special poojahs in the temples. They chanted Devaram but demolished Siva temples. Is this the religion? When you compare these pseudo religionists with materialistic philosophers, the latter is far good.

No one can give a final statement regarding God, Aatma, rebirth and effect of good or bad deeds. Both religion and materialism are just two planks of arguments. It is the experience of seers and sages that form the basis for religion. We might believe in them or not. Everything is a matter of faith. We take exploitation and guesses as the basic premises. It is through senses we experience the outer world. Do they do the job correctly? Yet, we take it that whatever is experienced through senses is correct.

Today in so many countries thousands of Godmen have appeared. They indulge in trading on the basis of human faith. They seek advertisements. Most of them are tricksters. Some of them might possess religious powers. But religion is not a circus. Most of the people think that the so called Swamiars are the ultimate refuge for the sinners to seek redemption. They return after such visits to exploit the people again. They do the weeding of the society. They tell lies. They take bribes.

What is the aim of a religion? The duty of a religion is to inculcate righteousness in the minds of people and help them to attain salvation. We do not know anything about the other world. But we are able to see and experience this world. If only people follow the religious precepts, then there is no doubt that the quality of life will improve. Fear of God, humility, love and a sense of social goodness alone will lead one to a disciplined life. But religions became the basis for all negative things. It is better that such religions perish. Only the religious principles form the religion and not the pseudo rituals.

You cannot establish God, Aatma and life after death by arguments and debates. We might perhaps come to know in a future date as to the exact nature of all these things. Next comes the important duty for the people to cleanse their hearts. Next must come the reformation on the economic front which abounds in religious and selfish wars, injustice and corruption.

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is the end of a religion? The duty of a religion is to make men righteous in the minds of people and help them to obtain salvation. We do not know anything about the other world, but we are able to see and experience this world. If only people follow the religious precepts, then there is no doubt that the quality of life will improve. Fear of God, humility, love, and a sense of social goodness alone will lead one to a disciplined life. But religion is not the basis for all negative things. It is better if a man is right as a man. Only the religious principles form the religion and not the pseudo rituals.

You cannot establish God, Heaven and life after death by arguments and debates. We might perhaps come to know in a little while as to the real nature of all these things. Now comes the important duty for the people to change their hearts. Now we have to see the formation of the countries from which abound the religious and selfish wars, injustice and corruption.

After Death...?

Materialism

Buddhism

Vedantha

Mysticism

Christianity

Spiritualism

Modern Scholars

All what they say

about After Death...?