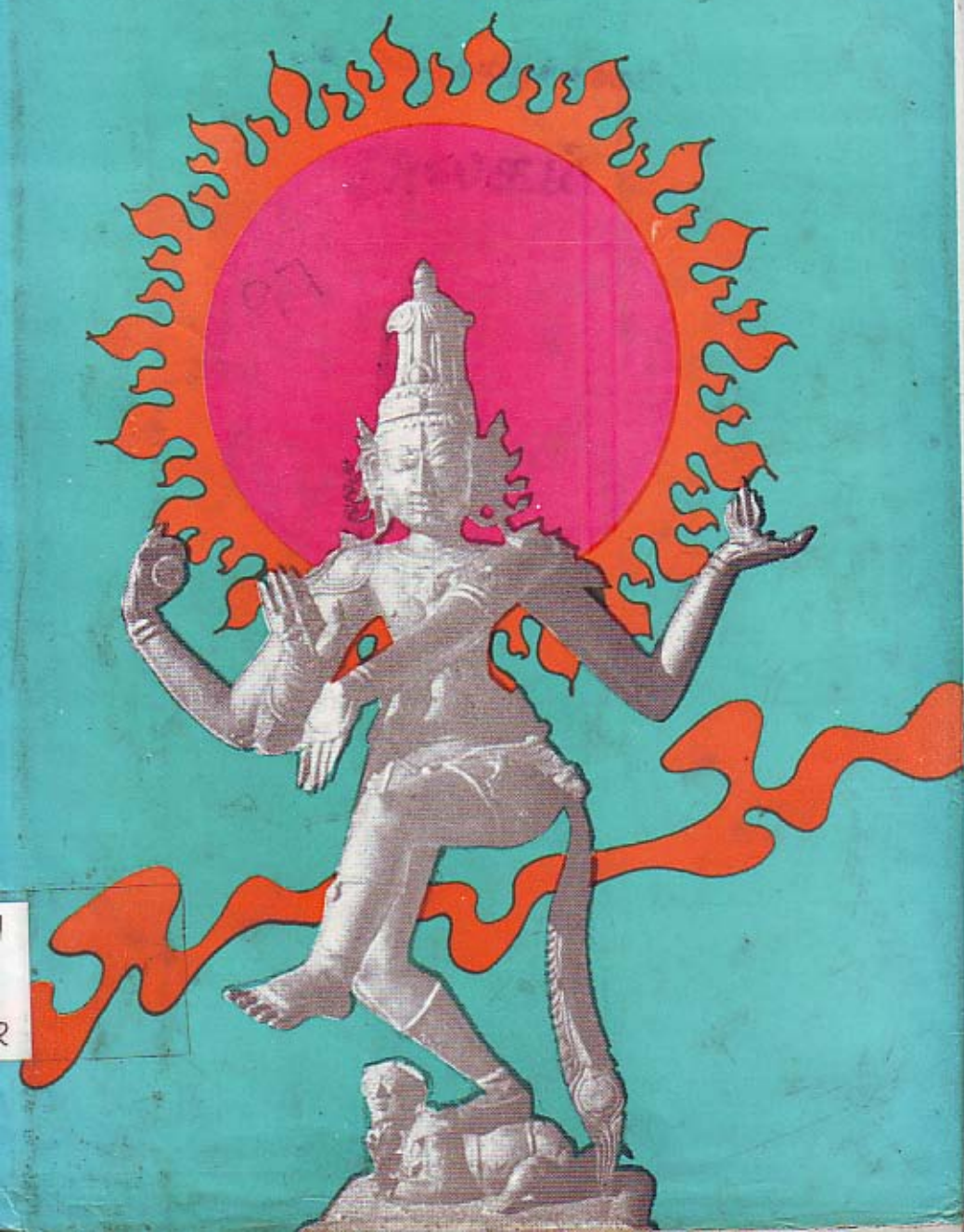


THE  
CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION  
OF THE TAMILS

C. RAJASINGHAM



# **THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE TAMILS**

by

**C. RAJASINGHAM**

A challenging historical perspective on the oldest yet still surviving culture called the Dravidian. The author has taken pains to cover the widest possible areas of reference.

The Tamil growth covered millennia and still survives against the wantonness and ruthlessness of the present industrial - commercial age. As the author says: "Tamil civilization was built on the ever-present because it knew that the psyche contained nothing that is old." (Page 16).

This book is based on scientific facts that have so far not been covered. These facts have been ignored through failure to see things outside the profanities of modern history. It is hoped that this effort will help to arrest the mass degeneration of the personality called Tamil.

# **THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE TAMILS**

**(A historical perspective)**

**C. RAJASINGHAM**

**International Institute of Tamil Studies,  
Madras, Tamil Nadu, India.**



*Forewords*

**Hon'ble C. Aranganayakam**  
Minister For Education

**&**

**Dr. Avvai Natarajan**



*A challenging perspective on the world's greatest heritage condemned to  
live in a ruthless, indifferent and apathetic present.*

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## FOREWORD

Culture in Tamil and its growth over many millennia has been made a fascinating subject of study by Mr. Rajasingham of Sri Lanka. The introductory paragraph of his Preface to the book entitled, "The Cultural Contribution of the Tamils" speaks ruefully of "the world's greatest heritage condemned to live in a ruthless and apathetic present".

I, as Minister in charge of education, do agree that new directions of growth are needed to strengthen and purify the streams of Tamil. It is good therefore that the writer has gone into the manifold and varied aspects of Tamil life and culture. This book should stimulate fresh thinking and purposive action.

I am greatly encouraged by the fact that the antiquity and intrinsic value of Tamil culture is being recognized not merely in Tamil Nadu but in other more developed Western countries as well. Universities in a few Western countries too have opened new faculties for the teaching and dissemination of Tamil culture.

Mr. Rajasingham's book will serve the very useful purpose of taking Tamil learning to the world. It explains lucidly the variegated manner of the Tamil cultural growth as well as its meaningfulness to the modern scientific age. I am therefore glad that the International Institute of Tamil Studies has used the author's services as writer and teacher profitably and purposefully.

Tamil Nadu is indeed thankful for the new and dynamic approach to the subject by the author of this book.

**C. ARANGANAYAKAM**  
Minister For Education  
Madras - 600 009



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Madras - 600 009

## FOREWORD - II

It has become an exacting, yet pleasurable, duty cast on me to express an opinion on the first book concerning the cultural contribution of the Tamils from a reputed journalist, writer and University teacher of Sri Lanka.

I have had the pleasure of reading the author's contributions on many subjects. His incisive perspicacity and originality struck me, more so because he has attempted to apply an analytical method of approaching the contribution of Tamils.

The author has had the opportunity of working at the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras which has enabled him to devote his attention to this subject more closely and analytically. The field of Tamil needs the most modern approaches to interpret its vast storehouse of wisdom in the arts and sciences of living, not merely the significant relevance to a bygone era, but in the glorious prospect of a future for mankind. Thiru C. Rajasingham of Jaffna is therefore paving the way for proper attitudes and orientations in thinking on objective levels which is to be welcomed and recommended.

The author, has now opened a new and scientific vista of research which should provide the new generation of scholars an opportunity for a fresher and more wholesome look at Tamil pastures.

In respect of the vast field of Tamil it goes without saying that the musical rendering of poetry has to be continued as a time-honoured tradition. The author's valuable asset is that he has kept alive the value of the Thirumurais and their wholesomeness in musical rendering in addition to his abiding interest in Carnatic music. This shows there was, until recently in Sri Lanka, a continuing and living tradition of music inseparable from traditional poetry.

In these days, scholars of Tamil should eschew the sectarian approach and imbibe the scientific spirit of enquiry without the trappings of divine inter-mingling.

The author has tried to free himself from this traditionalistic approach. It is to be hoped that the readers would find this work stimulating.

**AVVAI NATARAJAN**

Secretary to Government  
Tamil Development - Culture Department  
Fort St. George, Madras - 600 009

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*This book is the result of the initiative taken by Dr. Shan M. Nagendra and Mr. N. Alagarasan of the U. S. A. to have something both substantial and concrete which would serve as meeting - point culturally of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, India and several other countries of the world. It is clear that what the modern Tamil is in danger of losing is his cultural heritage which paradoxically is perhaps the richest that any race or community can offer to the world.*

*As agreed upon between the author and the sponsors a percentage of the sales profit from this book will go towards the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee rehabilitation. By rehabilitation is meant into the cultural and economic as explained and clarified is no uncertain terms in the book. The monopoly of sale and distribution in the U. S. A. will be that of the sponsors.*

*Dr. A. N. Perumal, Director, International Institute of Tamil Studies has kindly given me a short introduction for which I am much grateful. My thanks also go to Mr. G. Thirugnanam of the Government College of Art and Architecture, Mamallapuram, who did the illustrative art work so brilliantly.*

*The printers too need my thanks for their painstaking effort to keep to the target date whilst meeting the standards of modern printing.*

**The Author**

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## PREFACE

By culture is meant a discipline in self-awareness which creates the artistic. It is different from the rational where the products are meant to be squandered in every form of licentiousness. The ground work of the human psyche belongs to the eternally living and by Tamil culture is meant the peak of this development in consciousness. This book is an attempt to discover the past of perhaps the world's greatest heritage condemned to live in a ruthless and apathetic present. The call of the present is there all the time so that the atom of nuclear physics can be pushed into the transcendental territory now understood in psychology as the archetype. In Tamil culture and its resurgence is the only possibility of this realisation.

It has to be said for once that the tendency today to adulterate Tamil with a'ien and Western cultures has already begun to cause disintegration to the pristine in Dravidian culture. In other words we may be said to have reached the stage of saturation in the phase of denigration of culture. In the abandonment of Saivism as a living religion is also implied the disappearance of culture as the strength and bulwark of Tamil society. Such a thing called religious failure will equally be disastrous for India as a whole which at one time was energised and activated by Saivism.

When Dr. Avvai Natarajan, Secretary to the Tamil Nadu Government on Tamil Development and Culture, entrusted me with the task of writing this volume, I felt that I had to break new ground to make what is called culture the distinct and edifying thing it was in Tamil. No mental effort can help to grasp culture because the latter calls for surrender of the ego which is as much as to abjure the dictates of reason.

That Tamil culture can be traced by the modern mind as a historical growth has led to many attempts which have produced a timid defensiveness. The gift of thought given to the ancient Tamils strove after the highest things which escape modern historical approaches. In their concern with truth they did not go outside so that the culture remained untainted by the empirical ego.

The fact is that there never was an Indian or even Graeco-Roman history as written in the modern sense. Such attempts of the recent past have been self-defeatist. The Tamil particularly never gave room for the personal ego to be inflated which explains why the life of Valluvar for example was never conceived of as profane and would never have had relevance to the profane. Every biography of significance in Tamil was outside the profane level of reference. India always disdained to write history for reason that it always would give room for detractors from the truth thus causing disorder and disharmony in the social order.

The traditional Tamil society was unanimous because there was community of ideas and feelings where the whole people represented a single purpose and goal. The distinctions, if ever, were measured by standards of profundity, not of literacy.

The social order was free from psychic diseases and the disorder arising therefrom. This is because Siva became the Redeeming Principle who plunges into the healing act as Maha Vaithianathan. In this act the depths of the collective psyche were reached so that the stage was not attained as today where man is lost in errors and sufferings as a result of an isolation of consciousness. In Saivism's goal men were caught in a common rhythm. This enabled the individual to communicate his feelings and strivings to mankind as a whole

Where, in the growth of Sanskrit, yoga became central, there was also danger of real psychosis with certain unstable individuals. The ego in Tamil was not sacrificed to a freedom that was illusory. Freedom or *veedu* was liberation from the pairs of opposites which led to unparalleled effusions of poetry set to music. It is a unique feature in Tamil development that such

majestic poetry should emerge in the form of musical rendering giving thereby a conscious relation to the processes of the unconscious. It is unheard of in any people's development of culture. The inherent in anything is the result of psychological exaggeration. In Tamil alone was achieved the goal which was once diffused widely among the masses of shifting the centre of gravity from the ego to the Redeeming Principle called Siva. That was a revolution for all the Tamil people and resulted in the great achievements here presented under the title of culture.

What was received as culture in the past was indistinguishable from life but unfortunately it could not be perpetuated into the future to which it really belongs. I leave it to the readers to judge why it is that the Tamils of today have become less concerned about culture than they had been in the past and whether the time has not come for them to fit their band-wagon once more to the richer and more edifying past. That would enable a bond capable of ensuring a longer period of time than the present short-lived era.

Without culture a people can become dehumanised and the little effort made here is intended to prevent trends where culture will no longer be made to subserve religion in the Tamil mind. It has to be affirmed with no uncertainty that the Tamil mind can grow, as it has indeed so far done, only through the religious impulse. Hence some effort has been directed in this publication to the religious background of Tamil development wherein alone is growth possible.

The fact is that the culture now commonly accepted as Dravidian, with all its present lack of integrality with the social order, is still the most disciplined known to the modern world. The failure to give the needed social value and impact to that culture which the Tamil kings in their time did, is one reason why imitative and cheap cultures have invaded as if into a vacuum. This indeed, though a modern symptom, is regrettable.

Where, in its modern sense education too has contributed to the disintegration of society, it is necessary to see that

culture is not affected by that disintegration. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has observed very candidly that a university degree is fast becoming "a ticket to nowhere" and that mining the ocean floor or the moon is much more rewarding than being a university teacher, lawyer or meteorologist. Even with affluent countries such as the U.S.A. "over half of PhD holders cannot find work for which they were trained and unemployment among chemists and chemical engineers was the highest in a decade in 1983". (U.P.I. report of July 30, 1985 from United Nations.)

Some attention has been given to Saivism as without it, there could not have been such tremendous growth and development in Tamil culture. Hence it is necessary to stress an aspect of Saivism which did not exist in the past. It is the attraction the religion is having in the Western world and even in the U.S.A.

Along with the vast technological and scientific progress there is also felt a growing need for a religion satisfying the peculiarly modern scientific outlook. For example over the past two decades or more, there has grown an unmistakable psychological interest in the things that take man to his own inner processes. That may even said to be a turning away from the outward material things which are causing much harm socially and economically. The glut of material objects and devices has made one thing possible which is the carrying away of the individual by society. This in the first instance has relieved the individual of a responsibility within a validity that may be termed universal.

Very few realise that the psyche is the *sine qua non* of all experience. The entire Dravidian Saiva iconography gave meaning and value to Energy which Einstein in a mathematical sense somewhat gave by the now famous formula  $E = MC^2$ . As a recent commentator has observed, "Physics has transgressed into metaphysics, when during its progress in analysing material objects, it has encountered less substantial entities like electron, proton and radiation, as also space-time continuum with a metaphysical base".\*

\* (p. 128 "The Cyclic Universe of Matter, Energy, Man and God" by V. M. Srikumaran Nayar).

At the transcendental level of Manikkavasagar - (vide chapter "Thirundappaguthi" in "Thiruvagam")— the ideality of space and time as forms of intuition becomes real. The illumined wisdom of the mystic at once becomes the daylight of the psyche. The ego vanishes as the centre of the universe and the world ceases to be enclosed within spatial limits. The beauty of Tamil in this context transcends even Haller's description of eternity quoted by Hegel :

"I heap up monstrous numbers,  
Pile millions upon millions,  
I put aeon upon aeon and world upon world,  
And when from that awful height  
Reeling, again I seek thee,  
All the might of number increased a thousand-fold  
Is still not a fragment of thee.  
*I remove them and thou liest wholly before me*"

That there is need of a resurgence of the Saiva religion and culture in Tamil Nadu mainly through proper teaching and study is evident. One has to admit that, whereas, for instance, Rev. G. U. Pope in his life time found Thiruvagam on the lips of every Tamil, as stated by him in his preface to the translation completed on April 24, 1900, the picture today is one of alienation and apathy. The same has to be stated of Thirukkural and other masterpieces which rank among the greatest literatures of the world. This contribution on Tamil culture is therefore directed towards the enlivening and re-awakening of interest and, I am sure, Dr. Avvai Natarajan has entrusted this humble task to me that I would be worthy of it. I have had his great wisdom and learning as guide in this undertaking, not less his responsibility as the Tamil Nadu Government's worthy choice to re-kindle and nurture the Tamil language and culture even in the very land of their birth.

Another goal needs to be reached which is to bridge the gulf between the scientific and humanistic approaches. The Western—biased education has already sufficiently killed the soul of experience in Tamil whilst distorting the perspectives that

(Hegel's "Science of Logic", Muirhead Library of Philosophy) Allen and Unwin-London, page 230.

should underlie a great and living tradition. For instance, it has taken many centuries for the West to realise that forestry is an integral part of ecology and mathematics. To secure the people with the right orientation through Western methods is not achievable in any new future unless a built-in insight into Nature and her phenomena are realized through the millennia-old tradition of the Tamils. For example, the oldest grammar in Tamil, Tholkappiam, assigned the sacred trust of the forest to divinity itself. It was Mayon, the diety, who presided over forest wealth :

மாயோன் மேய கடுறை உலகமும்  
 ன்

Forest preservation called for the capacity to be attuned fully with Nature; hence not merely the grammar, but the epics and the very music breathed life into the forest environment. Therefore in education too inner discipline and surrender are called for which, in a specialised way, Tamil was able to offer to her votaries. We feel the paradox today posed in the denudation of forests and high-lighted in modern scientific approaches regarding the dangers and the counter-measures needed. Scientists today admit that man's expanding technology has already gravely destroyed the environment. Dr. J. N. R. Jeffers, Director of the NERC Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, UK, observed at an international scientists' seminar held in Colombo in 1982 that one-third of the world's population is consuming two-thirds of the world's resources and desertisation is more the order with 20 hectares of tropical forest disappearing per minute throughout the world bringing about environmental disasters not capable of being solved by science alone.

It has become necessary to move out of modern texts which, under guise of learning, only generate bigotry and darkness. This book is aimed in whatever humble way it was possible to revive memories where these are weakened because a poor memory could never have formed part of education in tradition. The time may be said to have come for the Tamils to forget the machine because, needless it is to say, the forward look is within the self alone wherein lie the secrets that can unite and assemble life's forces.

It may be argued that scientific progress is a *sine qua non* today. The 'progress' about which so much is spoken is also being looked at through a different eye. The scientist too accepts the limit he has reached of his view. He now knows that with his glass prism, gifted as he is with the human eye, he can only be sensitive to the narrow band of radiation that falls between the red and the violet. The rest coming from the sun—infra-red, ultra-violet, X-ray, radio-magnetic waves, gamma, radio and cosmic rays—are outside physical view. Hence the world to modern eyes is distorted and enfeebled.

It has been noted by scientists that one-third of the world's crop land is losing top soil similar to what ended the Mayan civilization. In the words of the UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cueller, politically the world is on the verge of a new international anarchy. Armed conflicts, terrorism, a deteriorating world economy, the armaments race which absorbs more than 500 thousand million dollars a year, refugees by the millions and the ghost of a nuclear war are all there right before us.

India - (that part of it called Dravidian) - has in the past been the chief factor in the growth of civilization and culture and that growth, isolated from the perils of modern thought mostly on profane levels, can indeed offer safe harbour at least to the Tamil people who can look forward to a morrow. In that hope this work has been undertaken to enable some movement out of the present stagnation of mind and spirit.

It is not cynicism which made the great British naturalist, Sir Arthur Thomson, say in his famous essay on the donkey that "the earth will be a duller place where there are no more donkeys to bray." The noise of modern gadgets as against the bray of the donkey is different totally from what has been described as the 'cavernous melancholy' of this nature's gift to the world. When all culture is dead in the world accompanying the present precipitate decline, one would prefer the donkey's bray to the noise that industry produces even in the land of the greatest musical race in the world—the Tamils. More than all else the latter alone are capable of proving to

the world through their copious literature, music and art that there is not merely a transcendental background to man's existence but also that the archetypal world inside us has a reality all its own.

This book has been designed to give a new world view of Tamil culture. Fortunately the English language helps us to look into newer horizons. Intelligent and sympathetic understanding is needed to allow the further growth of Tamil culture and, I am sure, under the enlightened guidance of Dr. Avvai Natarajan, the little effort here will reach fulfilment. What is before the Tamil people as their need of the hour is the resuscitation of their great cultural heritage.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Shan M. Nagendra and Mr. A. Alagarasan of the U. S. A. for coming forward to bring out this publication at this crucial and even turning-point in the Tamil people's life not merely in India and Sri Lanka but throughout the world.

They have felt that, at this stage, when a world consciousness has begun to grow concerning the meaning and purpose of human life, it is necessary to open the windows towards Tamil. Herein alone lies a vast stretch of disciplined understanding as well as a reaching out into the secrets of man's psychic life and being. Tamil alone will be able to pull mankind out of the stifling products of the ego.

□ □ □

My thanks go to the Hon. Minister of Education, C. Aranganayagam and Dr. Avvai Natarajan, Secretary, Culture and Tamil Language Development, for writing forewords to this book. My work at the International Institute of Tamil Studies during more than two and half years has been due to their recognition of certain merits in me which has made this book not merely meaningful but necessary in the world today.

□ □ □

“பாமிரம் இல்லது பனுவல் அன்றே”

## INTRODUCTION

In the tradition of Tamil writing the introduction is intended to give meaning to the contents of a text. The text here calls for such an introduction since there have been and can be varied understandings of culture as the accumulated wisdom of the past. Where Tamil goes its culture developed mainly in relation to the religion of the Tamil people, namely Saivism. Vaishnavism, deriving inspiration from Tamil and Sanskrit sources, was able, to gather strength whereby to produce its repertoire of poetry and temple art.

It has to be admitted that in the abandonment of religion would be the disappearance of Indian culture and in that prospect would also be the disappearance of stability in India. Also the point made by T. S. Eliot in another context is relevant. It is that of “a native culture which has already begun to disintegrate under foreign influence, and where a native population has already taken in ~~the~~ more of the foreign culture than it can ever expel.”\* Language, culture and religion in Tamil were not different and contrasted things but rather identical so that it has become necessary to accept these inter-linking factors as sacrosanct.

As perhaps the oldest of the world's living languages, Tamil has a culture distinctly its own and, in presenting this interpretation, it has become necessary to give emphasis to the distinctiveness as well. One of the perils of the soul is its loss. The soul of Tamil which still lives in ~~some~~ form or other has to be preserved against the modern world's undervaluation

\* “Notes towards the Definition of Culture” by T. S. Eliot (Page 63)



of the human psyche. This book is therefore intended to fulfil a purpose, if it is not to fill a void.

There are knots which bind modern scholarship or research both mental and affective which prevent self-identification with the object. A bold venture became necessary to disentangle the mind from modern historical prejudices so that the unifying principles could be made to emerge.

That which belonged to India prior to alien and Western influences was indivisible and inseparable from the gnosis of God. That history was ageless and even today is capable of steering man out of all modern profanities of time. Whilst it became necessary to refer to data from various sources, there was found great difficulty in confining this presentation to the periods arbitrarily fixed by historians of today. That would have detracted from the greatness of Dravidian culture because what is needed is the growth of that culture outside all latter-day foreign influences which have consciously sought to destroy it. The miracle is that Tamil has survived in its intrinsic cultural and religious form so that this presentation can only help to draw the lines of objectivity.

Contemporary political, economic and social conditions have reversed man's advance towards the Logos. C. G. Jung who, like all Western thinkers and scholars, knew India mainly through Sanskrit and the window opened to it by scholars such as Max Muller, still came very near to understanding Tamil. That is because, through the science of psychology, he was able to expose the dangers of the intellect subjugating the psyche. Thus, he strongly felt the danger which had led to the age of scientific technology. Here he observes that "the foundations were laid for an inner opposition which today threatens the world with chaos. To make the reversal complete, all the powers of the underworld now hide behind reason and intellect, and under the mask of rationalistic ideology a stubborn faith seeks to impose itself by fire and sword, vying with the darkest aspects of a church militant."\*

While modern history always tends to be self-assertive India abjured this. The manliness of India before the Western world set foot on Indian soil lay in the flowering of the human personality. That was outside the arid regions of self-assertion. The self of India belonged to transcending principles, whence came the reason that the Tamil man's Saivism even today holds sway in Kashmir. Lemurian Tamil having been the primary classical language of the world means that South India was the cradle of the human race. "The Dravidians were original inhabitants of the Indian peninsula and developed a civilization which was taken to Mesopotamia and formed the basis of Semite civilisation."\*

Tamil was the repository of the Primordial Tradition and in its doctrinal form exists even today in what is known as Sangam and post-Sangam literature. The Dravidian tradition continues as the Primordial mainly due to preserved poetry and literature which, prior to the profanities of later day and particularly modern history, was oral, inwardly realised and communicated as doctrinal. The same is understood of sacred poetry such as *Thiru-Vasaham* where it could not otherwise be so supreme and beyond profane understanding if it was not that Siva Himself wrote as Manikkavasagar sang. Perfection must proceed from manifestation to the divine in which is the ultimate liberty of spontaneity.

There was no toleration in tradition of the vagaries of genius. Ananda Coomaraswamy has rightly referred to "ultimate liberty of spontaneity" as being "conceivable only as a workless manifestation in which art and artist are perfected."\*\* To us who cannot and will not understand tradition, Coomaraswamy's presentation of true or pure art as having an exclusive logic and criteria of its own which cannot be tested by modern standards of truth, will appear incoherent. Dravidian art for example took its ideals in the mathematical sense whilst filling in its wholeness the entire field of vision. The intelligibility required is of the essential, not necessarily optically plausible.

\* ("The Collected Works of C.G. Jung-Vol II pages 292-293)

\* "People of India" by R. Risely

\*\* "The Theory of Art in Asia" page 23 by Ananda Coomaraswamy

Delving into the Dravidian past calls for an escape from notions of time—past, present and future. There have been geological and other changes during glacial periods which submerged the Lemurian continent breaking up large areas into fragments. Recent archaeological finds at Harappa and Mohenjodaro give clear evidence that Saivism was the earliest religion on Indian and Sri Lankan soil. The fact is that Saivism prevails even today in Kashmir despite foreign infiltration and influences, conquests and missionary activities which have destroyed the wholeness and integrity of the Dravidian tradition throughout India.

It was Saivism which created the vast repertoire of Art and Architecture as well as Theories of Government in the light of tradition among 64 branches of study which were essentially Dravidian. Historians refer to Kapatapura mentioned by Ramayana, Mahabharata and Arthashastra as belonging to the submerged continent in which was located the second Sangam. The First Sangam was in *Then Madurai* and the third in modern *Madurai*.

The Indian outlook before the Aryan and other impacts, in line with tradition, lacked the historical sense. It was essentially due to an indifference to transient effects since the view of things was *sub specie aeternitatis*. The Aryan too after some time was compelled to accept this view of the world which enabled under Dravidian influence the building of a Sanskrit culture and tradition.

Historians of today have a total disregard of the chronology of the ancients in terms of everything including history. The so-called 'true' but in fact utterly profane history is traced to about the 6th century prior to the Christian era. In tradition time was not involved in secular and profane understanding to give arbitrary categories of so-called Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Stone Age man as being inferior to modern man. The Saiva calendar based on the movement of the earth in relation to the planets had a bearing on cosmic influences astronomically interpreted. This puts the modern historical approaches to limited perspectives merely.

The sidereal year with 12 permanent segments and the five year Yuga Panchanga, the Ecliptic Circle divided into 27 equal parts were known to the Tamil tradition from a time immemorial. The revolutions of the planets as well as of the sun, the Milky Way with its more than 20,000 crores of stars, the movements of the atoms and the numerous galaxies of the universe were brought to focus by Tamil astronomers and Saiva mystics such as Manikkavasagar. ("*Thiru-vanda-ppakuthi*" in "*Thiru-vasagam*")

Even today learned and cultured Tamils who have not succumbed to modern and Western influences continue to treat time and space outside the profanities of modern distinctions. Time to man is to them a cycle - a *Manvanthra* divided into four periods. Man is today in the last cycle called *Kali-Yuham*.

For astronomical purposes the Tamils took into consideration 27 stars or *Nakshatras* which also form part of their culture and tradition. The 28th star, having gone away as pole-star in 10,000 B.C.—only 27 are taken into consideration. The concordance here is that the moon takes  $27\frac{1}{2}$  days to go round the elliptic circle and which also accounts for this division.

The sun has its own solar year and begins it by entering Mahara Rasi. That to the Tamils is very important as ushering the Pongal designed to remember and offer gratitude to the sun. The sun is related to all things on earth - the most important being agriculture and animal husbandary. The festival includes the domestic animals too, especially cattle. In its movement from the equator to  $23\frac{1}{2}$  South is the second phase commencing July (*Aadi*) and ending in December (*Marghazi*). The first phase is one of awakening in which is found a great deal of Tamil mystical poetry - *Thiruppavai* and *Tiruvempavai*. The number of days taken by the sun from Vernal to Autumnal equinox is  $186\frac{1}{2}$  days and then from here to the Vernal is  $178\frac{1}{2}$  days.

Thus the Tamil people's history belongs to a timeless determinant because their thoughts escaped time's profanities

having found the true meaning and purpose of existence on earth. T.S. Eliot gave proper expression to this in "*Four-Quartets*."

"A people without history,  
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern  
Of timeless moments".

When the Tamil language grew from prose to poetry and thence to music and dance, the people had learnt to come "out of 'the sea of sound' into 'the life of music'". In the accelerating movements of modern life with its false notions of "progress" one sees the downward decline of the Tamil people. It has become an accelerated movement away from the continuity that in Tamil linked all things together. It is also a movement away from the truths that lay within easy reach of all the Dravidian people.

In *Kali Yuga* they say is the tenth part of the whole *Manvantra* and the craze with which the Tamils have been made to accept so-called "rational" thought under guise of modern education has struck fatally at the root of what René Guénon aptly terms as "the genuine supra-rational and non-human traditional wisdom". It was a wisdom derived mostly from the disciplines which were initiatic in character.

In the same way the Renaissance and Reformation completed the rupture with the traditional spirit, the downright falsification of history found in modern books to accord with the sinking of civilization to its lowest elements is indicative of the dark age of Kali-Yuga where the characteristics are marked by disorder and confusion. The Tamils have unfortunately taken seriously an age which is "at the opposite pole to primordial spirituality." The words of René Guénon are apposite here: "Modern civilization, like everything else, has a reason for existing, if indeed it represents the state of affairs that terminates a cycle. One can say that it is what it should be and that it comes in its appointed time and place; but it should nonetheless be judged according to the words of the Gospel, which have been too often imperfectly understood;

'Offence must needs come, but woe into him through whom offence cometh'.\*

It is necessary here to take to recent references by scholars somewhat more concerned with the real thoughts and experiences of Tamil. In the note on the "Saiva Siththantha System of Philosophy" in his book "*The Thiru-vasagam*", G.U. Pope says: "The Saiva Siddhanta system is the more elaborate, influential and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India. It is peculiarly the South-Indian and Tamil religion; and must be studied by everyone who hopes to understand and influence the great South-Indian peoples. The Vaishnava sect has also many influential followers in the Tamil lands, but these are chiefly immigrants from the North. Caivism is the old prehistoric religion of South-India, essentially existing from pre-Aryan times, and holds sway over the hearts of the Tamil people..... In a period quite antecedent to all historic data, the native Dravidian religion was a kind of Caivism."

One cogent reason for the failure of modern historical research to cope with Tamil-Saiva culture is its perverted individualism. That carries with it a humanistic philosophy where the immanent gives way to the individual personality. That means most historians have been at the mercy of their thoughts and corresponding desires which humanism naturally gives expression to. This contrasts with the Tamil tradition where the singer, artist or artisan was anonymous because the culture itself was significant in that it liberated without the slightest trace of anyone exploiting his own personality to become only an exhibitionist.

The Tamil concept of time and space was realised in terms of cycles where the four *Yugas*—*Kreta*, *Treta*, *Thuvapara* and *Kali*—became the larger and more understood perceptions of the world in relation to the cosmic universe. It was out of this certainty of understanding the transcending principle

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\* "*The Crisis of the Modern World*" page 14 by René Guénon

that the idea of a Dancing Siva emerged in poetry, dance and music. No historical perspective can ignore the nature of Tamil as a language of different and wide perceptions leading to the highest experience capable through any language. Tamil is organically not merely musical but capable of penetrating the depths of the soul. Its founding principle was from life (*uyir*) energising the body (*mei*) to create the living embodiment (*uyirmei*) thus traversing the logic of life through time into Eternity. The body letter is the *nunc fluens* or present point of time which is distinguishable as between past and future. The soul letter (*uyir*) which belongs to the Ever—present Now - the *nunc stans* - takes embodiment as the living human (*uyirmei*) to whom only liberation becomes a necessity. That liberation is from the pairs of opposites.

Though languages generally apply to concrete things, in Tamil alone are the coordinates available for knowledge of the world as an epiphany. Tamil presents the *now of time* which is the *now that stands still*. Hence the image of Siva was created as beyond the co-ordinates of time.

காலமும் நான்கள் ஊழிபடையாமுன்  
ஏக உருவாகி நின்ற ஒருவன்.

says the Tamil mystic making the *Now* or Siva ever—flowing and sempiternal. It is to be liberated from the pairs of opposites.

When considering history in relation to time it is necessary to escape the stranglehold of modern concepts about man's role in Nature. There is nowhere in Sangam poetry a falling back on time to identify man entirely as a creature of time. That was to see things in their simultaneity. In other words there was no forgetting that the *nunc aeternitatis* is present *here* and *now*. This eternal time is distinct from the time that flies and hence the history of Tamil should not, by any stretch of imagination, be brought within the confines of arbitrary methods applicable only to modern 'research' into history.

Tamil was able to gather up all time in which was seen the *Now of Eternity*. Modern history writers have made the

Tamil people think of themselves as creatures of time thus giving room for false pleasures in the souls of the Tamils themselves. As streams and torrents flow into the vast ocean, the Tamil Tradition made Heaven itself come down into the vastness of its Eternity as conceived Now and Here, as a single timeless moment. History lives in our very blood and it was fortunate that Tamil history was never written in tradition except to signify a continuity out of profane thinking. The involvement today in Tamil history has only created academic prejudices which choose carefully to leave out the living psychic organism of individuals.

The Tamil past is rich in human experience but we have been made by modern historians merely defenceless dupes especially of the future. If historians are truthful they will have a programme to be fulfilled by directing attention to the fate of the inner man that modern historical studies are no longer interested in. Just like the Western historical approaches there is a singular interest in externalising culture. There are deceptive analogies ignoring that the power of the West is material and therefore leading irresistibly towards decay. C.G. Jung calls the European psyche alien whilst he finds in the East only the greater human personality. He proceeds to say, "The European invasion of the East was an act of violence on a grand scale, and it has left us with the duty - *noblesse oblige* - of understanding the mind of the East. This is perhaps more necessary than we realize at present."\*

The Western consciousness is historically conditioned and geographically limited. The ideal of material welfare and "progress" involved in notions of speed, creation of more artificial needs and desires for more material satisfactions, is multiplying evil through inequality and insensitivity. It is the growth of disorderly appetites among the masses which has begun to destroy modern civilizations. But historians who are unable to set their sights on what is going to be a tragic end to the present

\* Page 84 "The Secret of the Golden Flower" by C.G. Jung.

world, keep on drawing inferences from its materialistic outlook. Along with the shrinking of religious perceptions what is found today are the remnants of spirituality. The historical sense has shrunk to writing about the profanities of history that descended on the Tamil people after foreign invasions and intrusions.

In that sense the homogeneity of India was forgotten prior to the Greek invasions which really began the course of profane history. The sacred history which made Ramayana and Mahabharata live throughout India despite linguistic differences, the origin of Indian religious thought in Saivism dating back to many Yugas, the concept of Maheswara as Originator of Dance and of Nataraja as the Greatest Dancer, the Tamil man's Carnatic music which once belonged to the whole sub-continent and the whole body of Tamil poetry set to music are things which belonged to Yugas past. It was only in *Treta-Yuga*, dominated as it was by *Rajas* that pleasure became separated, prompted as it was by selfish desires. *Kali Yuga* began the Tamasic outlook which is responsible for the entire distortion of history in the first instance.

How Saivism prevailed from Kashmir in the North to its proper homeland in the South has not received the serious attention of historians. It was Tamil and Saivism which gave meaning to the dance of life and of Siva. For example, at the beginning of each chapter of the thirty-six categories of Kashmir Saiva philosophy, there is the benedictory verse from **Bharata's Natya Sastra**. The latter was named as the Fifth Veda merely to counteract the Brahmanical exclusiveness which debarred the Sudras from reading or hearing the four Vedas. It was the Tamil universality of outlook which broke the back of Aryan domination which suppressed the Sudra even in his own territory by excluding him from the circle of Vedic study. Chandra Pandey comments in this regard, "Bharata does not accept the authority of Manu in respect of the attitude towards arts". (\*)

\* (Page 12 Vol-1 "Comparative Aesthetics" by Chandra Pandey)

Bharata Natya even today is typically Tamil-Saiva and the concept of Siva's mystic Dance is portrayed in Sangam poetry which goes counter to the Aryan-Brahmin outlook deriving from Manu. The latter calls music and dance vices though pleasant at the beginning. Manu wants the king, householder and student to shun dance, song and instrumental music.

Altogether contra-opposed is the Tamil-Saiva outlook which makes Siva the great Dancer and which makes the Tamil language itself inextricably tied with music. Whence came the three-fold division of Tamil as Iyal - Isai - Nadaham (Literature, Music and Dance).

It can be ascribed to the peculiarly modern disorder and aberration that research into Tamil has only confined itself to the profanities of time. What René Guénon deplored as the encroachment of the West which has been a brutal domination ultimately killing the ancient traditional civilizations is particularly applicable to the Tamil situation. He says, "Today Orientals are to be found who have Westernized themselves more or less completely, having forsaken their tradition and adopted all the aberrations of the modern outlook, and these elements, perverted by the teachings of European and American Universities, have become a cause of trouble and unrest in their own countries".(\*) He bemoans the general spreading of disorder which is most pronounced in the field of historical 'research'.

"Time", says Ananda Coomaraswamy, "is the cause of temporalia, but absent from eternal things".(\*\*) The all-comprehending nature of Tamil is that its poetry, dance and music escape the limitations of time. Siva's Eternity belongs to a state beyond the infirmities of Time's creation. All moveable time is ever present in Siva's eternity. Siva's life is beyond time and He carries as garland the skulls of many Brahmas. Each day-time of a Brahma is a **Kalpam**.

In sacred numerological reckoning a **kalpam** includes a thousand **cathur yugas**. Seventy-one **cathur yugas** form a

\* Page 97 'Crisis of the Modern World' by René Guénon.

\*\* Page 23 "Time and Eternity" by Ananda Coomaraswamy.

manvanthiram meaning 43,20,000 years. We are today in kaliyuham which Guénon calls "the darkest period" of the dark age, "a state of dissolution from which there is to be no emerging except through a cataclysm, since it is no longer a mere revival which is required, but a complete renovation". Modern civilization, he says, "has a reason for existing, if indeed it represents a state of affairs that terminates a cycle".\*

Tamil represents, in all its true sense, the traditional standpoint of the East and thus it is totally opposed to Western attitudes, including scholarship. In tradition, Tamil was never taught as a classroom exercise where disciplined understanding takes the last place. It produced a line of teachers profoundly endowed with learning and wisdom - the last in line being Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna who functioned in the early British era as teacher both in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. He fought besides the growing menace of missionary education that sought to kill the Tamil tradition through the Bible. Though he himself provided the first and most authoritative translation of the Bible into Tamil, he was singularly equipped for the task of beating back missionary onslaughts which enabled Jaffna to preserve Tamil in its pristine purity even during the worst periods of British rule. The tragedy of the present education system modelled on the West is that the Tamil people are unable to beat back Sinhala chauvinism and veiled colonialism in the way that Arumuga Navalar did. Even the education system was gradually modelled to communicate Western notions of 'progress' leaving out of context the vast vocabulary of Tamil studies designed to fashion the whole man. It was a deliberate call to substitute knowledge for feeling and wisdom in education.

The 'modern' to which category Tamil should be classified as alien, is deficient in principles. Where Tamil represented the living traditional spirit, the West itself would have been drawn to its concepts whilst stripping itself of all dependence on individual contingencies. Towards this end the principal wisdom

and knowledge available in Tamil should have been rescued by the Tamils themselves instead of allowing themselves to yield to the pitilous logic implied in the events of the modern world. Tragically they are now called upon to face a future both dark and catastrophic.

There is still time for Tamil to be rescued from, if not to escape, the shipwreck of the present world. As René Guénon has observed, "The truth of the matter is that the West actually stands in great need of being defended, but solely against itself and against its own tendencies which, if driven to their logical conclusion, must lead inevitably to ruin and destruction". (\*)

It is "out of the sea of sound" that one sees "the life of music". It is Tamil alone which can present 'the life of music' to a crazy and indifferent world.

The Tamil people's concept of Siva led to a straight-forward devotional understanding which naturally produced a vast hymnal literature of metaphysical content. Matter and energy became interfused in the Siva-Sakthi concept and the poetry of the mystics grasped in its totality all that was understood in the theories of cosmic principles. The individual self became energised when it understood itself as a fraction of the Universal Soul.

Such a society had to keep its consciousness alive—hence the spreading, sprawling temples built out of dedication and love. In the music entirely consisting of Thevaram and Thiruvasham which pervaded the temple atmosphere was the positive and affirmative growth of culture. The dominating elements here were the **Othuvar-Murthis**, not the Brahmins who were confined entirely to rituals which became essential to temple worship. Today the decay of temples so widespread in Tamil Nadu is in the withdrawal of these **Othuvar Murthis**. It is also caused by the failure of the Brahmin priesthood to

offer the people the culture needed to sustain their developed outlook.

In addition, and more far-reaching, has been the impact of Western-based education which has continued the dehumanising process through rapid industrialisation accompanied by the growth of a commercial life. People have naturally become money-minded and cold leaving no other alternative except self-destruction. D. H. Lawrence saw this in Western societies when he wrote in "*Lady Chatterley's Lover*": "The fault lay there in the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanized greed... There lay the vast evil thing, ready to destroy whatever did not conform. Soon it would destroy the wood, and the bluebells would spring no more. All vulnerable things must perish under the rolling and running of iron".

Science has played a very powerful role in Western society, if not in all 'progressive' societies. The problem was confronted by Marx himself where he said, "But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearances and the essence of things coincided" ('Das Capital'). This dichotomy does not arise in Tamil thinking because the machine did not superimpose itself on thought processes which were entirely orderly.

Here Kenneth Newton presents the true picture of the scientifically and industrially advanced America: "The machine had a profoundly conservative influence upon American politics: for, in the first place, it did nothing to organize the working class into a powerful and coherent political force: to the contrary, it had an interest in maintaining a divided population, for in this way it could manipulate and control the electorate. With its highly-developed form of ethnic and community-based politics, the machine reinforced differences within, rather than among social strata and thus "it divided the poor against each other,"... The machine bought votes with bribes, not election promises, and it put corruption and ward healing before issues and ideology. It emphasised control and manipulation rather than participation and discussion."\*

\* "Conflict Avoidance and Conflict Suppression" by Kenneth-Newton, page 76.

The modern world is an aberration and in the present day is producing more and more mental confusion - a structure merely raised by human individuals and therefore entirely profane. It has produced a false sense of contentment in material development whilst on the intellectual level there is atrophy of a kind very visible in all things. Knowledge in its essence is lost whilst all over there is dispersion in multiplicity. There is endless disintegration of human activity whilst division and opposition gain strength and momentum.

The metaphysical poetry of T.S. Eliot portrayed this in many places. The greatness of temporal government is a farce enacted on the modern mind and in his poetry Eliot refers to it with rare effectiveness:

"I see nothing quite conclusive in the art of temporal  
government

But violence duplicity and frequent malversation,  
King rules or barons rule:  
The strong man strongly and the weak man by caprice,  
They have but one law, to seize the power and keep it.  
And the steadfast can manipulate the greed and lust of others  
The feeble is devoured by his own."  
("Murder in the Cathedral")

To write the history of Tamil culture is to rescue it from all that goes today as profane history in the hands of Western and Oriental scholars. It means a continuous battle against oneself and the environment. Everything today is characterised by the black quality and a battle of sorts is necessary against what the moderns lay high premium on as being the "scholastic".

I have refrained from recourse to so-called 'historical' data of which sufficient quantity is now available. The academic interest in the classical represents something 'unfelt' in realisation. As Ananda Coomaraswamy has said it is, just as in an algebraic equation, "where the equation is the only truth while the terms may stand for anything."

I shall keep the terms, if ever, only to get the equation focused in order to view the majestic beauty of Tamil and its Tradition.



CHAPTER 1

## Beginnings in Saivism

It has become necessary to correct the so-called interpretations of history concerning Tamil so that the deepest springs of life which constitute Tamil are not ignored. In those alone belong the social significance of history. The inadequacy and one-sidedness of present approaches have to be compensated for and this means we have to look back to the primordial image in the unconscious.

Tamil history is the history of Saivism which is the movement of the transitory into the realm of the ever-lasting and that is why it captivated the whole of India before the advent of foreign invaders beginning with Alexander. It was Saivism which held India in unity, majesty and grandeur and enables even today, in the midst of manifold vulgarities, the finding of refuge from all the perils of modern thought and action. Saivism offered a metaphysical rationalisation of all things that belonged to or should belong to religion. This enabled a freedom in Tamil society unheard of in any civilization which could be called the freedom of the spirit. As B. Bhattacharya observes, "By thinking, rationalising, feeling and communicating, this particular form of the Hindu religion has kept itself away from the Vedic class consciousness and established a strong proletariat method of worship, where religiosity is no special privilege of a caste. Siva remained the soul of man kept in bondage. Siva meant emancipation hereafter to the soul. Siva's way represents a class struggle."\*

Tamil and Saivism were in tradition one and therefore able together to speak to a temporal world out of the eternal. In the objective and impersonal lay Tamil and hence the language became profoundly musical and moving. There was no cult of



Nataraja

*"That Energy which science must postulate behind all phenomena"*

\* Page 195 "Saivism and the Phallic World" by B. Bhattacharya

personality in the Tamil-Saiva tradition because it was not the weal or woe of the individual that counted but the life of the collective. Much time and effort have been spent in discovering the cult of personality in Tamil and these have only produced contradictory, futile and negative results. Historians of today suffer from the psychic malaise of the period—its prejudice and bias.

Where Saivism goes, it conceives of a unity which transcends anything that man may seek to create in division—hence the refrain in mystical terms that the Law of Siva must needs embrace all humanity.\* Dr. Grierson observed correctly in his *"Vedic India"*, "The word Siva is Tamil in origin; the conception of Rudra-Siva has a tinge of Dravidian influence on the Aryans not only philosophically, but on their whole mode of thought." Grierson also observes, "The ancient Tamils worshipped the idols directly without the intermediary of priests. This custom is found in the famous temple at Benares, the origin of which cannot be found in Aryan literature."

The Law that governed the Saiva order arose out of the concept of vocation which enabled Tamil society to emancipate itself from the herd. The involvement in vocation became Saiva Neethi--the Law of Siva from which there was no escape. That Law reflected an inward calling where something whispered and led along new and wonderful paths as if it were a daemon. That was the proper calling of the inner man. In Tamil no devils were produced such as how the Swiss proverb would put it: "Behind every rich man stands a devil, and behind every poor man two." The God of Tamil was Siva who was "the naked one" or *Nakka*.\*\* The Tamil concept of religion was elevating even to the poorest intellect because there was in it a meaningful connection to the developing consciousness.

Siva became all from the minutest to the largest so that there was no doubt about the divine order and arrangement. The mystic Manikkavasagar saw the cosmic universality through

\* "மேன்மை கொள் சைவநீதி விளங்குக உலகமெல்லாம்"

\*\* "நாதாவெனவும் நக்கா வெனவும் நம்பாவென வென்று"

(Thiruvagam)

the atomic nuclei and the vast inter-stellar spaces.\* It is the converse of the Western development where science has warped the outlook and spirit of man. Jung spoke out clearly on the Western aberration:

"Our intellect has achieved the most tremendous things, but in the meantime our spiritual dwelling has fallen into disrepair. We are absolutely convinced that even with the aid of the latest and largest reflecting telescope, now being built in America, men will discover behind the furthest nebulae no fiery empyrean: and we know that our eyes will wander despairingly through the dead emptiness of inter-stellar space. Nor is it any better when mathematical physics reveals to us the world of the infinitely small. In the end we dig up the wisdom of all ages and peoples, only to find that everything most dear and precious to us has already been said in the most superb language. Like greedy children we stretch out our hands and think that, if only we could grasp it, we should possess it too. But what we possess is no longer valid and our hands grow weary from the grasping, for riches lie everywhere, as far as the eye can reach. All these possessions turn to water, and more than one sorcerer's apprentice has been drowned in the waters called upon by himself - if he did not first succumb to the saving delusion that *this* wisdom was good and *that* was bad. It is from these adepts that there come those terrifying invalids who think they have a prophetic mission. For the artificial sundering of the true and false wisdom creates a tension in the psyche, and from this arises a loneliness and a craving like that of the morphine addict, who always hopes to find companions in his vice."\*\*

When, by contrast, without external scientific aids such as the telescope and microscope the Tamil poet-mystic Manikka-vasagar saw the cosmic arrangement both microscopically and macroscopically and presented the Cosmic Vision of Siva in

\* "Thiruvasham vide "Thiruvandai-pahuthi"

\*\* Page 31, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" 1935/1454. In Collected Works 9, Part 1: "The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious."

*Thiruvasham (Thiruvandappahuthi)* one feels a certainty in all that is before man and a majesty in spiritual thought set to music. From Western decline and degeneracy through science, is the Vision of Siva's gross and subtle states as He embraces all that pervades from the minutest to the largest. The whole poem "partakes of the nature of a rhapsody, - not without some sublimity, - and can be fully appreciated by those only who have studied the whole Saiva system."\* Pope, the Christian missionary, knew not the music where the poem lay and therefore can be excused for making qualifying statements as here. The whole poem is not merely sublime but majestic when sung.

Where Tamil and Saivism went together there was art and music acting in combination. It is that art which makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life. There is the unconscious psychic life of mankind which has been touched only by Tamil and which made the imagery of Siva relevant for all time. Jung observed that "creative life always stands outside convention." The Tamil tradition in its totality represented creative life in literature, poetry and dance which escape the profanities of modern 'historical' research. India, had no history before the Western world took upon itself the burden of writing that history. In terms of antiquity, Tamil and Saivism are over and beyond the yugas.\*\* We who belong to Kali-yuga can speak little knowing that, according to Saiva doctrine, it is only a tenth part of a whole Manvantara.

Tamil has been and is—(because of its vast volume of poetry, music and dance)—the repository of the Primordial Tradition which, through Saivism, embraced the whole Indian sub-continent. Tamil in its entirety embraced a doctrine and thus enables those who even now look for principles which constitute knowledge in its essence to find in Tamil learning and discipline the best available. In the principal knowledge offered by Tamil it can be said for the world, crazy as it is today, that everything depends on giving it a chance to return

\* Page 16 "The Thiruvasham" by G.U. Pope

\*\* "காலமும் நாள்கள் ஊளி படையாமுன், ஏக உருவாகி நின்று ஒருவன்"

to its springs. The voice of Tamil which speaks in primordial images enthralls and overpowers and lifts the transitory into the realm of the over-enduring. In it is found the absolute aim of science—the capacity to penetrate all things. The images in it are life itself.

In the Mahabharata there is found a glowing account of Siva and his secret abode in Kailas (*Anusasana Parva*). It says: "This (Mahadeva) is the glorious God, the beginning of all existences, undecaying, who knows the formation of all principles, who is Pradhana and Purusa; who, the lord, created from his left side Visnu, for the preservation of the universe; and when the end of the yuga (age) had arrived, the mighty lord created Rudra etc." This shows Siva bhaktas abjuring Vedic dieties whereupon Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra took a lower position.

In the Mahabharata, Bhishma tells Yudhishtra: "It is this Lord Krishna that is capable of narrating in its entirety the qualities and true nature of Siva". Mahabharata and Krishna are intertwined in the sense of an astronomical era beginning Kali-Yuga which was in 3102 B. C. Siva worship which is traced to Ramayana gives the year as 4401 B. C. when Rama and Lakshmana entered Sri Lanka.

Both Brahma and Vishnu express the time embodiments of creation and preservation and both exist over a vast stretch of time called Manvantra. The cosmic activity which is Siva's Dance makes it omnipresent and all-pervading. In Tamil-Saiva tradition Siva carries round Him as garland the skulls of many Brahmas. (\*) As Destroyer of all forms He is the one who removes the malas or the fetters that bind each separate soul. Thus His Dance is symbolised as taking place in the burning ground or crematorium where illusion and deeds are obliterated.

(\*) "செத்தார் எலும்பணிவான்  
திருகேதீச்சரன் தானே"

(Gnana-Sambandar)

It is Tamil, as the most ancient of Indian languages, which gives the entire vocabulary of reference to Siva. Fortunately all these references in song, poetry, dance and temple architecture which are extant even to this day proclaim the reason why Saivism spread throughout India and contributed to the cultural and religious integrity of the whole sub-continent. It is only after the Greek invasions the beginnings are to be seen in the fragmentation of India's cultural identity. The subsequent European and Moghul influences and the pressure of industry and commerce began the dark age for India seen even today in conflict, strife and division. It is a downward movement from higher to lower—an antithesis of progress as understood today.

During the Mahabharata period the influence of Saivism had already become all-pervasive from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas. The ninth chapter of the Bhishma Parva refers to Dravidas and Keralas, Karnatakas and Kuntalas as well as to the Colas and Konkanas. Sahadeva went from Seringapatam to Madurai and from here to the Podiyil Hills to pay respects to Agastya and from thereon to Cape Comorin. Through his peregrinations in the Southern country Sahadeva met the Pandyan king whose daughter he asked in marriage. It is here that specific mention is made of the fact that the Pandyan kings were worshippers of Siva. This provides tangible evidence of the universality of Siva worship throughout India during the Epic period.

Saivism took on an all-pervasive form in India and Mount Kailas represented the symbol of Siva abode. In the North and South the mountain became sanctified which was contributory also to preserving the ecological balance of North and South. The concept was extended in course of time to Muruhan being a hill God—Seyon to the Tamil mind. Krishna was Mayon of the forest land. Muruhan or Subramanya worship was the development of Saivism in the South with its rich and unequalled vocabulary of poetical and musical reference. Parallel to this growth was the upsurge of Vaishnavism both

in the North and South. Tholkappiam refers to Vishnu as Mayon. (\*)

Nachchina-kiniyar, the commentator of Tholkappiam refers to 'the shepherds of the mullai region, who offer several oblations to the sacrifice receiving Mayon so that cattle may be fruitful; but they jointly pray, 'protect our numerous cows'.

In Tradition, Muruhan or Seyon was the son of Siva and His worship was carried into the fastnesses of the hills, mountains and deep forests. In Sri Lanka until the last decade Muruhan worship was identified even in the deep Southern Kataragama hills where pilgrims from all over that Island and Tamil Nadu would travel - (the genuine ones on foot)-as a matter of practice every year. From Jaffna in the North pilgrims would, soon after the harvesting season in **Thai**, travel on foot hundreds of miles to this sacred shrine braving wild animals and foul weather.

With the growth of Western influence and pseudo-nationalism among the Sinhalese caused by the corrupting influence of Western political systems, the religious outlook collapsed yielding place to self-centred and greedy lives which gave Kataragama sectarian and political meanings. Today the forest has disappeared virtually yielding place to macadamised roads, tourist hotels and air-conditioned comforts. Even the river Menik Ganga is drying. In turn these have transformed the shrine into a museum piece where song, poetry and dance of the highest order in Tamil have given way to Portuguese refrains called 'baila', which appeal to the animal in man.

The concept of final liberation was explicitly involved in Siva worship. To transcend the limitations of body and mind, to grow beyond oneself which is implied in death is to reach the state called the unextended point of time which is Now - the nunc stans. Siva in psychological terms represents the

(\*) "மாயோன் மேய காடுறை யுலகமும்  
சேயோன் மேய மைவரை யுலகமும்"

psychic life of the archetype which is timeless. To know Him is to separate the opposites as much as possible and to strive for singleness of meaning. Of all the literatures of the world it is Tamil alone which gives enlightened understanding of the above, so that Siva comes into correct focus. It is unlike modern scientific understanding which has despiritualised nature causing impoverishment and stagnation to the psyche of man. Modern science has insulated man from the springs of life and produced an unfathomable obscurity in his psyche.

The river became the symbol of Siva - "the river is within us and the sea all about us" as T. S. Eliot would describe. These were sanctified all over India and the mighty river Ganga flows from out of the Lord's head. All the epics revere the river and even the Kaveri and Tamraparni in the South are sanctified in the Mahabharata ("Sabda Parva Ch. 33) and Arjuna saw Kaveri at its mouth (Chap. 235 of the Adi Parva VV 14 and 15). He bathed and offered worship at the point where the Kaveri meets the sea. He even asked the Pandyan king to offer his daughter in marriage - a king whose ancestors worshipped Siva.

In South Indian Saivism is seen the clearest and most profound exposition of the great scientific and metaphysical doctrine called Saiva Siththantham. The Tamil kings worshipped Siva and in Silappadikaram, king Senkuttuvan wore Siva's Feet on his head as the proper Symbol and Authority from which kingship derived its power. (\*)

Temporal power was derived from spiritual authority without which it would naturally have had to go wayward. Nothing in the Tamil concept of temporal power allowed the king to usurp spiritual authority which was one reason that the most learned and disciplined community in the Tamil social order,

(\*) "நிலவுக் கதிர் முடித்த நீளிருஞ் சென்னி  
யுலகு பொதியுருவத் துயர்ந்தோன் சேவடி  
மறஞ் சேர் வஞ்சிமாலையோடு வலங்கொண்டு  
மறையே ரேந்திய வாவுதி நறும்புகை."

**Anthanasar** or **Iyer**, either were Prime Ministers or had direct entry to the king's palace and access to him at all times. **Manikkavasagar** and **Sekhilar** were thus able to keep temporal power within the ambit of spiritual authority.

The spirit engendered by Saivism gave meaning to life. It was unlike the peculiarly modern 'life' engendered by scientific knowledge derived mostly from the ego and therefore dull and insignificant. To account for everything on physical grounds is an over-estimation of material causation.

Saivism produced an equilibrium as to all things ultimate and therefore also bearing on the contingent. There was no opportunity given for delusion of thought. The data of the senses do not provide all that exists in the mind which explains the one-sidedness of the Western man.

Saivism creates order in the chaos of disorderly individual events and in the past had succeeded greatly in extirpating that chaos. Jung says, "In all chaos there is a cosmos, in all order a secret order" which brings to mind the beautiful rendering of the cosmic universe by **Manikkavasagar** in **Thiruvandappahuthi**. The West, from which modern India appears in earnest to learn and copy, has still to learn the inestimable treasure of Saivism. This is because the Western man is both ego-bound and thing-bound and therefore unable to realise the deep root of his being.

The failure of religion in the West has aggressively afflicted the East. **Bhattacharya** has observed not without reason that "the Christian Church detests philosophers." Of course, Tamil-Saiva tradition produced poets, singers and mystics. **Bhattacharya** observes further, "Sages of the spirit raised their voices in vain. Moses, Elijah, Eloysha and Jesus: St. Francis, St. Augustine, St. Benedict and St. Catherine, Rolland, Russell Schwitzer and Roerich; scores upon scores of thinkers, cried in vain for the establishment of true love and peace...It has been commercial tradition in the West to sell spiritual discretions for monetary profits." (\*)

(\*) Pages 207 - 208, "Saivism and the Phallic World" by **B. Battacharya**.

The growth of the Tamil mind in religion was productive of the highest in poetry and music. It was a living spirit eternally renewed in growth outgrowing all the time, earlier forms of expression. In Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu the spirit pursued its goal in inconceivable and manifold ways, preserving the stem of the eternal tree despite changes in leaves and blossoms. The Tamil people had the immense capacity to renew in spirit because their lives over many millenia of experience had taught them that life lives in the spirit, not in the ego. It was the spirit which gave meaning to life and truth was nothing if it was to live as being alien to the spirit. **C. G. Jung** calls it '**antimion Pneuma**' - 'the false spirit of arrogance, hysteria, woolly-mindedness, criminal amorality and doctrinaire fanaticism.' He condemns the post-Christian spirit as 'a purveyor of shoddy spiritual goods, spurious art, philosophical stutterings, and Utopian humbug, fit only to be fed wholesale to the mass man of today'. (\*) Sri Lanka's sudden emergence into the darkness of the modern era has produced all the above symptoms and the Tamil of the great Primordial Tradition has been thrown overboard through that mentality where the world itself has become dehumanized.

The history of Tamil Nadu—not in the restricted and profane sense applied today—was the entire history of India from the point of view of the evolution of humanity from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light. The first foreign invaders, the Greeks, followed by the Moghuls and others began the profanity of modern Indian history which segregated, compartmentalised and virtually destroyed the unity of the sub-continent in terms of culture. By culture here is meant the totality of tradition which contributed to continuity and common understanding among all strata of the Indian society.

For those today who are assiduously fostering and maintaining division and disorder - (more today of aggravating it)- India is presented in terms of sectarianism, division and disintegration. The protagonists of modern historical methods are keen to promote their own deceptions. They delude themself-

(\*) **C.G. Jung** "Collected Works 9, part II 1959/68, Aion (1951)

ves whilst deluding others because they are not trained to a consciousness of universal principles which embraces the Indian tradition. Verbosity in externalising the Indian identity and consciousness has driven thought into mere sonority of words which have produced the illusion of thinking.

Historians never cared for the unifying principles in life, despite all external differences. These specialists of a kind look for values in so-called 'democratic' institutions with power coming from below and which naturally excludes all genuine competence. The coincidence of 'democracy' with materialism, at once reduced human levels to a state where disorder and confusion only resulted. The authority in Indian Tradition was spiritual and therefore had to be hierarchical. It was not subject to revolutionary change because its concern was with the Primordial Truth. The initial usurpation of spiritual authority was with the conquest by external, ravaging and alien elements whose inspiration was colonialist.

The new forces, in order to establish temporal power, set about - (over a period of time, no doubt) - making the Indian people believe in the magic remedies of 'democracy'. The 'progress' of democracy on Indian soil has proved to be illusory, though in theory the majority is supposed to determine the law. The majority concept killed the proper attitudes for interpretation of Indian history. It failed to recognize that by majority is meant only an expression of incompetence, if not rigicide. Unanimity was reduced through the profanity of the historical process to one of sentiment or rather of emotional impulses which hinder reflection. One of the cheapest artifices of politics today is the ballot paper which in its rights only proclaims the supremacy of multiplicity.

The universality of the order which existed in India aeons prior to the Western impact was felled by brute force making the Indian people capable of being reduced only to the level of arithmetical numbers. The law of greater number negates the concept of any supra-individual principle. Present day individualism is the out-growth of a material civilization causing more and more division and multiplicity.

The profanity of modern history has led to stagnation and desiccation of soul. The springs of life have dried as the source of water seeps away. The tragedy is that India has readily accepted this decline in order to foster 'democracy'. The need will soon arise to shake off this torpor so that life can once again flow down into the depths. That India will have to return to her own and not be stuck for ever in a hopelessly wooden Philistinism is the aim of this cultural survey of the oldest living Tradition which is the Tamil.

Those who cannot enjoy the past are also neurotic, especially those who will not allow to themselves the development of individuality. India never was and can never be a spiritual mummy despite the effort of foreign and missionary elements. The longevity of Indian Tradition will always have meaning for the human species. The modern world cannot continue to live all the time in the morning. That would be against the purpose of nature. The expansion of life is different from the expansion of the ego. India is still rich in its heritage and will not allow the childish egoism of the present to bring about social failure if not the destruction of the spirit. The whole cup has to be drained with grace. Rather the spirit of India has to resurge from the ruins and ashes of colonialism and the pseudo-colonialist mentality of the present.

How is India's history to be re-told except as the living Present, the *nunc stans*. The truth will emerge if we do not allow ourselves to go down the sunset way. The seeds of the unpredictable can only belong to Indian soil and the emergence of the new life has to take the old perspectives if it is to produce continuity and value. The famous art critic, Ananda Coomaraswamy has correctly observed: "The essential contribution of India is simply her Indianness, her great humiliation would be to substitute or to have substituted for this own character (*svabhava*) a cosmopolitan veneer, for then indeed she must come before the world empty-handed."\*

The oneness of India is a mystery despite all external differences and despite all the imported and damaging foreign ware. The strength of India is the acceptance of the elite

\* "The Dance of Shiva" by Ananda Coomaraswamy.



which implied the authority of the spirit over temporal power. India never suffered the suffocation of the elite through mere lipservice to 'democracy'. The superiority of India's elite in the past transcended geographical and racial boundaries. India cannot suffer the vagaries of individualism through the arrogant supercession of power derived from mass sentiment and appeal.

India's history was a constant renewal despite time's vagaries. There can be no proper written history of India before the Greek conquest because the renewal was an act of memory. Mahabharatha and Ramayana belonged to all the Indian people *all the time* because these were stored in memory and not put aside in books. Siva worship extended from Kashmir in the North to Cape Comorin and thence into Sri Lanka and the Indonesian archipelago because it provided a never-failing source of memory. India's greatness is in her stored-up energy and wisdom carried through in memory. Forgetting meant death for the inner man, unlike today where everything is reduced only to an economic leave aside the social unit. Time and space in Indian tradition was curved which meant a connection with eternity. Movement was seen only in the outer circumference, but in the Centre stood the Dance of Siva, the Unmoved Mover. Tamil contributed to the entire meaning and logic of concepts which are even now accepted as being unassailable despite Cartesian thinking.

On the other hand the tricks of trade of materialism have produced only rivalry of interests in the economic sphere. The weapons of industry and commerce have been invasions into the concepts of social justice underlying *Aram*. In the latter, justice was placed in the very hearts of men and every man had a responsibility to reach towards it.

Tamil vocabulary was designed to embrace the life force of humanity, unlike today where alien languages are unable to escape their profane limitations. These limitations are centred in the growing arrogation of material power leading on to brute force and, where industry has become indispensable, to create the needed and growing violence. Man has succeeded in industrialising his mechanisms of violence because of the

formidable brutalisation of instinct. The qualitative which has yielded place to the quantitative now embraces the mass call-up or mobilisation of material resources to bring about nuclear annihilation.

Saivism became universal in India before modern history was ever thought of and before the speed of communication was able to accelerate propaganda and proselytism. Industry and commerce have robbed India of her precious inheritance which is the knowledge and realisation of Siva as the Cosmic Dancer who represents the "choral dance of the constellations, and in the planets and fixed stars, their interweaving and interchange and orderly harmony." Industrialism has made India a house divided against itself which means strife and division all round. Saivism embraced India through the grip of the meanings in realisation like the Ganga which flows eternally through Siva's head which is "the river within us and the sea all about us." The marvel is that Saivism is being accepted today in other parts of the world because time is taking its toll of all proselytizing religions.

India did not surrender to the profanities of time as clearly seen in the whole body of Tamil poetry approved by successive Sangams. What was most important was nearest to the self and hence *aham* (inward) themes were given precedence in the Sangam era to *Puram* (outward). Even the *puram* was steeped in majesty, beauty and order and kept itself within norms which modern psychology would call an outgrowth of the living spirit which is eternally renewed. *Aham* and *puram* belonged to one eternal tree only with changing colours, and blossoms. *Puram* often thought of material welfare but without destroying the spirit and permanence of *aham*. Tamil abjured the ego as dull and void of meaning when it evolved altogether as poetry set to music.

A few scholars of recent times have applied themselves to understanding the Tamil people's contribution to culture without the prejudice of so-called Aryan superiority. Prof. Jean Filliozat, a recent writer, has observed: "Tamilians have played a vital role in the general expansion of Indian culture beyond the

oceans in Indo-China, Indonesia and China. In these countries we find in the monuments and inscriptions many evidences of Tamil influence. Moreover, in the last centuries and till the recent period, Hindu priests in Thailand and Cambodia used Tamil texts and Sanskrit texts written in the *grantha* character special to Tamilnad. At the same time the Hindu iconography of these countries was of Tamil origin. In Java, Agastya is represented almost like in Tamilnad and his cult is explained by the data of the *agamas* of Tamilnad. In Cambodia Kaaraikkal-ammaiyar is already represented at the Feet of Natesa in the Xth century just like later, at Tanjavur and Gangai-Konda Chopuram.\*\* Further the writer observes: "Many scholars have been satisfied with the study of large texts popular everywhere throughout India, including Tamil Nad, and belonging to the general Hindu religion, like Maha Bharatha, Ramayana and Bhagavatapurana... Sanskrit texts in Tamilnad are not always borrowed from Northern India; many have been genuine products from Tamil Nad".\*\*

A distinctive feature of Tamil civilisation was the bhakthi element which made Saivism cosmopolitan. Saivism abjured caste and this was one reason why its universality was lost through pressure of the Aryan caste system. In Tamil literature Agamas did not find a place and the humble title 'Adiyar' was sufficient to the lives as Saivites. Sekhilar's biography of the 63 Siva-Adiyar gives example of the true self-surrender implied in the Saiva tradition. By the same logic the great mystics Appar and Sambandar were able to expel Jains from the royal courts. Even Buddhism disappeared through the efforts of Manikkavasahar and Sambanthar. The Saiva religion lived on the lips of people through a voluminous oral tradition where the Thirumarais and Thiruvasaham were not relegated to books.

It was the immensity in the understanding of truth which gave longevity to Tamil poetry such as that of Thirumoolar to whom tradition gave a life time of 3,000 years. His *Thirumanthiram* held the Tamil people to the centre of their innermost

\* "Archaeology and Tamil Studies" by Prof. Jean Filliozat of Collège de France, École française d' Extrême-Orient, Paris.

\*\* Ibid Page 4.

being leaving no room for alienation. It was unlike Western acquisitiveness which has to be pumped into barren souls all the time to make them grow into adolescence. The modern suffocation has brought out lamentable substitutes for illumination of the Self. These are the hypochondriacs, pedants, niggards, mere adorers of the past and eternal adolescents. Man today is carried by society thus relieving him of individual responsibility but the Tamil society existed in the quality of each individual. The individuality of the man of today is lost in the mass where the mass is not even the individual collective instinct with enlightened understanding. The perilous shadow of credulity in democracy has reduced the mass to the level only of voters whose intelligence is dependent on the symbol of candidates and the capacity of these to mislead,

The desire for ease and security can never find happiness in the spirit. The craving for newer and better ways to material welfare has contributed to more delusion and ignorance. That is how the industrial-economic system of the West has centralised itself in Tamil society leaving the cultural entity forlorn and desolate.

Today there are more calls to move forward, to be progressive which means to gather up hopeful fulfilments for the future where the present gathers up its gigantic Promethean debt - the way to nuclear annihilation. Tamil civilization was built on the ever-present because it knew that the psyche contained nothing that is old. The only thing that was required was that, in order to build a state of wider and higher consciousness, one should not be shattered in the tension of opposites. The comment of Prof. Jean Filliozat becomes apposite that "when we think about dead civilizations like those of old Egypt and old Mesopotamia, all the data are in the proper field of archaeology, But it is not so when the civilization is living and rests upon an old tradition, like in Tamilnad." (ibid)

It is necessary here to deal with the concept of the Sangam, so peculiar to the growth of Tamil as a language. All old literature now extant belong to Sangam periods. The first Sangam is lost in antiquity, but it points to the primordial

beginnings of Tamil. It is there in the Tamil mind refreshed in the thought that Siva Himself presided over it. There is no doubt a persistent tradition with legends which go to show time in terms of astronomical eras. These legends, for example, in the chronicles of Sri Lanka speak of two deluges which caused the disappearance of the Lemurian continent.

Where Tamil was concerned, its divine origin was emphasised through metaphysical concepts where the Tamil alphabets pointed to a beginning *in principio*. Through these alphabets Siva became life itself, not any anthropomorphic being. His Presence was made to be identified and felt in the form of *uyir*, or life letters which in turn energised the '*Mei*' or body letters to form the living embodiment or '*uyirmei*'. Thus it is that the grammatical understanding gave meaning deliberately that the procession from letter to word called for an awakening.

The first Sangam gave inspiration to the awakening of mankind from slumber and in the cosmic evolution too there is that awakening when each *Chathur Yuga* begins with Siva representing the End which is the beginning. It was therefore apposite that this Sangam had Siva as its President. The Second Sangam reflected a new phase in the astronomical cycle with Muruhan, begotten of Siva, succeeding to the role of giving fulfilment to the language of Tamil as sacred and nothing else besides. Here K. K. Pillai comments: "The persistent tradition about the earlier Sangam works are now lost, as well as the legends about the two deluges of the sea recorded in the Ceylonese Chronicles suggest that the existence of the two earlier Sangams is not a myth. For the attainment of high literary standards in the 1st Century A.D. there should have been a development of the literature for some time prior to it. True, the fantastic periods of duration of the Sangams and the incredible legends associated with the Academies are mythical; but the fact of these academies having existed in the past does not deserve to be summarily dismissed as baseless."\*

\* Page 3, "Landmarks in the History of Tamilnad" University of Madras. by K.K. Pillai

In the Tamil tradition there was no attempt to reduce everything to the stature of man as an end in himself, nor any turning away from heaven to gain possession of the earth. It is the modern mind which is engaged in the downright falsification of history and thereby has succeeded in bringing knowledge down to empirical and analytical levels gathered from prejudice parading as empirical study of facts.

Western sciences and their industrial application refer to the lower forms of knowledge. They represent as René Guénon says, "a dispersion in pure multiplicity tending towards final dissolution." To Guénon 'modern civilization, like everything else, has a reason for existing, if indeed it represents the state of affairs that terminates a cycle.'\* It is in the Tamil language of the Sangam age that the living traditional spirit is fully alive even today. The call of this spirit is strong and welcome as the only window to principal knowledge, namely knowledge in its essence offering the only vehicle available to identify it with the object. Sangam poetry alone was able to connect man with transcendental truth and supreme knowledge. Further, Tamil was able to establish intellectuality through a long succession of teachers of doctrinal truth. Even today it can be considered as a countervailing force against the aberrations of the modern world through the system called university education.

An important concept connects Tamil with Saivism and makes it indistinguishable from the latter. It is that language belongs to life and the purpose of language is to express what is seen face to face. The Tamil mind had been far removed from the modern which has turned the psychic into the physical and scientifically sacrosanct. Modern science fortunately is beginning to see higher realities and the time may not be far off when ingrained and thoughtless materialism, which is already being put away as an antiquated relic, will be eradicated from the fields of science. Scientific theories are now becoming only tools of things both vulnerable and ephemeral, not everlasting

(\*) Pages 13 & 14 "Crisis of the Modern World" by René Guénon

truths. It has been psychologically found as necessary that we have to think in antinomies because every truth becomes an antinomy when thought out to the end.

"Real virtue in Saivism," says Dr. K. C. Pandey, "lies in equating perfectly both creation and annihilation, integration and disintegration, without the least worry about those changes which the material metamorphosis of objects has to undergo without affecting the spirit." (\*) Saivism, as expressed throughout India at one time represented the spirit which governed all thinking. It never could drag men away from life because it was life itself. The spirit of Saivism gave meaning and fullness to life. The Tamil people can well be said to carry the whole of history with them because in Saivism alone is written the true history of mankind. In that history the past was able to participate in the present. The "progress" on the other hand of today has piled up a gigantic Promethian debt which modern man pays off through hideous catastrophes. By keeping on reinforcing the narrow range of consciousness we are today reinforcing the tension of opposites which is altogether different from Saivism's goal of shattering it.

Today there is personality disintegration arising out of incoherence in political life. As the industrial system progressively declines, the squabbles multiply for what remains of it. The obsession with bigness and growth, as Alvin Toffler has pointed out, (\*\*) has led to a blind race to increase G. N. P at all costs. The instinct for mass market has added, for instance, in the field of music, phonograph records to its output. Instead of the music which gave meaning to poetry as it should be in the Tamil mind, in Tamil Nadu too the music factory has taken birth. Toffler's comment is apposite, though in a different context, "Standardized, mass-manufactured 'facts', counterparts of standardized mass-manufactured products, flow from concentrated image-factories out to millions of consumers." The solution to all the problems appears to be only the personal computer which means creating a computerised environ-

ment. This galloping technological development is no doubt appalling. The revolt no doubt is beginning to be felt deeply and T. S. Eliot gave vent to it in his inimitable style: \*

"Where is the Life we have lost in living ?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge ?

We <sup>have</sup> is the knowledge we have lost in information ?"

(\*) Page 243 "Comparative Aesthetics" Vol. I by Dr. K. C. Pandey

(\*\*) "The Third Wave" by Alvin Toffler

## CHAPTER II

## Age and Wisdom of Tamil

A recent publication entitled, "Quotations on Tamil and Tamil Culture" by R. Madhivanan brings to focus certain facts either suppressed or distorted by Western and even Indian historians trained to look at Indian culture through Sanskrit eyes. Some relevant references to this would help the development of this chapter.

1. "Tamil is the most ancient language and progenitor of human speech. Kumarikandam, the submerged continent in the Indian Ocean, otherwise known as Lemuria, was the original habitat of the Tamils.

2. "Greece, Assyria and Babylon were ringing with the fame of Tamil Nadu in ancient times, and came to her for teakwood and sandals, pearls and muslins, peacocks and pepper."

3. Ilangovadigal, the celebrated author of the 2nd century A. D epic, Silappathikaram, refers to the submerged continent as the old territory of the Pandyan dynasty, at the southern extremity of which a gigantic mountain chain called *Panmalai* and a huge river called *Pahruli* were situated. India was known as 'Navalam' in those days.

4. Kumari Kandam is based on facts and figures found in *Irayanar Ahapporul* and Buddhist sources.

5. The date when Ceylon got split from the mainland of Kumari Kandam is 2317 B.C (Tennent's 'History of Ceylon', Page 7).

6. The Sacred Sangam or Academy lasted 3700 years under patronage of 59 kings. The First Sangam had existed for 4440 years under 89 kings. Thus the First Sangam might have been established in 10,527 B.C.

7. Valmiki's Ramayana has reference to the golden coloured Mahendra mountain submerged under the sea, south of Cape Comorin.

8. Recent research points to the Indus Valley known in Tamil as Meenadu, as being first inhabited by the Tamils.

9. The Lemurian Tamils were highly advanced in music, dancing, arithmetic and astronomy.

10. Lemurian Tamil flourished as the primary classical language of the world.

11. All Indo-European languages including Scythian and Sumerian have their basic roots in Tamil of Kumari Kandam.

12. African languages too have affinities with Tamil.

13. The harp or *Yazri* was the invention of Tamils in Kumari Kandam.

14. Bharata Natyam originated in Kumari Kandam. The girls who practised it were known as *Viraliyar*.

15. The books which received the seal of the Second Sangam included those on mathematics, astronomy, medicine, logic, sculpture, music, metals and astrology.

Mathivanan observes in his book, "The Mayan calendar starts from 3373/3113 B.C. very close to the start of the Kali Yuga in 3102 B. C. .... Traditional Tamil fractions and sub-fractions are so minute that millennia of arithmetical thought and practice should have preceded their evolution." Much harm, it has been said, has been caused by Sanskritists who had obliterated the Tamil source in respect of many findings and discoveries. This included the fields of astronomy, mathematics, ayurveda, music and sculpture. Music, dance and drama were in the blood of the Tamil people and articulated in their poetry. In Kumari Kandam there were distinct and separate classes engaged in these - the *panar*, *koothar*, *porunar*, and *kodiyar*.

The damage done to Tamil studies by Sanskritists has to be considered an enormity. Many have taken the way of Max Muller and other Western scholars whose ignorance of Tamil has been profound. Many Indian scholars too have been victims of prejudice and purblindness. However, no one has been able to discount one fact that Saivism belonged at one time to the whole of India. Surendranath Dasgupta, who has devoted only the last volume of his five volume treatise on the 'History of Indian Philosophy', to the "Southern Schools of Saivism" has been nevertheless constrained to observe that "Saiva philosophy and the worship of Siva had spread itself far and wide throughout the peninsula long before the eighth century A. D. We have the most sacred temples of Siva in the north in Badrikasrama, in Nepal (Pasupatinatha) in Kashmir, in Prabhasa, in Kathiawar (the temple of Somanatha), in Kashmir (the temple of Visvanatha), the Nakulisvara temple in Calcutta, and the temple of Ramesvaram in extreme South India. This is only to mention some of the most important places of Siva-worship. As a matter of fact, the worship of Siva is found prevalent almost in every part of India, and in most of the cities we find the temples of Siva either in ruins or as actual places of worship".(\*) This writer's ignorance of Tamil and his Sanskrit orientation of outlook are seen in some startling observations he makes. Statements such as, "The fundamental facts of Saivism are composed of Vedantic monism and Samkhya, and sometimes the Nyaya doctrines" abound in the book.

It is appropriate in this context to refer to what Ananda Coomaraswamy had to say: "The Dravidians are peculiar to India, once universal India. They are the bearers of a cultural continuity extending from the Stone Age."(\*\*) Thus India in the cultural sense reflected the Tamil genius which transcended parochial issues. There was always a revolution in the Tamil soul which discarded irrational pleasure and thereby created order in the realm of Reality. It remained anonymous because it had no property in ideas and also because of its insight into the opposites

(\*) Pages 8, Vol. V "A History of Indian Philosophy" by Surendranath Dasgupta (Cambridge University Press)

(\*\*) Page 64, "The Wisdom of Ananda Coomaraswamy"

as ineradicable and indispensable preconditions of all psychic life. There were no moods, affects, phobias or compulsive ideas in the Tamil growth as the past unfolded into the present which in turn gathered into the future. The spirit that was Tamil gave meaning to life whilst offering it all the possibility of its greatest development. The divine freedom was in the opposition to Nature which enabled Tamil "to rise from a corruptible world to an incorruptible and joyous existence."

The effort of recent scholarship has been to discover the greater and even transcendent identity of Tamil both in the reflected glory of Sanskrit and outside the narrow walls of an 'Aryan' hegemony. Xavier S. Thaninayagam observed in 1955, "In the architecture of Champa and Cambodia, in the sculptures of the museum of Tourano, in the Saiva Sidhantha system of religion once followed in Indonesia and Indo-China, in the bronzes of Siam, may be seen the traces of Tamil influence. The Bharatha Natyam has affinities with the dances of Cambodia and Bali, the Tamil sacred verses are recited by the court Brahmins of Thailand and during the coronation of the Kings; certain tribes in Sumatra go under the Tamil names of Chera, Chola, Pandya, Pallava, and the temple of Dieng plateau of Po-Nagar, of Mison (Vietnam)".(\*) Thus to extend the influence to the rest of India is not difficult, if only we can escape the aggressive phobia underlying Aryan-Sanskrit thinking. Graeme Williams rightly observed, "India was an amazing breeding ground for the evolution of life forms. Man himself struggled upwards out of the anthropoid within the limits of India".(\*\*)

The Aryan cult accompanying the Sanskrit worked in many directions and sedulously wherever it had opportunity of propagation. Even in Sri Lanka it became a convenient appendage of sectarianism when Sanskrit crept into the Sinhala dialect. The Tamil kings of Jaffna in turn added on the title "Arya" to "Chakravarthi" to indicate their royal lineage when they were pitted against the Sinhala Aryan concept. Though the Jaffna

(\*) Xavier S. Thaninayagam, "Tamil Culture, its Past, its Present its Future with Special Reference to Ceylon"

(\*\*) Graeme Williams, "The World We Live In" Vol 1, Page 104

kings were always loyal to the Pandyan monarchs and claimed that they represented the Pandyan authority in Sri Lanka, they still called themselves Arya Chakravarthis. The Sinhala language derived so much from Tamil crazily took on Sanskrit words to accentuate the conflicts under cover of Buddhism. The Sinhala kings in turn openly espoused the cause of Buddhism though the Buddhist influence gradually faded from Tamil Nadu and even from India.

The 'Yakka' and 'Naga' aborigines are easily identified today in the linguistic, cultural and racial divisions of Sri Lanka. Many Sinhala historians today link the Sinhala race and identity with 'Yakka'—the word itself being in common usage as one of endearment even today. On the other hand 'Naga' had more significance for the Tamil with evidence of a highly-developed culture associated with, for example, music. The 'Nagaswara' music is entirely Dravidian and even more entirely vocational. In Jaffna even today the caste called 'Nattuvar' keep the Nagaswaram tradition going as entirely vocational. It is a distinct cultural entity wholly devoted to the fine arts proving that history lives in the blood of the Tamil people because it has become one with the mind and therefore in the living psychic organism of every individual.

The Tamil has been able to lay hold of the future whilst assimilating past history. That is because the culture is rich in human experience already bequeathed. The Sinhala, on the other hand, shows alienation, being dispossessed of the living cultural and transcendental element and therefore without root and without perspective. Further, in the hands of opportunistic politics the Sinhala people have become defenceless dupes of whatever novelties the future may bring.

The Ramayana and Mahabharata speak of the Nagas of Sri Lanka. Also some of the Sangam classics show that the Nagas inhabited Sri Lanka. The last Tamil Sangam at Madurai had Naga poets from Sri Lanka such as Puthan Tevanar and there is no doubt that before the growth of Sinhala as a dialect, the language of Sri Lanka was Tamil. Today through political pressures Sinhala has grown into a language though

the cultural roots, if any, have already dried ever since political opportunism took the Sinhala people away from the stream of Tamil culture.

The aborigines of Sri Lanka also include the Veddhas - deriving from the Tamil word for hunter - *vedar*. These *Vedar* worship Muruhan or Kanthan under name of *Kandha-yakka*. The sylvan shrine most venerated in the deep South of Sri Lanka is that of *Muruhan*, called in Sinhala, Kataragama Devāla. He is the diety of *Kurinchi* or hill country and He it is who presided over the Second Tamil Sangam. Kataragama belongs to the Veddha country and the Veddhas.

The kings of Jaffna issued the '*Sethu*' coin to commemorate the control they had over Rameswaram. This gives importance to the fact that the Tamils of Sri Lanka included those settled along the North-Western coasts which were also Tamil speaking until the Roman Catholic Church under Bishop Pieris of Chilaw made the first move to convert Church services from Tamil to Sinhala. This began the political moves of a later date to convert whole populations even around the ancient Munneswaram Temple at Chilaw who from pre-historic times owed allegiance to that historic Temple to become Sinhala-speaking.

The Jaffna Kingdom had a powerful say over the Pancha-svara temples of which only one - Rameswaram - was in India. This fact alone establishes the strong hold that Saivism had over the people of Sri Lanka which also points to the untiring efforts of Arumuga Navalar to restore Thiruketheeswaram destroyed by the Portuguese despite strong opposition of the new Roman Catholic converts.

Another powerful evidence of Tamil influence in Sri Lanka is the Kandy Perahera held in honour of four dieties - *Natha*, *Vishnu*, *Kataragama* and *Pathini*. Since the time of Gaja Bahu I the worship of Kannaki took root in Sri Lanka. In addition, the Cholas built Siva temples of granite at Polonnaruwa which are still historical remains. The Nataraja image found here is a magnificent Chola contribution in the field of metallic sculpture,



It has been described as "an expression of the highest imagination and ingenuity of the great Tamil artists who, with balance, rhythm and symbolism, executed the highest conception of the infinite." The bronze sculpture of Sunderamoorthi Swamy, the Saiva mystic and poet found here, has been described as "the most expressive of what a mystic's super-conscious state can be."

The same perverse delight in philistine cultures parading as "Aryan" which characterised the Sinhala cultural and religious growth also caused great harm to the Tamil tradition in India. The 'Aryan' theory encouraged the Philistine - it even created the vast lumpen class in Sinhala life. It created a desert land overnight culturally with 'baila' music being indistinguished by the rising class of politicians from the great musical tradition of the Tamil people. It is part of the whole modern scenario portrayed by T. S. Eliot which in great measure is applicable to Sri Lanka:

"The desert is not remote in southern tropics,  
The desert is only around the corner,  
The desert is squeezed in the tube train next to you,  
The desert is in the heart of your brother,"

(Choruses from 'The Rock')

Though Sanskrit belonged to India's ancient tradition, its involvement in historical profanities down the ages distorted its influence and outlook whilst at the same time narrowing its vocabulary which ultimately brought about its death as a living language. While Tamil, despite repression from the concept that Sanskrit was Aryan and therefore superior, was able to enrich its experience, Sanskrit even died as a living language. Evil became a reality more so where it was distinguished from its opposite good and a cleavage in the opposite was caused. That inexorably led to what is known as crucifixion.

The union of opposites is a living process but Sanskrit becoming Aryan was intended not to unite the opposites. It only created restlessness whilst leading to a lack of meaning in life. That aggrandisement rebounded on Sanskrit since the wheel

of history could not be put back. Sanskrit could have drawn life from Tamil, but instead it became furtively and spiritually prurient and thus its death became inevitable. The psychic process should have been allowed to grow in peace so that the inner experience available abundantly in Tamil could have helped Sanskrit in its growth. Humility was the only thing that was called for but it could not possibly come in the context of aggressive aloofness. Life calls for perfection, not necessarily for completeness and reality is only in the intervention of time and space *here and now*.

## CHAPTER III

## Concept of Government

When the modern is looked upon as an evolution from the primitive, there will be difficulties with understanding the whole theory of government as understood in the Tamil tradition. Those who have faith in modern notions of democracy for example are often at a loose end to reconcile democracy with the so-called "greatest happiness of the greatest number." The answer was given by Plato that "we too can clothe our husbandmen in royal apparel, and set crowns of gold on their heads, and bid them till the ground as much as they like and no more. Our potters also might be allowed to repose on couches and feast by the fireside passing around the wine cups, while the wheel is conveniently at hand and working at pottery only as much as they like." (*The Republic IV*)

The concern of democracy in creating all forms of equality—economic, social, political and cultural - has been found to be a patent failure because, as Plato found, "under the influence either of poverty or of wealth, workmen and their work are equally liable to degenerate." Explaining this further he says that wealth "is the parent of luxury and indolence and the other - (namely poverty) - of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent". (*ibid*)

It was therefore in line and perfect accord with the Tamil tradition that one can see Plato wanting the rulers to bear in mind "that music and gymnastic be preserved in their original form, and no innovation made" and also that "any musical innovation is full of danger to the whole State and ought to be prohibited." The reason which in modern Tamil 'growth' can be seen as being apposite and relevant is Plato's own view that "when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them."\*

\* Page 420 'The Portable Plato' Translated by Benjamin Jowette and edited by Scott Buchanan - Penguin Books.

It has to be remembered that by music Plato comprehended culture as it is understood today. This is different from what the Greeks would understand by 'gymnastics' which meant physical training and well being.\* Culture therefore meant action. The growth and maturity of Tamil music represented the peak of achievement in culture and culture included the art of government too. The Tamil kings were learned in the 64 arts and sciences so that they were able to exercise wide understanding and depth of vision.

The art of government took root in thirty-two distinct functions brought under the category of *Aram* or imperatives of sacred duty.\*\* These duties formed the proper base of action in the art and science of government. Thus no degeneracy was possible in the social order under influence either of poverty or wealth. Every occupation became a vocation in the same way as the kingly order was. Thus the growth reached in music throughout remained unalterable as against modern innovations intended to pander to the ignorant and philistine. If the modes of Tamil music were allowed to be altered, that would have destroyed the integrity and purposiveness of the Tamil concept of government based entirely on *Aram*. Today's change in the modes of music yielding place to Tamil orchestra of which there is a surfeit over the radio, film and pop is a pander to vulgar impulses and the animal in man. It is thus a reflection of the change the Tamil people have undergone in the art of government. What the British have left is a legacy of 'popular' government through mass vote where the highest norms also had to be mass-sacrificed in the fields of culture.

The thirty-two norms of government in Tamil tradition covered all the needed functions of life in an unanimous society. These norms reflected the organisation of Tamil society which made possible a race of erect-minded men. The kingly order represented the single centre of ultimate reference and did not in India vary from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. Saivism helped

\* See Page 9 "Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art" by Ananda Coomaraswamy.

\*\* See Appendix II.

to prevent through the strength of Tamil the yielding way to chaos where, for example, in Europe the Vandals, Goths and Huns were able to raze down civilisations. Even the subsequent emergence of Christian love and charity could not prevail against disorder and tyranny all because Jerusalem was far out of reach. Men therefore invented many things which brought into being the poison of expansiveness through competitive trade, national pride and commercialising of human emotions. The result was that, in the name of peace, commerce and uniformity, societies all over the world have been systematically rampaged. The Dravidian civilisation had continuity and abiding strength only due to the spiritual insight and strength of the Tamil tradition.

The kingly order made possible the creation of the needed elite in society for the proper development of social function. It was unlike the democratic processes of today where principal knowledge is discarded yielding way to intellectual and spiritual atrophy. Today the individual turns himself up as the measure of all things because truth has descended only to the level of consent in numbers with no regard to the qualitative. Kingly power has no place in quantitative dispensations where the individual cannot be educated to see the lowly side of his own nature. Society takes upon itself the law of the jungle which in turn means endless multiplication of courts of justice as well as of standards of right and wrong. Thus in C.G. Jung's words, "Everyone who becomes conscious of even a fraction of his unconscious gets outside his own time and social stratum into a kind of solitude." (\*)

The Tamil outlook combined the religious outlook and the secular in the ideal of kingship. In this ideal was the proper functioning and fellowship of men aiming at the enrichment of the common life. That life was rendered beautiful through art and music where the will of the people was not subject to any legal limitation. The Tamil in Dravidian civilisation enabled the growth all the time of the creative where what was

important was not the historical accident of a separate State but the spiritual and even scientific fact of the universal in all mankind.

Time and distance did not separate the duties of people from that of royalty. There was no question of determining what were the wills of the people because duties only supervised and therefore became paramount. The matters revealed in the concept of *Aram* where it concerned kingly duties were pertinent all the time to the people's lives more because they were already inwardly known. Kingly duties were all the time in the knowledge of the needs of both spirit and body. There are processes not accessible to physical perception but they do demonstrate their existence. The confessions of the psyche speak a world of images which are ineffable.

The Tamil mind had reached the peak, one may say, of this psychic development. The king therefore could not rule in his own right being bound by the norms of *Aram* which in turn brought to light the meaning of kingly duties. The tradition well knew that every human being had unconscious contents and also that every object had an unknown side. It is only now that the physicist is beginning to know about the molecular structure, for example, of steel. But rational formulae do not belong to experience being themselves incapable of wholeness.

The Tamil kingdoms were concerned with enrichment of the common life. This called for the proper recourse to disciplines which life in its entirety evoked and which at the peak could make even the Minister of a king turn Saiva ascetic. Saivism meant a deep and fascinating involvement taking one from the grammar of the Meikanda-Sastras to an experience of deep surrender and love. There was no lack of the proper guides and teachers so that learning was carried to the very homes of the people. This was reflected in the *puram-thinnais* of houses where the great masters taught all the disciplines involved in Tamil studies. A great many such masters and their disciples became *Brahmacharins* in order to carry on their comprehensive disciplines and vocations. Arumuga Navalar

(\*) Page 258 "Mysterium Coniunctionis" C. G. Jung, Collected Works 14

of Jaffna and his disciples as well belonged to that tradition in which may be said to have issued the proper family planning. The goal of learning was liberation in the complete and profound meaning of that term. Thus the Tamil tradition would never have had problems of population explosion which today is the result of sex being exaggerated in books, films and other media. Sex as an end in itself is a Western aberration thrust into Tamil and for that matter Indian life.

Kingly power was subject to continuous scrutiny by the norms of *Aram* and were sacred and inviolable therefore. It was different from Moghul and other assumptions of power designed to subjugate the population either to an alien religion or system of plunder where there was continuous abuse of power. Where the modern theory of sovereignty is a theory of political organisation chiefly, there is abuse of a continuous kind stemming from all directions. Hence all modern democracies have failed to provide for creative civilisations where there is no imprisonment for the human psyche. Thus even the modern Marxist State does not call itself communist, but socialist because the 'withering away of the State' is inconceivable in any modern form of government however idealistically perched it may be.

No one would dare think today of creating a unit of allegiance capable of providing the goal of endeavour which is that of liberation. Harold Laski was therefore right in his observation: "Anyone, indeed, who looks at the character of modern life would find its most distinguishing feature in the existence of a multiplicity of wills which have no common purposes which drive them to identify." (\*)

Though Laski speaks of the scientific fact of world independence, that is only a matter of theory because the common factor of humanity rests on the spirit generated by the psyche. The struggle today is for bread alone and all the evils of the modern stem from this struggle solely. Laski admits that "men

will sooner part with their souls than with their possessions." (\*) He emphasises therefore that "our industrial organisation has been devised to satisfy the owner of capital; it has sought to fulfil not the function of service, but the function of acquisition." (\*\*)

The modern State has fallen short of proper ideals and functions because there is the intervening snare of industrial power. In many cases the ownership of capital has degenerated into dictatorships. The Tamil outlook was based on certain imperatives which made the ideal of kingship serve the religious and secular because the Tamil people's religion was neither organised nor exploitative but provided a co-inherence to life here and beyond. The king represented what was *Saiva Neethi* - the sense of justice where all the contradictions in life became reconciled in the concept of Siva as the Centre of Consciousness between the dualities.

There was a transcendent love which brought king and people together through the discipline of the 64 *kalais* or avocational arts. That universality began, it may be said, when Agastya came to the South and established the Tamil language and Siva Himself presided over the First Sangam. The universality of love in Tamil tradition was seen in the embodiment called king with the result for example a large number of Pandyan kings bore the same name.<sup>(a)</sup> The cult of personality was not in the Tamil kingly order since what supervened was profound wisdom, insight and love. It was love of the kind described by John Donne:

"Love, all alike, no season knowes, nor clymes,  
Nor houres, dayes, moneths, which are the rags of time."

The duties of the king were part of the whole accepted tradition in which there was no violence to the growth of the spirit of man. The thirty-two bounden functions coming under *Aram* included all those that were needed for the minimum of

(\*) Page 30 "Grammar of Politics" by Harold Laski

(\*) Page 87 *ibid* (\*\*) Page 108 *ibid*

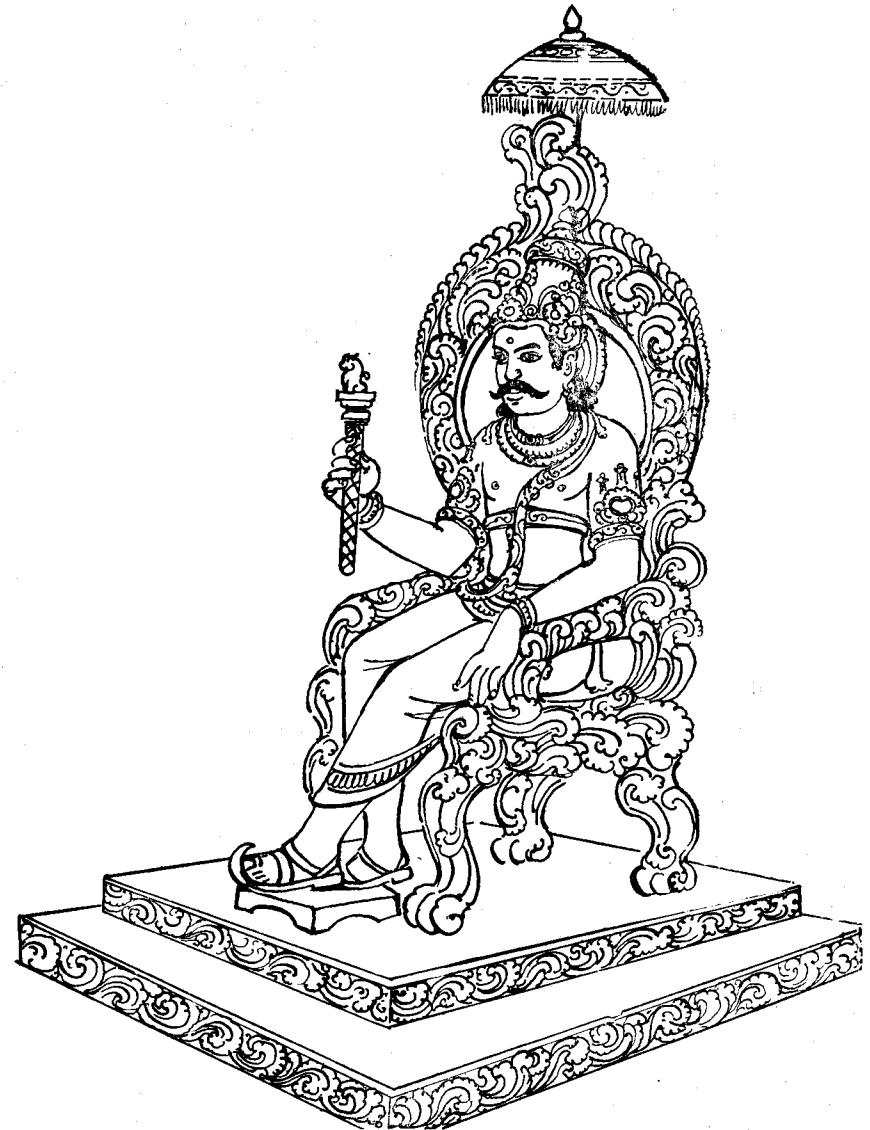
(a) See "Indian Antiquary" XLIV 1919 - Page 165.

life's experience, growth and satisfaction. The king represented the entirety of the will of society in relation to those needs where the soul of the people was absorbed into consciousness. The kingly order proved that God was also a psychological function of man. It was able to redeem human nature from the opposites in order to attain the new life in Siva.

The appendix gives the list of kingly duties as sanctified by *Aram*. These have been outlined in *Abirami Sinthamani* (Encyclopaedia of Tamil Studies). It includes all that would be the minimal to the people's lives geared and ordained to fulfilment and liberation. It brings even the cattle into focus because the cow was the centre of economic life providing at the same time an ecological balance. The first of the duties was towards pilgrims and *Othuvar*. The latter represented the living oral tradition of poetry and the temple as offering the mystic's view of the universe. The king too had to see that food was provided especially for those who chose to live by the spirit and for whom poverty was a voluntary choice. These were the truly religious—the *aru-samayaththor*.

Tamil life and culture grew out of surrender and the king's first duties were to see that nothing in the nature of detraction arising from greed supervened. Inns were equally first concern because everyone looked on life as pilgrimage. Thus it was that this urge to be liberated brought out the best in Tamil art, namely temple architecture. People when not otherwise engaged in agriculture which was seasonal, had given pilgrimage priority. For others too, whatever their learning and wisdom, pilgrimage became indispensable as a discipline taking them out of time and space limitations.

The oral tradition equipped all the people with insight and realisation of the nature of truth and prevented them from leaving knowledge and wisdom within the covers of books. Pilgrimage equally meant a stern discipline for body and mind. It took the people out of time-space limitations and gave them the fitness and vision to reach out for goals other than self-interest. In pilgrimage was the *nunc stans* belonging to the centre of consciousness — the Now of Eternity — as distinct from the



*KINGLY JUSTICE - The Kingly state as it represented the Eternal Law (ARAM) from which the human code was derived. This was a living presence giving the Tamil people's psyche its unparalleled dignity and worth.*

*nunc fluens* in which is all the speed and disillusionment of the modern man.

The king too led the way in pilgrimage and saw to the establishment of temples wherein alone the pilgrims found meaning. All the great mystical poetry called *Thirumurais* found their root in temple worship and pilgrimage. The king had sacred responsibility to correlate the temple to the true religious impulse. In kingship all contraries ceased to exist because it rested on a pedestal from where the contraries could not have reality. The people too were not afflicted by the sort of intellectual atrophy so apparant today.

The king represented also the 'body' of the people made wholesome in the spirit. That was possible through knowledge of differentiated and collective functions. Tamil, even at the alphabet stage was able to represent, if not to give emphasis to this idea. The alphabet 'ka' (க) as first of the 'body' letters as distinct from the 'life' letters signifies the protective role which is that of the king. The letter also stands for '*anma*' or soul. The entire concept of '*aram*' in kingly duties was to see that the norms of earthly life were not violated. Thus it ensured that people suffered not from the psycho-pathologic condition called schizophrenia. The latter condition marks out modern societies which is the dreaded symptom civilisation today has created. In turn the Tamils were never troubled by politics or by the collapse of their securities. While they affirmed life in its wholeness they were also able "to turn away from the world and to disappear into the unconscious for good".

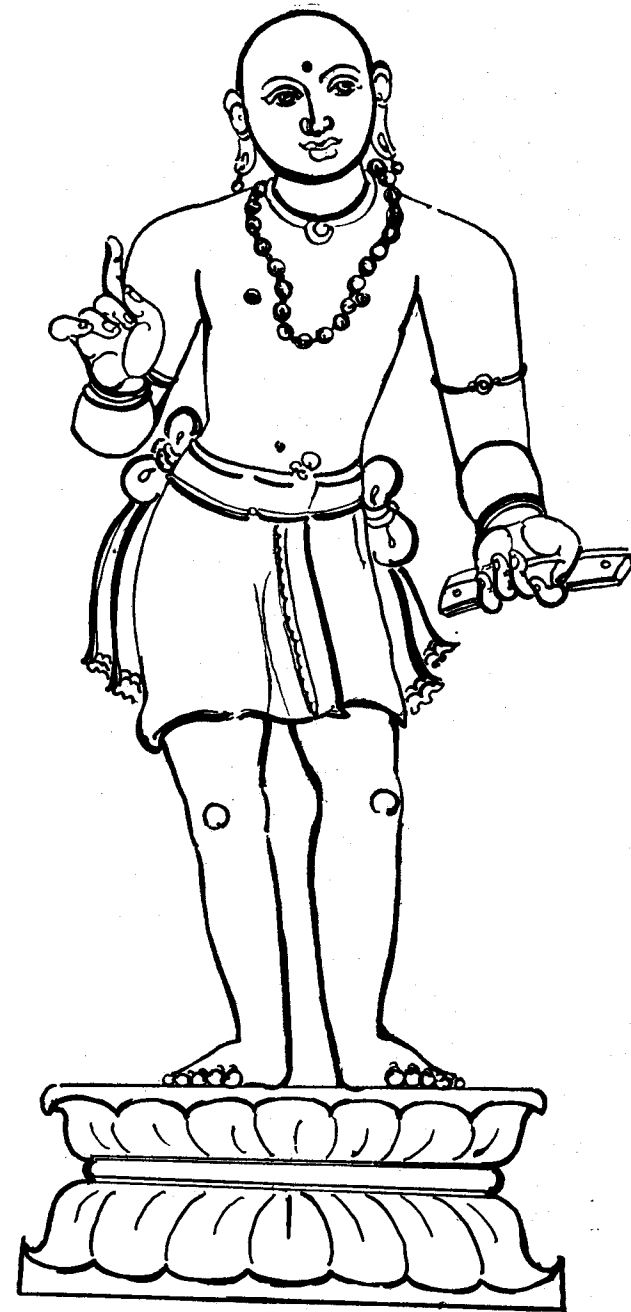
The king's duties were of a kind that could not be transgressed or violated because they depended entirely on principial knowledge. The real understanding therefore operated from above downwards not as today with the ballot paper as instrument to create understanding and concord from below upwards. There was no room for the downward decline of intelligence now taking place under guise of 'progress' and in the name of democracy. The Tamil people today have had a surfeit of 'progress' applying to the function of acquisition. Under guise of scientific and industrial development they have succeeded only in satisfying the owners of

capital. That applies equally to the whole of India where in the demand for rights which is anti-traditional people have become possessors of claims that are empty of the proper performance of duties.

Laski posed the problem admirably—namely that “the will of the State cannot be made legally co-ordinate with wills that in fact cover a lesser area than its own.”(\*) This is indeed the problem of modern States built on concepts of democracy. The collective will of the people conceived of in democracy has failed so miserably that it has in most cases led to forms of dictatorship or authoritarianism. In the concept of government the Tamil tradition made kingship not the Divine Right but the Divine Duty of kings. That established the proper conditions for the people’s liberation. There was neither possession nor demand for rights because that would have destroyed kingly power only through the possession of claims that were empty of all duties.

In this context it would be relevant to note Arthur Toynbee’s observation about how intolerably anarchic the present-day world is. He says: “Mankind’s survival now depends on a technology with a worldwide range of operation, but even this is being paralyzed by the continuing partition of the globe among 140 discordant, sovereign, local states”. Further he observes regarding the much - vaunted democracy that it has its defects too; “One of the gravest defects is the tendency of people living under a parliamentary democracy to give ultimate loyalty to the small, less important group instead of to the large, unimportant group. By this I mean that people too often put the interests of a political party above those of a political party and those of the nation above the interests of mankind as a whole.

“The second serious flaw in democracy is insincerity. Considerable pressure is sometimes exerted on politicians to make them follow the party line, even when that line goes against their consciences. On a somewhat wider scale, for the sake of political tactics, people often pretend to support policies in which



MANIKKAVASAGAR - Represents the ascent from scholar, poet and Prime Minister to the Pandiyan King to the greatest mystic who bequeathed to the Tamil people the marvellous THIRUVASAGAM (See page 49).

(\*) Page 75, “Grammar of Politics” by Harold Laski

they do not believe".\* The kingly order of Siam (modern Thailand) was built on the Saiva tradition since Tamil mystical poetry played a significant role in the coronation. The first title of the founder was Ramadhipati I. According to H. G. Quavitch Wales, "the first three kings of the Bangkok period (Cākri Dynasti) were mainly engaged in endeavouring to restore and imitate the glories of Ayudhyā and they had little inclination to enter into relations with foreign powers." ("Siamese State Ceremonies").

In kingship was also understood the rhythmic character of the world process. By giving priority to the knowledge of the inner reality of things it was able to create the whole rhythm of life for the people in literature, poetry, music and dance. It created the climate for appropriate development of the people's inner and collective qualities. Thus an interplay of the opposites was produced leading to the natural rhythm of life. In it came into being a true co-operative society preventing any degradation from the basis of *aram* to that of contract.

Kingship gave emphasis to the statements of the soul which were different from today's emphasis on the statements of the conscious mind and even of external emotions. The former made the people conscious of realities outside the animal instincts. The mind today keeps on producing tissues of falsehoods, snares and delusions. The invasion of foreign religions into Tamil Nadu under various garbs has also been the result of the vacuum created through the absence of the kingly order. We are taught by the West even now to forget the control the Tamil mind had over the supreme power of nature within and without. That mind was able to transform the transitory into the ever-enduring. It was a mind truly of the collective man able in the best possible way to mould the unconscious psychic life of mankind.

The kingly order and what it signified is seen best in the life of Manikkavasahar as Prime Minister of the Pandyan kingdom. It was the spirit of Siva which ruled which made the

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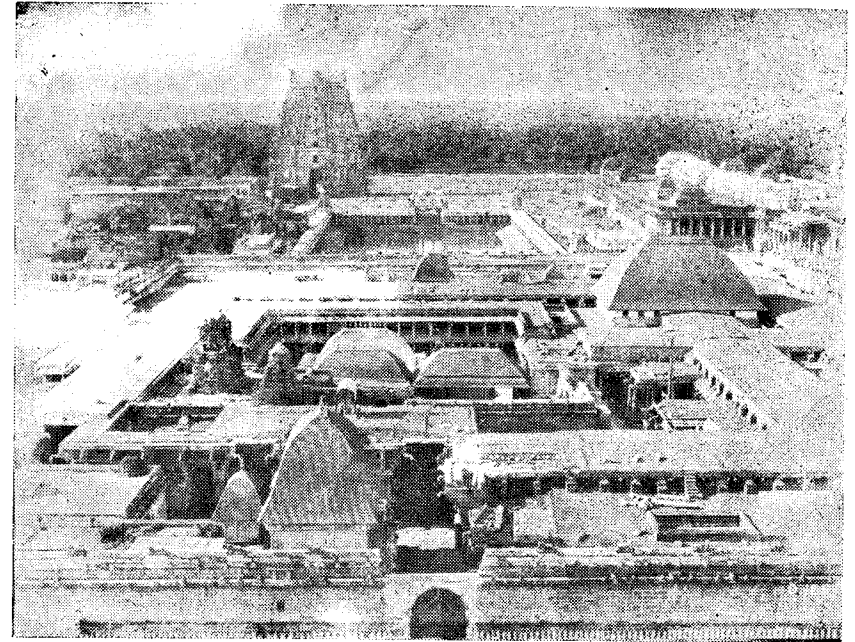
\* Page 221 -- "Choose Life" by Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda — a dialogue (Oxford University Press)



king subservient to its dictates whilst the Prime Minister only acted as Siva willed it. As Prime Minister what Manikkavasa-har saw is related by G. U. Pope taking data from the biography entitled *Vathavurar Puranam*. In the latter is beautifully portrayed the two Courts which presided over the Pandyan Kingdom. One Court was that of Siva and His 999 hosts set amidst the verdure of trees and the fragrance of flowers in the midst of sweet and sacred music and the other where the Pandyan kingdom surrenders to spiritual authority in the way that all kingdoms should. This beautiful biography brings out the tradition of kingship in Tamil territory and exemplifies that beyond temporal power is the living spirit which chooses the men who proclaim it and in whom it lives. In the kingly tradition Siva becomes the unconscious drama of the psyche mirrored in the events of Nature.

If there is to be any true government for man as a mass entity, the Tamil development of kingship should certainly show the way in which justice is done and not merely seen to be done. It has also to be done in the way called for by the spirit which is in the renewed possibility of an intense life and the recovery of life itself. Siva therefore became the peak of kingship as He indeed was the greatest intensity of life.

(In the Appendix is given the 32 functions of society based on *Aram* which it was the enjoined duty of kings to see that they were not transgressed).



Chidambaram - Nataraja  
Temple

*One with aged and revered history,  
but now invaded by commerce and  
trade. It represented once the  
entire Tamil people's singleness of  
purpose.*

## CHAPTER IV

# Temple Art And Worship

It is the Tamil tradition long before any other which knew that liberation was a necessity for man from the ego-bound world of consciousness. It was a long and arduous search and discipline which gave certitude to the knowledge that Siva represents the universal and cosmic consciousness and that the deep root of all being is neither ego-bound nor thing-bound.

It was not a mere confession of faith as in Christianity where with Paul one is called upon to say: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Despite this, to the Western man the value of the self has sunk to zero. In the case of the Tamil, during many millenia of experimentation, research, study and application, it was known that Siva only was the secret order in all the chaos and that everything requires for its existence its own opposite. Tamil therefore was able to possess order because it earned it. The innumerable temples that sprawl Tamil territory reflect the fullest realisation and consciousness of that order.

Tamil is the only language able to offer religious cognition because Saivism is a cognitive religion despite the fact that the Western invasion of the East through technology, science and industry is an act of violence on an unpardonable scale. "Western man", says C. G. Jung, "has no need of more superiority over nature, whether outside or inside. He has both in almost devilish perfection. What he lacks is conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around and within him. He must learn that he may not do exactly as he wills. If he does not learn this his own nature will destroy him."\*

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\* C. G. Jung, "Yoga and the West". In *Collected Works II: Psychology and Religion; East and West*. Page 867.

Tamil, through being the repository of Saivism, has strengthened the inner man so that there can be no alienation from the innermost being. If the Tamil people can return seriously to the study of their vast repertoire of learning through poetry, music and dance which is their precious birth-right, they will not be overwhelmed by the insatiable greed of the West which is already gnawing at the soul of the Westerner.

The temple represents the spiritual culture embedded in Tamil as well as the spiritual authority stronger than anything that legal systems today seek to establish as political or State power. The latter needs temporal authority to govern the 'human animal' whose knowledge of power is in the exercise of muscular strength. Already is visible the decay caused by disorderly appetites among the masses whose sole interest is in money making. The result is that the understanding of religion too has shrunk proportionately. In the blind race to increase the Gross National Product (G. N. P) at all costs has come into being the ugliest and noisiest of monstrosities - industrial societies centralised from the ground floor up as well as factories belching smoke and pollution. The more powerful the technologies, the swifter has been the personality disintegration. As Alvin Toffler has pointed out in his book, "The Third Wave": Industrial civilization today seems something less than utopian—"in fact it appears to be oppressive, dreary, ecologically precarious, war-prone and psychologically repressive."

The worst enemy today is right there in our own hearts so that the sprawling temples have lost their meaning. Having lost their meaning means a void and gap which has now been easily filled by trade and commerce. The latter have naturally and inevitably eroded the environment conducive to temple worship so much so all the great temples - Chithamparam, Mathuraj Meenatchi Amman, Rameswaram etc - have been encircled by business houses and the noise of gadgetry.

The Tamil people were able for millennia to stand by their own soul. The living presence of the eternal images lent their human psyche a dignity. It was through the orderly advance in self-awareness that the achievements of the Tamils are best

Rajagopuram & Vimanam  
*A feature of temple architecture.*



seen. They knew what was the core of man - the psyche in modern terms - that it was separable from the body and not sharing in its dissolution. They knew also that the first knowledge of psychic law and order was found in the stars and the cosmic principle underlay the Siva concept. Having found the inner wealth of the soul in the heart of man, they interpreted the wealth in material form through a stupendous variety of temples.

The temple - (in Tamil Nadu there are 10,542 temples) - was meant to remove the rigidity of the one-eyed point of view. It was as the eye to the sun which brought the soul to correspond to Siva. It was as the cosmic space to physicists - near and yet so far. But, unlike the physicists' view, it was there to summon all the powers of enlightenment that consciousness could offer. The temple never grew out of a vacuum. The king and people knew that, to reach the other shore, it was necessary to go through the medium of the psyche and not through the medium of the body. The temple carried the entirety of the Tamil people's history with it which is also the history of mankind. It was so made as to stretch out of the bounds of time into an incorruptible and joyous existence.

If we have to understand space-time continuum with a meta-physical base it is the temple which offers the proper overall base. It projects inconceivably long vistas of reference.

The temples were meant to represent that consciousness does not create itself but wells up from unknown depths. The *Prakaras* or sky-high *gopuras* and *mandapams*, the *artha-mandapams* and *mahamandapams*, wood and rock carvings all conveying the message of the beyond, were inspired by the whole people and executed by the finest craftsman in the world. There is dance and music represented even among the *ganas*.

Temples became the centres of learning as well as the promoters of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, drama and literature. They were the trustees of a continuing and ele-

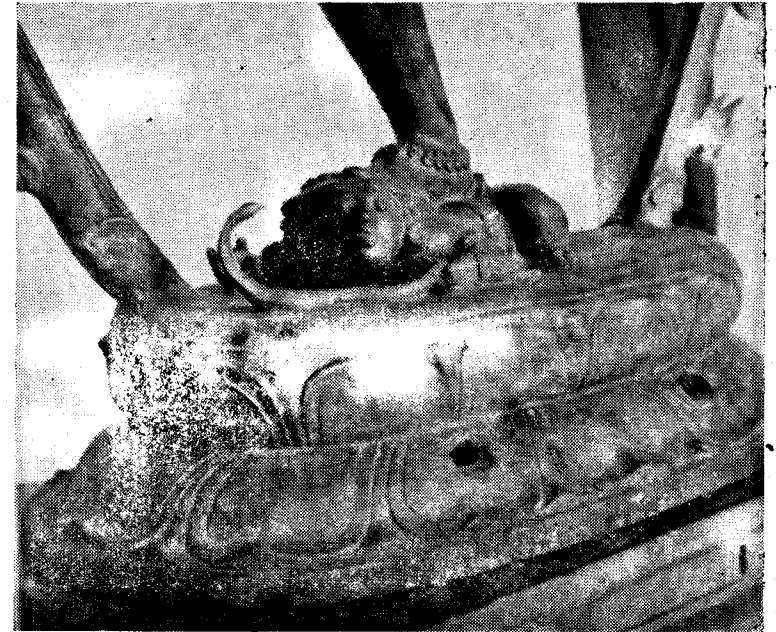
vating culture in literature, music and dance which is the sole inheritance and greatest contribution of the Tamils to the world. Nataraja represents the kingliness in Dance which pervades the universe and pulsates the hearts of men. The Golden Hall of Chitambaram became for the Tamil people the Centre which Siva represented in Dance.

'The great Siva temple of Chitamparam in South India, where the image of Siva, the dancing god, is enshrined.' says Ragini Devi, "may well be called the temple of the dance, since its portals and corridors are adorned with panels in bas-relief of subtle dance figures endowed with exquisite grace and vitality.

"Sculptured figures of the one hundred and eight *karanas* of the classical dance are carved on the inner walls of the four-towered gate ways leading to the Temple."\*

Though the Dance becomes expressive of movement and Stillness, the latter becomes most expressive in the Resting Foot of Siva. Understood in the Tamil mind and brought forth in myriad forms of imagery is the Foot or *Adi*. The Formless, All-Pervading Identity is Siva - the universal Cosmic Principle. He stands for the highest intensity of life. The Foot as Still Point or Symbol of Rest is the meeting point in the soul's inward realisation. In the chaos of disorderly individual events, in the chaos of the irrational both within and without, in all the disorder, the Foot points to a secret order. It is the root of the Tamil man's vast understanding where his relations with the world become relativised. All the great mystical poetry in Tamil was thus able to assimilate the ego to a wider personality.

The image of the Dance was enacted in life by the famous *thevathasis*. The latter's names found place in inscriptions and Temple chronicles. The masters who taught - the *Nattuvans* - too received munificent Royal patronage. They belonged to a guild called *Nattu Mela* - ancient, revered and non-Brahmin. They



*THIRU-VADI - A most beautiful representation of the Resting Foot of Siva giving meaning to time in Eternity. Time ceases at the Still Point which is the Resting Foot of the Eternal Dancer.*

*(The above is reproduced with acknowledgement to the Archaeological Department, Madras).*

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\* "Dance Dialects of India" by Ragini Devi

were not merely great musicians but composers of music and dance because they brought down to earth all that could be known of the celestial Dance,

Dancing was of four kinds : *Sokham* or pure dance, *Mei-kuthu* or emotional dance, *Avinayaam* or dance with gesture and *Nadaham* or dance-drama. Siva's Dance was *Koothu* or *Kunippu* and mystical poetry refers to Him as *Koothudaiyan* or *Kunippudaiyan* giving emphasis to the eternity of the dancing process. Adiyarkku Nallar refers to the Lord's Cosmic Dance as *Ahak-Koothhu* which Manikkavasahar elaborates as *Gnana nataham* or the Dance of Gnosis. On the other hand man's dance in the fleshly state is distinctively referred to as *UUna-nataham* by the great saint and poet.

The concept of Siva as *Osai* and *Oli* is the highest peak of understanding in music. From this the Aryans built an elaborate theory and philosophy called *Nada-Brahma-Vada*. The subsequent development of music as *Nathopasana* has to be traced to yoga as (*hatha and Raja*). Sarangadeva, author of Sangitha Ratnakara, identified *nada* with *Brahman*.

Where temple architecture went Sri Lanka became totally identified with India in style, manner and methods of worship. The Isvara temples in Sri Lanka drew Indian pilgrims in large numbers in the same way as Rameswaram and other temples in India attracted pilgrims from the Island.

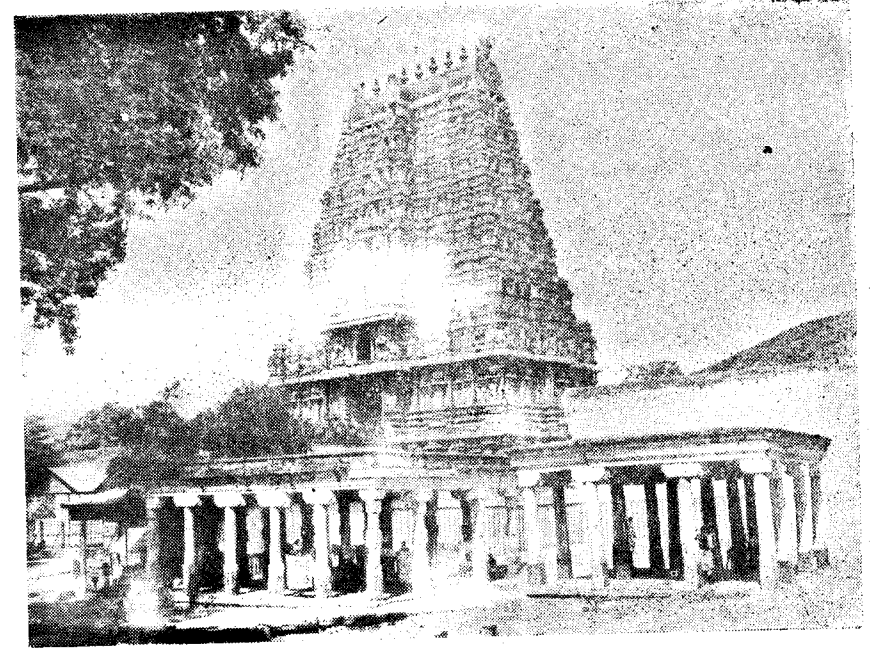
The inscriptions of Pararajasekaran who ruled in Jaffna in A. D, 1414 found on the principal temple at Rameswaram records that the shrines there were built by Pararajasekaran in Saka 1336. The stows for the shrine were hewn and shaped at Trincomalee and then carried by boat to Rameswaram. The Cholas built Siva shrines at Polonnaruwa and Siva Devala 2 was the work of Rajendra Chola. It was entirely of granite. In these Siva Devalas were to be found a magnificent series of Siva images entirely metallic. The Natarajah image now found in the Colombo museum has been described as "an expression of the highest imagination and ingenuity of the great Tamil artists who, with balance, rhythm and symbolism executed the highest conception of the Infinite."

The temples sprawling South India and Sri Lanka establish an identity of immense religious and cultural import. They were vibrant with life and fervour especially after the *Thevarams* were unearthed by Rajaraja Chola I through Nambiandan Nambi. These mystic songs of unequalled beauty and profound inspiration, 8250 in number, were collected, arranged, set to music and sung in all temples. The *Thiruppuzhal* of Arunagiri-nathar in turn gave life to Muruhan temples. It was the Aryan impact and the invasion of Sanskrit into religious ceremonial which contributed to the steady decline in religious values and outlook leading to division into categories of utilitarian and spiritual, imitative and inventive as well as the theoretical and operative. The culture of the Tamil as distinct from the Sanskrit was dominated by the longing to be liberated from oneself, not through physical austerities, but through the exacting disciplines of art, music, dance and poetry.

On the other hand the remarkable tolerance of understanding between Saivism and Vaishnavism is the growth of Vaishnava shrines adjacent to Saiva in great many places. This is because the Tamil mind grasped the nature of the psyche as a factor where the inner and outer worlds corresponded to form a living union. The *Thirumurai*s and, following upon these, the *Thivya Prapantham* came to be on the lips of people for whom religion was life itself.

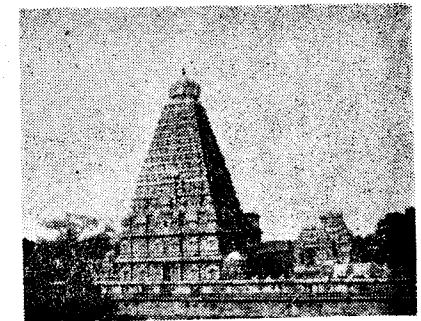
There were no conflicts as existed as between Saiva and Jain or Buddhist because the Alvars mention the presence of Siva in the person of Vishnu. The essential knowledge of doctrine and recollection which enlivened Platonic thought was found in both Saivism and Vaishnavism. With the Aryan impact through Sanskrit, Saivism went through certain external transformations but the doctrine held within it the science of the psyche which was unassailable and sound. This knowledge was by and by strengthened by the knowledge, wisdom and outpourings of the mystics.

Saivism combined with it the elements, as some would say, of the Vedic and Indus Valley cultures. But the Dravidian origin of Saivism cannot be disputed as well as its absorption into the Aryan fold because, from Kashmir to India, Saivism was the



Alagar Koil - Madurai

*One of more than 10,500 temples of Tamil Nadu. The Temple in its total concept carries the entirety of the Tamil people's history which is also the history of mankind.*



Tanjore Peruvudaiyar Temple

*Temples too were the trustees of a continuing and elevating culture in literature, music and dance.*

transforming and unifying force during what has been admittedly the sacred history of India. It is this history which is important as projecting the universality of the Siva concept throughout India and evidence of which is even now to be found throughout the length and breadth of the country.

In the same way that Ramayana and Mahabharata held India in unity, the understanding of Saiva doctrine became complex psychology which pushed India forward into the unknown side of the psyche. Just as microphysics today is leading the scientist into the unknown side of matter, Saivism was able to reveal the unknown side of the psyche through means of antinomies.

As this scientific base of Saivism developed through the influence of king and commoner alike, the Tamil country became dotted with as well as ornamented and sanctified by temples. The kings too became monarchs in the ideal and spiritual sense of their authority being divine. It was similar to the concept brought out in the Ramayana epic and Arichandra Puranam. In the former, Bharata holds himself as king in trust for Rama during the latter's 14 year exile. It was Rama's sandals which occupied the throne of Ayodhya whilst Bharata only became trustee of temporal authority. (Ram. - Ayodhya, 2, 115, 27). Thus Plato would say: "A tyrant is the wretchedest form of government, and the rule of a king the happiest". ("The Republic" IX). The kings of Tamil tradition left for posterity the temples solely, not palaces as the Moghuls for instance did. The latter remain evidence of how cruel their exploitation had been.

The Tamil life breathed through the temples was one entirely in the spirit. There was no trace of the ego in it. The self of Tamil contains the deposit and totality of all past life and its soul lives in a realm beyond the body. Tamil mystical poetry contains tremendous psychic contents. It could be treated both as a mathematical point and as a universe of fixed stars. In Tamil is the forward march, not any brooding or sterile activity which runs round in a circle. Its advance was the greatest because it was in self-awareness. Thus Tamil was able to advance towards a singleness of meaning where the opposites became separated.



The variegated and polarised appearance of every image on a temple **Kopuram** — some fearsome, some endearing, some inward-looking, others outward and indifferent — reveal the contradictions outside of the Centre. The depth corresponds to a potential height and the uttermost darkness to a hidden light. There is also the separation of each into its complementary opposite. The contrasting and even conflicting situations brought out in temple art reveals the only way to a redeeming principle. The kopurams rise skywards away from man's narrow limitations towards an understanding of Nature's polarities. Psychologically this reveals something profoundly conceived giving meaning to what C. G. Jung said in another context :

"Our knowledge of good and evil has dwindled with our mounting knowledge and experience; and will dwindle still more in the future, without our being able to escape the demands of ethics. In this utmost uncertainty we need the illumination of a holy and whole-making spirit — a spirit that can be anything rather than our reason". \* Even the traditional and much-revered figure of Nataraja can change where the right Foot is planted and the left is raised in some temple representations. King and commoner knew the import of the Dance which "diffuses His power in mind and matter, like the heat latent in firewood, and makes them dance in their turn." \*\*

King Rajasekara Pandiyan as monarch of Madurai was proficient in 63 out of 64 traditional branches of Tamil learning. Out of reverence and devotion to the Dancing Lord he refrained from learning that single branch. When he was taunted by a visiting bard for this lapse, the king started his lessons in dance — a composite of *bhavam*, *ragam* and *thalam* — whence the well-known word, *Bharatam*.\*\*\*

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\* C. G. Jung : "Psychology and Religion : West & East" in Collected Works II — Page 267

\*\* Ananda Coomaraswamy : "Dance of Shiva"

\*\*\* For further details see "Nataraja Bronzes in the Madras Museum" by K. C. Kamaliah in "Art and Architecture" — "Heritage of the Tamil" series.

The lesson that Tamil history teaches is that the kingly order was a very disciplined one because the king represented an unanimous society predetermined by traditional concepts of order and meaning and where there could be no opposition of interest between king and subject or patron and artist. The integration of Tamil society was wholesome and thus it functioned harmoniously during millennia, not as it has become today through the withering touch of modern civilization.

The analogy of the human and divine artificers both alike is strongly evident in the temple art of the Tamils. This art particularly served a purpose which was to elevate man by emphasis on the polarisations with the final End in their reconciliation. Tamil society always possessed an elite whose vocation was in knowing metaphysical truth. It is unlike today under Western influence and the mesmerism of industry, democracy and such like, where everybody is called upon to become the product of a perverted individualism. Ananda Coomaraswamy observed rightly, "The constitution of man is not a democracy, but the hierarchy of body, soul and spirit." In this hierarchy grew the totality and homogeneity of India during times before the foreign influences played havoc.

Where it came to religion there was no clash or conflict throughout India such as what plagued Europe in the Middle Ages. The abode of Siva to those in the South was in the Himalayas; but, though in the North He lived, His Eye was centred in the South. Thus the great Siva temples such as Rameswaram even now attract the largest number of devotees from the North of India. The whole of India gave way to the mind of the sage unlike the modern subservience to the intellect. The mind of the sage became the mirror of the universe. It was different from the man in the mass who is the most deceived and self-deluded because he has been allowed to sink unconsciously to inferior moral and intellectual levels. Where the mind of the sage was said to be the speculum of all creation, the mass mind of today lives only because it is called upon to live in the gutter. The latter's highest development is that it is able only to mark against the symbol of a ballot paper and that through the influence of loud and

cheap propaganda. Here C. G. Jung's observation is apposite : "Loss of roots and lack of tradition neurotize the masses and prepare them for collective hysteria. Collective hysteria calls for collective therapy, which consists in abolition of liberty and terrorisation. Where rationalistic materialism holds sway, States tend to develop less into prisons than into lunatic asylums." \*

The numerical values of today are like a million zeros which joined together do not add up to one. It is an age when infantile tyrants are made whose power is derived only from the frightening immaturity of the man of today.

In Tamil tradition, the king was the most learned and disciplined and his Prime Minister as much learned to show the way of kingly government. For example Arimarthana Pandyan, king of Madurai, who in himself was the highest embodiment of justice, learning and wisdom, entrusted to Manikka-vasahar, a mere stripling, the task of advising him in the role of Prime Minister on the intricacies of governing the country. G. U. Pope describes the youthful Prime Minister thus : "The boy is represented as being from the first a prodigy of intellect, and it is gravely stated that in his sixteenth year he had exhausted the circle of Brahmanical learning, and especially was consummately learned in the *Agamas* of the Caiva system. The fame of his learning and genius soon reached the king, who sent for the youth, conceived a vehement affection for him, and constituted him his prime minister, giving him the title of *Tennavan-Brahma-Rayan* (—the Pandyan's Brahman king)"\*\*

The great mystical poem *Thiruvasham* is a monument to the memory of this sage as much as it is a monument to the greatness of Tamil and Saivism. The king, as can well be deduced from this and other examples, did not rule in his own right. The people were deeply involved in what they realised were their duties and rights and these, if ever, were governed through the metaphysical order presented through the temples.

\* Page 595 C. G. Jung Collected Works 8 : The Structure and The Dynamics of the Psyche.  
 \*\* "Thiruvasham" by G. U. Pope Page XVIII

The social disintegration which began with the foreign and industrial impact has made the people go frantically after the new world evils—the urban centred culture presenting new fads under the enervating influence of modern cinema living entirely on excitement. The new world lacks definition and solidity and every alteration that has taken place in traditional morality has been by definition an immorality.

The colossal amount of labour involved in temple construction where, in most cases, huge granite rocks had been transported over vast distances, shows how symbolic and significant the temple had been to the Tamil people's lives. Besides the Tamil influence spread far and wide to Thailand and Cambodia. Even when Sanskrit developed, it could be seen that it was mostly an indigenous growth confined to Tamil Nadu. Tamil land produced its own poets, mystics and devotees or *adityars* — (the latter 63 in number)—who symbolised the meaning and intent of Tamil and Saivism. The expulsion of Jains from royal courts especially through the great Saiva mystics, Appar and Sambanthar, was the triumph of Saivism. It was a triumph for the temples which fostered the bhakthi movement. The deep and abiding faith in Saivism among the Tamil people may be ascribed to the great spiritual and literary achievements of Sambanthar and Suntherar. Between the temples and the lives of the people was the balance of the opposites.

The sculptured rocks in temple art yielded way to the sanctuaries or *vimanas*. These were followed by exquisitely beautiful *kopurams*, *mandapams* and corridors. The Dance of Siva, covering time in eternity, represents a continuous condition. The impact in the mind of the worshipper who was part of the discipline of tradition was right within the heart, though the Dance takes place at Chithamparam which is everywhere.

*Silpa* included eighteen or more professional arts. The avocational arts (*kala*) formed 64 which included music, painting, weaving, cookery, horsemanship and even the practice of magic. *Silpa* was divine art which called for both sacrifice and integration. Thus it is said : "Our Saiva Agamas teach that

the architecture of our temples is all Kailasabhavana, that of forms prevailing in Kailasa."

It is good to note some of the landmarks in temple architecture of Tamil Nadu. The Chola, Pandya, Vijenagar and Nayak rule was marked by temple building indicating a wholesome development in the Tamil mind and a continuity which was unbroken. That alone shows the distinctiveness of the Tamil mind from the Western and modern counterparts. It did not allow itself to be isolated from the primordial oneness with the universe. It was different from the Western mind which has only sharpened the conflict between science and religion. Scientific materialism has succeeded in denigrating the self which is man's central archetype providing for his wholeness. The temple became necessary as learning and realisation grew thus reflecting the self-liberating power of the introverted mind.

Temples such as Chitamparam, Madurai Meenakshi and Tanjore became vast conglomerate edifices reflecting in themselves the condensation of the living process. The Tamil psyche was able to confront the natural process with the symbolic images. This enabled the bursting forth into rhapsodies of song and dance which is peculiar to the Tamil expression. The temples convey this incredible psychic growth which filled the landscape with untold and abundant images of the non-spatial universe. The return today to the traditional order calls for the simultaneous return to poetry and music contained in the *Thirumurais* by which alone can the temples be brought back to life.

The machine is destroying the temple as the centre of Tamil life. In another context D. H. Lawrence put it expressively: "All vulnerable things must perish under the rolling and running of iron." \* The machine age has also dehumanised the nature of people pushing it more and more towards control and manipulation. Outside this context Temple art is evidence of the

\* D. H. Lawrence, "Lady Chatterley's Lover"

tremendous maturity of the Tamil growth and of the marvels that the spirit can achieve. Though we belong to an age of the lowest profanities, there is need not to allow the temples fall into decay and decrepitude—least of all allowing them to become museum pieces. The temples still remain evidence of the marvel behind the spirit of man where the ego has been surrendered.

Striking examples of the magnificence of temple art is the immense gopuram of Suchindran temple which reaches the height of 134 feet. The *Kilikoothu Mandapam* of Mathurai Meenakshiamman Temple is supported by pillars cut from a single block of granite. The door posts beginning the *gopurams* are cut of single stone reaching 60 feet in height. The Brihadeeswara Temple in Tanjavur has a marvellous pyramidal structure of *vimana* with 14 storeys reaching a height of 216 feet. The *mandapam* of Srirangam has been made of 1,000 pillars of which 936 still remain. In the Suchindran Temple northern corridor are four musical granite pillars which produced different musical sounds when tapped. There are musical pillars also at Madurai Meenachi and Nallaiyappar temples at Thirunelveli. The steps of the small *mantapam* of Dharasuran temple have been designed for musical reproduction of the seven notes of the octave.

The craftsmen who carried out these stupendous tasks of bringing eternity into time were highly disciplined and learned in their *sastras*. As Ananda Coomaraswamy comments:

"Such a craftsman goes through the whole process of self-purification and worship, mental visualization and identification of consciousness with the form evoked, and then only translates the form into stone or metal. Thus the trance formulae become the prescriptions by which the craftsman works, and as such they are commonly included in the Silpa Sastras, the technical literature of craftsmanship." \*

(\*) Page 166. Essay on "Origin and Use of Images in India" in "Transformation of Nature in Art" by Ananda Coomaraswamy.

The growth of Tamil to a great extent should be linked with the temple as reflecting the centre of the highest consciousness. The incomparable *Trirumurais* all have bearing in constant pilgrimage and temple worship. The mystic poet Manikkavasahar merged his corporeal frame with the Infinite Presence in Chithamparam Temple. His transformation was as complete as the imagery he produced in his marvellous mystic utterances in *Thiruvasaham*. He bridged the discrepancy between perception and reality where scientific test of the modern age is unable merely to prove. He stifled the ego which lives only in time and space. He provided example of liberation from the pairs of opposites and gave the Tamil people their greatest legacy in the discovery that all division and all fission are due to the splitting of opposites in the psyche.

In this way was found the true meaning and intent of the world's incomparable art—namely the Tamil people's Temple art. We are in a time of dissociation which is therefore a time for sickness. Through a return to the spirit behind Temple art and through the disciplines needed for its maintenance only can the Tamil return to wholesomeness. It is the only way to save mankind from the grip of rationalistic materialism which is only preparing the most cultured people of the world for collective hysteria. C.G. Jung, back again, gives this support when he said that "the masses are only breeding grounds of psychic epidemics."\* It is therefore necessary to prevent the decline of the Tamil people to the level of the masses.

The wonder of the Tamil development in art, poetry and music is that these have been the outcome of a personality called Tamil which was unified and wholesome. It was the whole people's singleness of purpose which enabled such an unbelievable and stupendous growth. If Tamil's growth has to be projected into the future, there is need, all the more imperative, that the temples should be rescued in spirit and adoration and not be allowed to fall by the way side as museum pieces.

\* Page 227 "*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*"  
C.G. Jung in *Collected Works* 9, Part I.

## CHAPTER V

# Sacred Numerology, Geography and History

The modern disorder prevents any attempt to look at things in the way of tradition. The disorder itself being the result of an aberration calls for a complete break with the present in order to view things outside the disorder. It is becoming clearer every day that the answer to everything cannot be found in modern thinking. Illusion is one of the most difficult things to overcome before one can strike upon the frontiers of the unconscious.

If we can reach towards understanding the traditionalist concepts behind numbers, geography or history, we would have to pass through the paces of a revolution or renewal. The blindness of the present hour can be cured by a return to the ground of human nature which is the individual's own deepest being. The battle is even more exacting because modern science has provided the most feeble instruments to overcome the many and manifold hideousness behind it. It has to be said for once that the Tamil man's God is not to be caught with human attributes. In seeking knowledge of that God we have to set out against the directions set by reason knowing very well that there are irrational possibilities of life which have just as much right to be lived.

In the regulating functions of the opposites is a running contrariwise, meaning that sooner or later we shall have to run into the opposite. We can never forget that the world exists only because the opposing forces are in equilibrium and the rational is counterbalanced by the irrational.

It cannot be denied that science has made the machine whilst making the mind of man satanic. The observation of

René Guénon is therefore apposite: "If men really came to understand what goes to make up the modern world that world would there and then to exist, because its existence, like that of ignorance itself and of everything that implies limitation, is a purely negative one: it has come into being solely through the denial of traditional and superhuman truth."\*

The tradition of Tamil concepts in numbers, geography or history is altogether outside profane levels of reference. It calls for a knowledge of cosmic analogies where the functional and symbolic values coincide. In art, for instance, symbols become an iconography and therefore give meaning to the universal language of art. In their context symbols are metayhysical.

The Tamil view as held sacred in tradition is that, in the concept of numbers for example, there is self-identification with things of absolute, if not ultimate, value. These were not related in any way to the economics of self-interest. A number is outside personal interest or reference. Its existence is not only as means to recognition but as means to communication and to vision. Even when writing the letters of the Tamil alphabet there is sanctity attached which brings to focus the symbol that each letter has to convey in bringing the meaning of the ultimate Reality. This is all done with the foreknowledge that Siva's idiosyncrasy is being and the life letters represent the outward expression. Thus it becomes from the very inception a revelation of truth. Numbers too written in the Tamil form convey ultimate meanings unconnected with the commercial. The result of such an approach is that no one laid claim to anything except in the background of its abiding usage somewhat in the manner of Meister Eckehart's expression, "Heaven does more than the carpenter who builds a house."

The sense of numbers can elevate or degrade. The modern and peculiarly self-centered involvement in numbers has led to the degradation of people through commercial and economic activities merely. The Tamil mystical poet Sambanthar gives example of how numbers bring meaning to the cosmic arrangement wherein all things remain in their dimensions apart from

time and space. In that concept alone and in that realisation only can all time be gathered into the eternal Now.

சூரிய முதலொன்றாயிரு பெண்ணான் குணமுன்றாய்  
மாருமறை நான்காய் வருபூதம் மவை ஐந்தாய்  
ஆரூர் சுவை ஏழோசை யொடெட்டுத் திசைதானாய்  
வேரூய் உடன் ஆனான் இடம் வீழிம்மிழலையே.

Translated into English it would run thus, though the beauty of the rhythm becomes outside the focus of the music it belongs to:

"As End of all He is, as *first* in principio  
In *two* He is male as well female.  
As *three* He stands for the *gunas* too.  
In *four* Vedas unchanging He remains;  
The elements as *five* He doth represent.  
In taste he is *six* and immanent He is  
In the *seven* octave notes;  
Directions all-pervading He is *eight*—  
That one in Veelmilahzalai  
He indeed is all these."

The concept of numbers here does not belong to the intellect but to the eye of gnosis. Siva becomes differentiated in sacred numerology but the meanings attached to numerals are other than the numerical. The psyche confronts the natural process with a symbolic image. The numbers operate on an entirely sacred level as the numerical concepts unfold. For example the whole gamut of Tamil music with its vast field of improvisation and grammatical structures, all get resolved into the seven notes of the octave.

So too the other numbers which reflect the unconditioned creative power of the psyche. From one to eight is brought out the primordial image which is a condensation of the living process. In Saiva Siththantha philosophy Siva's attributes are given as eight (எண்குணத்தான்). The number here becomes sacred when it is not allowed to petrify into something static. The numbers help to visualize in themselves the cosmic process

\* Page 109 "Crisis of the Modern World" by René Guénon

and its all-embracing activity. What is present in every individual is the psychic organ which is the archetype. Numbers in the profane sense, if any, get devalued and man is thus able to reach beyond the limitations of his personality. Thirumanthiram, one of the earliest works which gives importance to concepts in numerology speaks of Siva as One, *in principio*, His Grace extending to two; in form He becomes three; in four, meaning the Vedas, is His realisation; in Him is the overcoming of the five senses and their perceptions and so on until the manifested state where He becomes eight.\*

The intellect is a kind of thinking. It is just as an equation from which nothing comes out but what we have put in. When numbers as here take on a symbolic reference, thinking too develops in primordial images which make up the groundwork of the human psyche. Thus when we reflect on the great achievements of the Tamils, it becomes clear that there was built in them a confidence and joy in the present as they danced and sang in the temple corridors. Thus it was that the kings built houses for such complete and dedicated artists because they had reached the greatest freedom from dependence on economics. It is the peak of any civilisation that human beings could have shed light on their darker reaches and thus were able so easily to change and transform themselves because only that which changes remains true.

The blindness of the modern concepts in numbers has led to an unparalleled impoverishment of thinking. It has led to greed, avarice and self-interest of a kind which is repugnant to the goal and purpose of life. The treasurers of Tamil are lovely, though mysterious. Numbers were symbols of immense significance but, for those to whom the history of the world begins with the present day, this awareness of sacred numerology will certainly not enter because that calls for a revolution only from within.

\* ஒன்றவன்தானே இரண்டவன் இன்னருள்  
நின்றனன் முன்றினுள் நான்குணர்ந்தான் ஐந்து  
வென்றனன் ஆறுவிரிந்தன் ஏழும்பர்ச்  
சென்றனன் தானிருந்தானுணர்ந்த தெட்டே (Thirumanthiram-1)



THE SIVA TANDAVAM as the COSMIC dance of the Universe is represented in 108 KARANAS. Chidambaram Temple became the centre and focus of this representation. Being Cosmic in revelation these are indeed the most graceful that human art can articulate. The Dance of Siva made Chidambaram the Centre of the Universe, "the Still Point of the turning world" which is HERE and NOW within the heart.

In the understanding of Saivism numbers have a symbolic value. G.U. Pope for example admits there is "some REAL TRUTH hidden" in such symbols.\* He was referring to the Five Letters *Ci-va-ya-na-ma* which are the Five aksharas — (*Ci* for *Siva*, *va* for *Arul Sakthi*, *ya* for the soul, *na* for *mayai* or *Thirothanam* and *ma* for bond or entanglement with the ego.) The cosmic Dance of Siva conveys different meanings to the two opposite directions it takes and *Thiruvavul – payan* 83 conveys it beautifully:

"On one side His Dance points to that of flesh ;  
Seek thou the other—the Dance of gnosis."

ஊன நடனம் ஒருபால் ஒருபாலா  
ஞான நடம் தானடுவேநாடு

The call is towards liberation. Here G.U. Pope's comment is relevant : "The syllabus *Ma* and *Na* represent the energetic wheel of impurity in itself, and as operating in the soul ; the syllabus *Ci* and *va* represent the mystic action of Sivan and of Grace. Between these stands *ya*, which represents the soul."

Five means, like all numbers in sacred numerology, a break away from the tyranny of numbers. It was one total concept which was integrally connected with the unity of the unconscious psyche. Numerology was distinct from the numbers of today which have brought about the rapid advance in technics. The latter contributed to the uprooting economically and psychologically of the industrial masses. The boasted rationalism of today has caused a psychological split leading to the mass mind. It is a mind all the time in conflict with the unity of the cosmos whilst on the most common economic levels it is blind to all things except self-interest. Numbers today bear no reference to transcendental truth or supreme knowledge. In the Tamil tradition numbers created an inter-penetration of subject and object unlike today where 'progress' in the scientific sense is only a dispersion in multiplicity. Tamil thought on the other hand was centred in unity which can be said to be the summit of the hierarchy from which all multiplicity derives.

\* G. U. Pope "The Thiruvacagam" (Pxi Note II on "The Mystic Formula of the Five Letters") —The bold letters are Pope's own.

Sacred numerology also gave meaning to traditional concepts in everything. In the same way that symbols were the universal language of art, "Traditional symbolism is more nearly a universal language than any other; the greater part of its idiom is the common property and inheritance of nearly all peoples, and can be traced back at least to the fifth and sixth millennium B. C."\*

Numerals gave clear focus to the out look of the Tamil people on almost all things. It is the same that we see colours not wavelengths that we are called upon to reanimate the forms that are with the vision of what is to be. By submitting ourselves unconditionally to the fundamental law of our being, it is possible to prevent the intellect being insulated from the springs of life. The modern man's psyche is impoverished and stagnant because he has been differentiated up and reduced down to the specialist level. Sacred numerology is capable of rescuing man from the animal collective psyche where everything is counted on the mass level including the ballot paper. Man has receded into the mass and is collective to the degree that he is not even sure of his own ego. Jung would call this animal collective psyche as "nothing but an assortment, a variety performance".

It would be necessary to look into all thoughts, associations and imprints that tradition has imprinted in the mind to see clearly that everything rests on an inner polarity because everything is a phenomenon of energy. To get to a singleness of meaning one has to separate the opposites as much as possible. For example the letter *ṣ* stands in Tamil for eight. It is the first letter of the alphabet and gives the first impulse to the metaphysical structure of the language. *ṣ* as eight gives meaning to Siva's eight attributes. It also connotes eight directions in which space was conceived in its totality. Eight becomes Siva even in the concept of the Tamil alphabets—*ṣ* the life letter representing the Primordial, the Beginning as beautifully brought out in the first *sutram* of *Siva-gnana-potham*. Hence it is that tradition ascribes that the Supreme Being Himself presided over the First Sangam lost in pre-history. That was intended to give Tamil its metaphysical content and meaning.

In Tamil numerology *ka* represents the first numeral being itself the first of the 'body' or *mei* letters in the form of 'lk' &

\* Ananda Coomaraswamy, "A New Approach to the Vedas" — (Page 78)

At the alphabet stage itself the meaning is conveyed that body and life must combine for existence. It is the numeral '1' which ushers in the meaning of existence or form. There is no mathematical concept taking a totality only of zeros. Unless & " interposes there can be no embodiment. In eight is the fullness which merges with the infinite. Further, nine takes us out of the world into astronomical concepts such as the nine planets. That ends the form given to numerals in the relative and temporal sense because what follows are combinations with profane arithmetical or mathematical references. The number '9' is spoken of as the last of the substantive numerals called *moola enka*, all of which properly interpreted becomes sacred numerology. Beyond it whatever the form of combination one is led to events of shorter duration which in turn create chaos and confusion through accumulation of facts and data incapable of proving anything or signifying anything.

Today the profane application of numerals has created short-lived men and their experiences along with mechanical and industrial inventions—inventions which can only lead to ultimate catastrophe, because they have created conditions for the negation of all real knowledge. René Guénon felt it rightly when he said "the relative is meaningless and impossible without the absolute, the contingent without the necessary, change without the unchanging and multiplicity without unity."\* The Tamil tradition did not ignore or repudiate intellectual intuition and it can even be said that the cohesiveness of India during ages past was due to her civilization being suspended only from this intuition.

The numeral 8 which gives meaning to the Siva concept has also been associated with the development of gnosis or transcendental power and understanding. These are: 1. *Anihma* which is to be as subtle and powerful as the atom 2. *Mahima* which is to reach heights as mountains 3. *Ilahima* which is to be as swiftly moving as the wind 4. *Pranthie* which is to be as one would wish 5. *Prākāmiyam* which is to create and and enjoy anything through the mind's power 6. *Isathuvam*

\* Page 35 "Crisis of the Modern World" by René Guénon.



which is to bring under control of oneself everything 7. *Vasiththuvam* which is to experience everything without being attached 8. *Karima*.

The numeral 12 has an astronomical bearing connectep with divisions of the year in terms of *rāsi*. These are *mesham*, *rishapam*, *mithunam*, *katakam*, *simmam*, *kanni*, *thulam*, *vrichchikam*, *thanusu*, *maharam*, *kumbam* and *meenam*.

All these concepts helped to keep doctrines and knowledge sacred. That gave an enviable superiority to the ancient in Tamil preventing the reduction of things to the stature of man as an end in himself.

When numerals are taken in their profane or commercial sense there inevitably follows misuse and corruption. In India, for example, it has been pointed out that corruption is growing faster than the economy and it has become part of an unwritten rule of life. This was admitted by Premier Rajiv Gandhi in an interview with the American quarterly, "*Chief Executive*" that the "real problem is the massive corruption at the bottom." One writer pointed out that "money making devices have been perfected and they cover all facet of life and development. Sanction of bank loans, entertainment tax exemptions, official purchases, sub-standard execution of development projects, natural disasters, contracts requisition and derequisition of houses and property and even selection of books are part of a flourishing corrupt culture in this country."\* When numbers are no longer sacred but only numerical and quantitative, the economic outlook becomes profane and perverted. The result is the growth and challenging posture of a parallel economy based on distorted values. Despite the great efforts made to reach a high growth rate economically coupled with social justice, there is degeneracy into the reality of modest growth and deeply entrenched poverty. Poverty is the result of the tendency to reduce everything to the quantitative as human beings descend progressively to lower levels than that of existence itself.

\* Hari Jaisingh writing in the "Indian Express" of 24/07/85

## நிலகம்

Man in the Tamil tradition was not called upon to experience himself as a scientific problem because what we see today is science working with concepts of averages which are only general and cannot do justice to the subjective variety of the individual life. Beneath the eternal flux is something that lives and endures.

In the absence of sacred values attached to perennial concepts, modern societies are fast reaching the fag-end of their imagined glory. In society itself there is today an inexorable moral degeneration because the individual has sunk to the level of the mass, which is something baneful, destructive and anarchical.

In sacred numerology account was taken of nature as the cause of effects. That left out the mere appearance. It called for deep vision and an ability to cultivate the higher things of life. Genius was at work in tradition because there was profound reflection underlying it. On the higher plane of love there is a healing process which was able to take people beyond entanglements in the ego. Wholeness is in fact a charisma and it calls for one to grow into it.

Where it comes to sacred history which is today no longer understood, historians have been hesitant to deal with something which really carried forward a great tradition such as Tamil. Because the trend is to look through Western perspectives, it has been conveniently ignored that India had a homogeneity all its own due entirely to the impact of sacred history throughout the length and breadth of the sub-continent. What lived as history was the ever-present in terms of thinking, feeling and action. The epics and puranas lived, not as today stored away in books, but in the memory of all the people and it was the aim of everyone to see the reflection of his or her personality in the characters presented through Ramayana, Mahabharata, Arichandra Purana and the like.

A great modern poet comes very close to rendering the meaning of what constitutes history:

"A people without history

Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern  
Of timeless moments".

("Four Quartets" - T.S. Eliot)

Tamil history never could have belonged to time as has happened since the foreign impact on India. As with the rest of India it was sacred and hence escaped the profanities of modern renderings. The life of Valluvar or of Manikkavasahar, for example, can only be said to fit into the perfectibility of things that should belong to the divine order because what they said and sang became part of the human vocabulary, not stored away in books or libraries. Such lives alone became historical in tradition because Truth lived in and through them outside the profanities of space and time. The curse of all modern history is that it magnifies the evil because it all the time ignores the centrality of the psychic process.

The ultimate success of the Tamil perspectives in history, numerology or geography was not in surrendering the self to any illusory knowledge. The symbols were illuminating. Between choice given to man to sink to the lowest level of the animal kingdom or to soar to the highest spheres of divinity, the symbolisms in Tamil pointed to the latter. Nature was not thought of merely as material to be used or consumed, but as self-sufficient essence out of the depth of being. Such symbolism as was used was capable of transforming nature into a language for man where what is called for is only to surrender and listen.

The modern profanities are transforming the earth into a kind of waste land and already the ecological disaster is being felt widely. In life itself the over-bearing thing is lifelessness and monotony. In the symbols found right from the essence of Tamil poetry was laid the perfect environment for the earth - an earth that can never be impoverished, but only enriched by man. In Tamil there was no place for the dumps of industry, the slums of cities or the intoxicating greed to conquer Nature because that would have been loveless. The impoverishment of the modern man's soul has arisen out of his lust for quantity.

In the interaction with external nature Tamil provided the ethos for intermingling with it within and without. As today with all industrial and commercial progress, there was no risk either to the physical life or internally to the self because the latter was enlarged through the recognition of man's essence in Nature. In the symbols was a vision of fulfilment of being in depth and continuity as well as in renunciation and regeneration. Man may have been lost in Nature in the sense of identity, but not lost in the corruption of Nature. Thus even in the concept of ancient Tamil grammar, divinity in its different forms was assigned to the different geographical divisions. The freedom in Tamil was only in the light of transcendent Truth. For the Tamil mind there was no ethos or ethics without Siva.

Unless the Tamils return to their own there will not be anyone left to show the way of sanity. The wholesale impact of Western - based education has shut off the Tamil man's inner world and impregnated his mind with ambivalence. The natural result has been disastrous. Where Saivism created a dynamic spiritual equilibrium and where the Tamil language provided all that was needed for emancipation from servitude and misery, whilst giving the proper meaning and direction to life, the failure to maintain the tradition has created an alienated world with fellow - beings divided and debased and all that is valuable laid waste and disintegrated.

Coming to sacred geography, unlike the people of today who only see a narrow world of electric lights, TV and the like, the Tamil view was outside the merely three - dimensional. The present postures on the other hand have led the Tamil people to mere trivialities whilst drowning them in a sea of debasing entertainment values.

The Cosmic Dance of Siva has all along been interpreted as facing South though the Dance takes place on the great mountains of Kailas. It thus transcends all concepts of dimension. Kailas became here and now to the Tamil mind whilst the South created the sense of the ever - present in the mind of the Northerner. Thus the Tamil land was blessed, says Sezhkilar, in his inimitable *Thiruthondar Puram*. \* Another source

\* மாதவஞ்செய்த தென்திசை.

*Kalladam* refers to Siva as 'God of Southern Tamil'\* But Siva was for the whole world to realize.\*\*

This geography brought the moon, a satellite of the earth, into proper focus by fixing its crescent form on the head of Siva. The poet - mystic Appar thus sings: "He the Sankaran who holds in His braided locks the moon."\*\*\* But the Blissful Dance of Siva is outside the bounds of geography, says Sezkhilar.<sup>a</sup> Its greatness is its own in the expression of Supreme Bliss being no longer spatial.

From manifold imagery written into sacred poetry, Siva becomes the Centre from which geography was understood. Outside time and space He rendered what was relevant to time and space so much so that the poet - mystic Manikkavasahar poses the question, "What matters where the sun rises?"<sup>b</sup>

Thiru - Moolar deals extensively with concepts in sacred geography and his Thiru - manthiram can only be understood in the light of traditional learning and wisdom. It gives meaning to the truth that they alone can live significantly who can escape the utter profanities of modern geography. For example in Thiru-manthiram 426 the consciousness is awakened only in relation to the cosmic world outside sense directions so that the sense understanding of geography is eliminated.<sup>c</sup>

The true luminosity of the sun was understood as *Siva Sooriyan* which meant an ever-resplendent Source of Energy.

\* தென்தமிழ்க்கடவுள்

\*\* உலகெலாமுணர்ந்தோதற் கரியவன்

\*\*\* "சந்திரன் சடையில் வைத்த சங்கரன்"

a இந்து வாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லையில்  
தனிப் பெரும் கூத்து

b எங்கெழிலென் ஞாயிறு

c "எட்டுத் திசையும் எறிகின்ற காற்றொடு  
வட்டத் திரையனல் மாநிலம் ஆகாயம்  
ஒட்டி உயிர்நிலை என்னும் இக்காயப்பை  
கட்டு அவிழ்ப்பன் கண்ணுல் காணுமே"

Thus mystics were able to see the myriad suns from a galactic perspective but, over and above, they saw the myriad galactic systems whose Centre and Focus was *Siva Sooriyan*. This concept or realisation was clearly expressed by Manikkavasahar in *Thiruvasaham* (vide *Thiru - andap - pahuthi*). In the centre of the Cosmic Wheel stands Siva. There was in Tamil tradition - unlike the divisions of the earth into Arctic, Antarctic, equatorial and the like, the linking of the earth with co-ordinates connected with sacred astronomy and *yoga sastra*. In this inter-linking of the earth with the cosmic environment came into existence the profound science of astrology which was part of the education of the best of men. That made it in tradition different from the man of today who according to Jung, "resembles more or less the collective ideal having made his heart into a den of murderers."

That the Tamil people should have succumbed to the profane limitations, aggressiveness and self - interest of modern history is a reflection of a serious aberration. Where once they represented the history of mankind outside all profane levels, they have yielded to the Western urge to interpret history as that of political power. In the words of the British logician Karl Popper the elevation of political power into a history for the world is an offence against humanity. "It is hardly better than to treat the history of embezzlement or of robbery or of poisoning as the history of mankind. For the history of power politics is nothing but *the history of international crime and mass murder* (including, it is true, some of the attempts to suppress them). This history is taught in schools and some of the greatest criminals are extolled as its heroes."\*

Arthur J. Toynbee, the renowned historian, refers to "history being rated at a low value" in the Graeco - Roman world and in the Indian world.\* India disdained the writing of history because that would have only taken the entire outlook and perspective into the profanities of time, thus leading to disorder and disharmony in the social order. Tamil society remained cohesive because it was unanimous in establishing a community of ideas and feelings.

\* "The Open Society and Its Enemies" by Carl Popper

\*\* "Choose Life" — Arthur Toynbee (Page 32) (Oxford University Press)

There was no danger of psychological ill - health because Siva became the Supreme Physician — 'the *Maha - Vaithianathan*' — who was able to plunge into the healing and redeeming depths of the collective psyche where it was not possible to be lost in the isolation of consciousness, its errors and sufferings. We are today caught in psychic diseases where we are unable to communicate our feelings and strivings to mankind as a whole. We just remain as a linguistic group in the midst of all the conflicts and diversities of India. We remain outside the past and therefore condemned to be free.

The over-emphasis given to reason even in Tamil Nadu has naturally thrown overboard intuition. Reason wants something to rest on and therefore calls for a hypothesis to work on. Therefore reason becomes something dependent on sense perception operating on the conscious level of the psyche. As Toynbee observes, "Both reason and sense perception are uncreative. The creative activity of the human psyche is intuitional, and the subconscious is its source."\*

For the Tamils to identify themselves completely with the new and run away from the past is a neurotic condition. In Tamil alone is available the possibility to shatter every narrow range of consciousness in the tension of opposites. Thus Nature and life can return in harmony to create the joyousness which is the essence of existence and which can never be invoked through modern public school and university education.

\* Choose Life—Arther Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda — a dialogue. Page 32. (Oxford University Press)



## CHAPTER VI

# Tamil Music or Isai

If music forms the base of Tamil and has been written into its concept as the language of self-realisation, then it is necessary to find the meaning of music as conveyed in Tamil. *Isai* enjoys the status given in Tamil alone of co-equality with *gnosis* or *gnana*, meaning thereby the 'way of liberation'. Thus the Primordial Sound or *aharam* becomes Siva Himself. He takes on meaning as the Manifestor of the letters of the alphabet in Tamil. The musical notes belong to the all-pervading *sruthi* in which the 'life' or *uyir* letters have their being. In Saiva metaphysics the musical notes are *stula* (gross), *Suksma* (subtle) and *para* (transcendent).

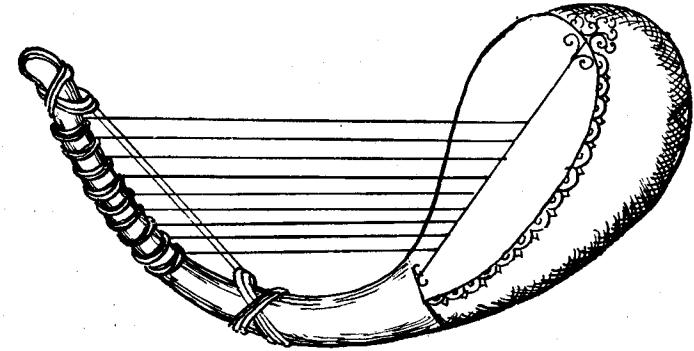
Prof. Chandra Pandey in his "Comparative Aesthetics" speaks of the metaphysical base of musical notes which is the Saiva concept. The same is applied to the birth of the Tamil language where Siva, presiding over the First Sangam became manifestor of the letters of the alphabet in which life (*uyir*) takes embodiment as *uyir-mei*. An ancient work, namely the commentary to the Iraiyanār Ahapporul, makes mention of this Sangam held at South Madurai, the original capital of the Pāndyās. This Sangam comprised 549 celebrities of the divine order including *Muruhan* and Ahattianār (Agastya). Historians attempting to read profanity into this sacred history have failed to realise the unique and distinctive character of the Tamil language as being the only vehicle for metaphysical truth more especially in combination with music. The whole of its development into the world's most beautiful poetry set to music giving evidence of the wonders in it of self-realisation, is sufficient proof that Siva alone could have guided its birth and development.

(\*) Page 562 "Comparative Aesthetics" Vol. I by Prof. Chandra Pandey

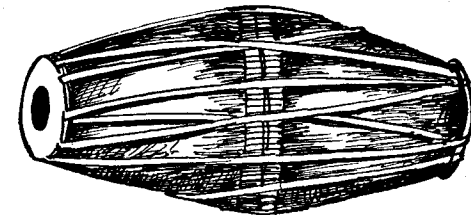
That the language produced the mightiest men—seers, poets, musicians, an exalted kingly order and dancers—is sufficient evidence of the tremendous power behind the language. Prof. Pandey also observes, “The philosophy of music is connected with the ultimate source of sound. According to the Siddhanta Saiva dualism, the ultimate source of all sounds is *Bindu*, which is also *Para-Nāda* to distinguish it from *Nāda* which evolves out of it.” (P. 576 *ibid*). The significant fact is that Tamil is inextricably tied with music and all Tamil was written as poetry designed thereby to be sung.

The Western growth in music by comparison is a latter day one and the Christian influence gave a religious turn in what is known as the Gregorian chant. Even so the earliest Christians were not impelled by music which still remained undeveloped in forms called ballads. These Christians perhaps relied upon Eastern hymnology because they did not feel the urge for artistic song. As James J. Wilhelm points out in his “*Medieval Song*”, When Christians did first try their hands at literary creativity, they tried to embellish the simple prose of the Latin Vulgate Bible or St. Jerome’s translation by writing narratives based on biblical themes, but expressed in a Latin imitative of Virgil or other great classical writers. At last in St. Ambrose the Catholic Church found its first great hymnologist...Ambrose composed his songs in order to bolster the spirits of his anxious, beleaguered followers.”—(St. Ambrose—ca 340 to 397)—was Bishop of Milan and father of Catholic hymnology).

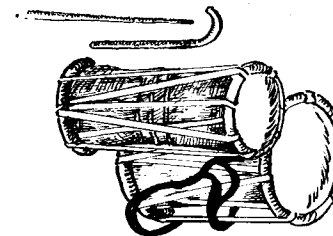
On the other hand the music of Tamil grew simultaneously with the language enabling the latter to hold its own as musical poetry. Both the Tamil language and music belonged to initiatic teaching which has unfortunately yielded way under pressure of the ‘modern’ outlook which is entirely profane. Guénon gives the cogent reason why “political preoccupations” wherever they have been introduced into any Eastern country, are prejudicial to the knowledge of traditional truths”. (P. 104 “The Reign of Quantity”). Without music the poetry would have died in arid and dead expressions. Siva represented the



SEERIYARZL - A pre—historic harp, from an Indus Valley seal.



THANNUMAI - A type of drum common in folk music and dance in Tamil Nadu.



PAMBAI - Includes both VENGALA (brassy) PAMBAI and VEERU VANAM (made of wood). A folk musical instrument both of Tamil Nadu and Andhra.

Primordial Sound or *aharam* and it was from this source the letters of the Tamil alphabet manifested expressing the principle that life and body have an associated and conjoint interest to produce music. *Bindu* is the cause of articulate sound and in the *Sada Siva Tatva* is included both *nada* and *bindu*.

This is different from the Aryan outlook in which Manu considers dance, song and instrumental music as vices, though pleasant at the beginning. Thus it was that student, householder and king shunned dance, song and music. Manu even forbade the 'twice-born', meaning the Brahmin, from taking food offered by an actor. It was Yājñavalkya who defended the fine arts in his *Smṛti* against the attack of Manu. Thus it was Bharata in his *natya veda* or *sāstra* enunciated the need for a fifth veda and called for freedom from the authority of Manu. At the very beginning of the *Natya Sastra*, Bharata pays obeisance to Siva for originating the Dance and Brahma for originating the drama—the Dance was that of *gnosis* and the drama was that of creation or existence. *Natya Sastra* was also known as *Sadasiva Bharata*.

According to *Ahanā-nooru* (331,74) the Tamil musical instrument, the *veenai* belonging to Saraswathi was used by wandering bards called *Panar* while the cowherds known as *Kovalar* played the flute. Also *mulavu*, *tondagapparai* and *kinai* were used as percussion instruments. This shows the extent of influence music had on the common people in their avocations giving them inward realisation and relief from boredom.

The *yazl*, flute and drum find an important place in *Silapp-athikaram* where the courtesan Mathavi symbolises the highest development where dance became integrated with music to give the former the needed self-expression. Music was stored in the seven notes of the octave which had astronomical relevance to the zodiac with twelve signs standing for the twelve semi-tones in the octave. Prof. S. Ramanathan has already dealt with this in his contribution to the "Cultural Heritage" series.

The growth of *Pun Isai* so closely associated with the main body of Tamil metaphysical poetry was the concern of royalty as such, meaning thereby that the Chera, Chola, Pandiya rulers were infused with the living tradition of the Tamils. The Temple represented the simultaneous development of Thiru-murais and the task was carried out by disciplined and self-realised teachers called *Othuvar-moorthis*. It was through the latter that Tamil grew into a great oral tradition with temples becoming sacred simultaneously with *thevaram* and *thiruvasaham* on the lips of almost everyone, thus giving vent to the entire people's affective energies. The desires of the animal sphere were obliterated so that the social order developed a marvellous rhythm and coherence. Nature and culture are necessities and they exist in man and tradition ensured that fools do not enter the arena. The maturity of Tamil growth through music was that people were able to pass into the meridian of life whilst all the time creating culture. That expressed the way where living matter becomes a transformer of energy. On the other hand, the trends arising out of modern influences to allow industrial techniques to overrun the religious and cultural outlook and transformation has deprived the vast majority of the Tamil people of the opportunity to give vent to their affective energies.

The life of Tamil was written into Nature which alone has the primary claim where the culture of the people has to survive. By taking sacred music such as the Thirumurais out of the temples we have desecrated the temples whilst allowing commerce too settle on every tree. This has made culture to live outside the purpose of Nature. In the mindless destruction of old values, the Tamil mind too has been allowed to take to the satisfaction of bodily needs as the only aim and goal of life.

Tamil culture was rooted in the soil and therefore enduring. Any craving for novelty can only push towards anti-culture which is one way to barbarism. It is the life of the individual that makes history; not the unimportant events of world history unfolded by newspaper propaganda or screened over gadgets like the TV. The time has come to arrest any mass degeneration of personality. Any regeneration of the spirit is only possible through the methods known to a primordial tradition such as

Tamil which recognised a majestic growth only as being possible through poetry and music.

There is no need to create visions of a paradise on earth because the modern concept of the masses is really the breeding-ground of psychic epidemics. Tamil as a language was wedded to music and the present trend to dissociate the connection is the way to the death of the language itself which would indeed be a tragedy for the world. Science must be made to serve and not usurp the throne. Tamil reflects creativity and it was the Saiva mystics who brought creativity to life making Saivism in turn a living religion. The language born into music and dance created the image of Siva which in turn calls for rigid discipline where human art becomes subject to law and life itself becomes integrated into the harmony of art.

Unlike anything else in the world, Tamil music represents an unbroken tradition. Despite foreign invasions and their positively harmful influences, the *pan* system still continues and grows into many and variegated ragas unknown even to the Northern system. In Tamil Tradition, ownership of the means of production belonged primarily to the spirit which meant keeping the music within the myriad varieties that the temple represented. That alone enabled growth into maturity for the art making it the right of every man who is endowed to demand that he is given the opportunity to become an artist.

The tragedy behind our industrially organised society is that Tamil music is being pushed out as far away as possible from the great temples that adorn the Tamil territory. The cultivation of music has been left to Sabhas where the vested interest is culture outside the discipline of religion. Where audiences for music could only be bred in temples, they are churned out of the vagaries and corruptions of the mass media such as TV and radio.

The *Thevaram* coming under Thirumurais have a musical form of their own which brought out their true depth of meaning conveyed in self-realisation. The Chola kings were deeply conscious of their abiding worth for it was Anapāyan who retrieved these *Thevārams* from the archives of the Chithamparam temple through

the help of Nambi Andar Nambi, Pandiyan kings too were no less conscious of the living tradition of the Tamils in poetry and music. They belong to a tradition dating from the First Sangam and moving on to the Third with the capitals also moving with the changes of the Sangam locations. Manikkavasahar and Thiruvasham belong to the Pandiyan where one can see the highest in song and poetry that Tamil was able to reach, Thiruvasham remains the finest efflorescence of Tamil in poetry and music giving justification that it was the transcendent Spirit of Siva which made such incomparable and beautiful outpourings possible. It is sufficient evidence that God alone is beautiful and all other beauty is by participation in that divine beauty.

The music of the spirit is written into the poetry of Thiruvasham. It brings out the meaning of the Eternal Law — *Saiva Neethi* — that governs life which represents its plenitude. In that Law alone were the regulative functions of the opposites to be traced which is the most marvellous of all psychological laws. He stepped over the limitations of reason into the finest Tamil poetry and music. He was able to counterbalance the rational by setting the joy of the eternal against the power and delight of the temporal. He brought Siva down to earth and proved His undeniable reality. He created a new cosmos with a compelling force of meaning and proved more forcefully than a modern physicist that nature is not matter only but Spirit as well.

Thiruvasham is the greatest contribution of the Tamil people to humanity because it opens the heart to the music of the spheres. In it are heard the great things that span what is called life. Where scientific understanding may be said to have dehumanised man, Thiruvasham connects man to the cosmos as an immediate living experience than could be visualised through space travel.

G. U. Pope, in his Preface to the translation of Thiruvasham says: "Under some form or other, Caivism is the real religion of the South of India, and of North Ceylon; and the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy has, and *deserves to have*, far more influence than any other. The fifty-one poems which are here edited, translated, and annotated, are recited daily in all the great Saiva



**FESTIVAL OF INDIA" Bharata-natyam dance of Malavika Sarukkai at the Alice Tully Hall Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts, London, 10th December, 1985. (Credit : Avinash Pasricha)**

*"The living presence of the eternal images lent the Tamil people's psyche a dignity" - (See Page 41)*



temples of South India, are on everyone's lips, are as dear to the hearts of vast multitudes of excellent people there, as the Psalms of David are to the Jews and Christians." This comment was written on April 24, 1900 - the date of Pope's 80th birthday. He commenced his Tamil studies in 1837.

The concept of music written into poetry and poetry blooming through the upsurge of profound learning and bhakthi is the peculiar beauty of Tamil which until recent times continued to exist only as poetry. This is because of the abiding concern for Truth wherein it was understood that every truth of a transcendent order necessarily partakes of the inexpressible. Tanjore figured predominantly as the centre for cultivated arts throughout all the vicissitudes of political change. From Chola times and even through Nayak and Mahratta periods, poetry continued to co-exist with music and dancing here. That great tradition yielded way under colonialism and missionary activity no less than through Victorian morality where dancing was concerned. Nevertheless it took new directions under disciplines of the traditional masters such as Nattuvanars and the guru lineage.

Where music went the Carnatic system grew and developed new dimensions through the great composers in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. Carnatic music, as it exists even today as a vast compendium inconceivable in any other musical system in the world, took its colour and structural form right from the time when Tanjore became the headquarters for it. The musical history is writ large in the epic *Silappathihāram* assigned to the 2nd Century A. D. Herein is revealed the theory of the twenty - two *sruthis*, the yarl or sort of harp - like veena as well as musical forms called *vari* and *urukkal*. This epic throws light on the manifold cultural activities of the people in music and dance particularly.

It was music and dance in combination with poetry that gave the Tamil people the consciousness of universal principles. The music was always present as an instrument to weave the cosmic order and to rend the veil of illusion. It produced light without

the shadow and silent realisation without the intrusion of noise. Its greatest problem today is how it can steer out of industrial and commercial activity and pollution. It has the healing power of Nature because it enters the deep wells of being and communicates with life in all its countless forms. Thus *Silappathikāram* says that the music comes from the song and instrumentation of celestials as being known to them - நாரன் வீணை நயந் தெரி பாடலும்.

It was in Tamil that the full gamut of music was known as belonging to an eternal framework and order. From here it was carried as far as Kashmir. Dealing with the "Treatment of Swara Propitiation", Sarangadeva offers his benedictory verse to Lord Siva which shows that it was Saivism which inspired the music of India. Sarangadeva devoted six chapters to music and the last one to dance which shows that, by his time, the musical influence from the South had crystallised throughout India. It was Saivism which contributed to such a culmination as Siva gained ground as an obvious psychic and non - physical fact. While Siva's existence became established psychically, He also became the ineradicable substrate of the human soul. R. K. Shringy and Prem Lata Sharma have commented : "Sangeetha Ratnakara - a composite of *gita*, *vadya* and *nrtta* - is devoted to the delineation of Sangita. Sarngadeva has consolidated and arranged in seven chapters the exposition of the entire Sangita. Six chapters are devoted to music and the last one to dance, Music, independent of drama, had apparantly become crystallised by the time of Sārngadeva."\*

In the very concept of Tamil is music which is why all writing became poetry - (a vast compendium indeed) - without which the intent and purpose of the language as a transforming principle would have been lost. One poet-mystic Suntherar calls Siva the embodiment of music and its fulfilment. \*\* Ano-

\* "Sangita Ratnākara of Sārngadeva" Text and Translation Vol. I by R. K. Shringy and Prem Lata Sharma

\*\* "Thiru-gnāna-Sambanthar - sung at Thiru - Veelzh-Milalzh (First Thiru-murai)

ther, Sampanthar, refers to Him in terms of the seven diatonic notes and the time measures. In the same way that the Divine Being and His concept is outside the human intellect, music too became extended in Tamil over vast regions outside the mind and its limitations. Thus Tamil life became intensified and quickened through music as the vehicle for poetry. That life therefore never allowed the picture of the world to become rigid, nor did it permit the Tamil people to become relics of lower levels of consciousness.

In the creative arts of Tamil was the possibility to step forth into the light. This is altogether different from the attitude today of intellectual arrogance which in turn has produced a hollow positivism and in most cases a sickness which forgets that cognition must have a subject and all knowledge must have a subjective limitation. An illustration of the concept of wholeness through form and substance ; body, mind and spirit ; cognition and realisation ; language, music and rhythm is brought in the mystic's song :

பண்ணும் பதம் ஏழும் பல  
வோசைத் தமிழ் அவையும்  
உண்ணின்ற தோர் சுவையும் உறு  
தாளத் தொலி பலவும்  
மண்ணும் புனல் உயிரும் வரு  
காற்றும் சுடர் மூன்றும்  
விண்ணும் முழுதானான் இடம்  
வீழிம் மிழலையே

"In music and its seven diatonic notes,  
In Tamil, with its inlaid multiform *rāgās*,  
In the melody that underlies and sweetens all  
There in the beat and manifold rhythm of *Tālās*  
In all that is here in *Veezlim-Milzalai*  
Wherein are earth, life, heat,  
The ent'ring wind ; the three  
Sempiternal fires — sun, moon and soul-  
The Heaven and all therein,  
In all - He alone is."

That was outpouring of the divine psyche which is far above the human. Interwoven all the time with music, Tamil

was able to give the Archimedean point outside the mind. It was already known and realised that the mind by itself cannot comprehend its own form of existence.

The tragic events of history which engulfed India after the Greek invasions contributed to the bifurcation of the Indian musical system into Carnatic and Hindustani. The latter got entangled in historical profanities which followed the foreign impact such as exemplified in the life of Akbar's Court musician Tansen in contrast with that of his guru Haridas Swami of Brindhavan. Whilst the latter kept the sacred aspect even whilst assailed by the rabid self-interest and commercial outlook of Moghul rulers which made him a recluse in the forests, the former chose to become Akbar's Court musician whilst embracing Islam.

The Carnatic system even today reflects the spiritual aspects of music which gives expression to a marvellous improvisation in raga and enables the systematic presentation of *kalpana swara prasthara*. The Hindustani system became rigid except for the depth, range as well as capacity for voice modulation. The Hindustani is unable to sustain a fuller growth because the system is based only on ten *Thats* or main ragas with a comparatively fewer number of other ragas taken up for detailed delineation. The Carnatic system is based on an endless variety of ragas called *janya* which spring from the comprehensive 72 *melakarthis* or main ragas.

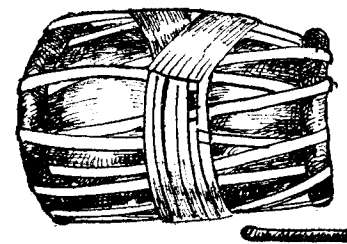
Even more significant are the numerous *tala* structures in the Carnatic system capable of vast range of improvised and rhythmic variations. It has developed a profound and systematic grammar of its own giving the appropriate and different meaning to each musical composition. Nowhere is there such excellent grasp of the intricacies involved in microtonal intervals. It calls for years of intensive and disciplined study to come to know the subtle and adroit manipulations of rhythmic beats and the complex rhythmic patterns of the great exponents of the *mruthangam* and other percussion instruments which even today distinguishes Carnatic music. This music is living evidence



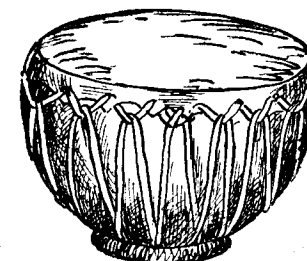
**NAGASWARAM** - One of the most ancient associated with temple worship and civil life. It is now being suffocated by cheap film music, radio orchestra and T.V. pop.



**FLUTE** - புல்லாங்குழல் Associated with Lord Krishna it represents the music of the spheres and of pastoral life. In Carnatic music it is given birth through just a reed but its melody stretches to the infinitely and most deeply felt.



**THAVIL** - The most rhythmic and chaste of percussion instruments and accompaniment for Nagaswaram.



**TABLA** - Peculiar to North Indian music, a sort of two halves of the Dravidian Mridangam. It produces less of the subtleties, variations and nuances of the latter.

of the great heights reached by the Tamil people in the field of culture. The subdued eloquence of the South Indian drums speaks for the tremendous refinement that art can reach if only it becomes religious. Tied with dance both cosmic and human, the understanding of religion through art became for the Tamils a life—time discipline and hence art become vocational. Temple music showed the way to this perfectibility as can be seen with the *Nagaswaram* and *thavil* players which point exclusively to the direction of Tamil culture.

The subdued eloquence of the South Indian drums used today in concert performances shows how much the Tamil mind had reached the peak of discipline in art and how much the Hindustani system has to learn from the South. The single elevating influence of the Tamil tradition on India has been the interfusion of the religious outlook with music and art. Today it is only the Dravidian tradition which holds firmly to music and the allied arts as part of life. As poetry developed it took on the intricacies of the drum and this is seen in the beautiful *Thiruppuzhal* of Arunagiri Nathar. Its greatest beauty is in the complexity of rhythm taking its cue from the complex *talas* of Carnatic music. It is an interfusion of poetry, music, rhythm and mysticism.

The influence of Sanskrit and the attempts at Aryanisation of Tamil culture has resulted in the neglect of *santham* music which may be said to portray the rhythmic play implied in creation and which for the Tamil mind is the source of all movement within the cosmos. Even today when Tamil is conceived of and expressed in the beautiful form of music, there is brought before the mind what can be said to be the culmination to the development of any language. Far from being the vehicle of profane and vulgar understanding, Tamil has become the single living language where profanities could not enter but under modern pressures it has today sacrificed its content and objectivity to serve the ends of a commercial and therefore doomed world. Along with its true and natural development in giving meaning to poetry also came the bifurcation into pure music called the Carnatic which overstepped linguistic frontiers. That development took within its fold other

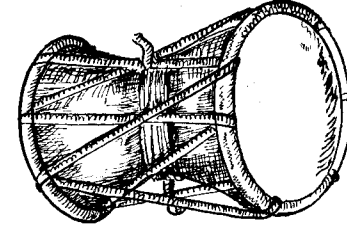
linguistic groups such as Sanskrit, Telugu and Canarese, thus bringing about strong bonds because the languages became only as the scaffolding for the music. It moved from the religious to the scholastic whereby the *kramas* of nearly 5,000 ragas have been brought out. \* The age of the saint composer of music has given way to the scholar which only works within the narrow framework of a time—table. Today music is no longer a vocation for the ends of transcendent experience.

When Sarangadeva offered his benedictory verse to Siva it showed that he either was a Saivite or that he identified music with Saivism. Also he refers to the '*Catuh-sāraṇa*' or four-stringed instrument. The *veena* to which it would have referred was associated with Goddess Sarasvathi and referred to in ancient Tamil texts such as *Silappathikāram*. *Thevaram* and *Thiruvasham* too give authentic reference to the use of this instrument in the exclusively religious sense because it is the only instrument capable of reproducing the minute microtonal intervals. \*\*

The worship of Siva as Natarajah gave priority to music and dance and the entire concept of temple architecture in Tamil Nadu brought this out clearly and forcibly. This Dance representing the cosmic order wherein alone is rhythm and Dance symbolised was interpreted through poetry and architecture, thus forming the whole grammar and dicta of Tamil life. Anne—Marie Gaston rightly says: "Today the worship of Natarajah is almost completely confined to South India...In Orissa, there are numerous sculptural representations of Natarajah dating from 6th to the 8th century...A number of items regularly performed in Bharata Natyam are based on Saivite mythology...

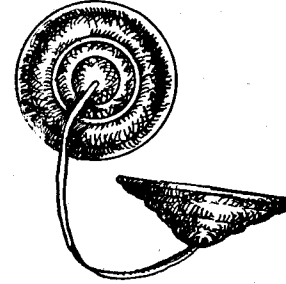
\* "Ragapravaham" — Index to Carnatic Ragas — by Dr. M. N. Dhandapani D. Pattammal.

\*\* 'நாரதன் வீணை நயந்தரிபாடலும்' Silappathikāram  
 'மாசில் வீணையும் மாலை மதியமும்' Appar Thevaram  
 'மிக நல்ல வீணைதடவி' 'Sampanthar thevaram  
 'இன்னிசை வீணையர் யாழினர் ஒருபாடி' Thiruvasham

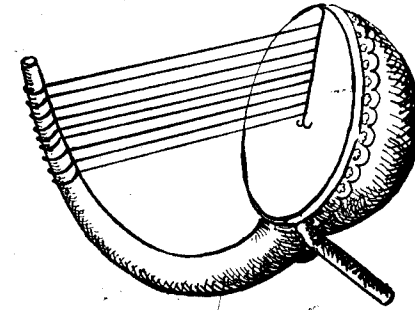


UDUKKAI :- One of the most ancient associated with Siva worship where, in the Dance of Destruction or Involution, Siva is represented in the crematorium where "the souls of His lovers are laid waste and desolate."

There is a peculiar rhythm when the players emerge out of the crematoria before the sun rises in the horizon. The rhythm is vigorous and powerful when played on this drum.



CYMBAL - Indispensable as time measure for the Nagaswaram performance with all its intricacies of TALA and microtonal inflexions.



An ancient SAPTA TANTRI VEENA: from a sculpture.

The children of dancing *devadasis* formed the artistic community of singers, dancers and musicians. It was and is through these repositories of an oral tradition that we understand how to perform gestures and follow the instructions enumerated in the texts."\*

The great ancient work *Silappathihāram* refers to the rich musical heritage of the Tamils and the royal patronage given to music and art. The kingdoms of Chera, Chola and Pandya were proverbially famous for patronage of music and dance because these gave meaning to people's lives. These gave the adequate symbolism because, without such symbolism, the whole personality could not bloom into the natural way marked out by evolution. Music and dance were able to elevate the people's levels of reference from the mere provincial to the universal. Herein also was the possibility of the reference of all particulars to unifying principles.

We have more often seen that modern education and disciplines steer men into provincial and sectarian levels of thought and action due mainly to ignoring the fact that man is also a spiritual and psycho-physical being. The materialist prejudice of today could also be ingrained and thoughtless caused by materialism itself. The consequences of such prejudices have been no doubt depressing because the modern world suffers from the visible symptoms of bigotry, superficiality and thoughtless scientific sectarianism. The art of government practised by the traditional monarchies of Tamil land did not allow the people to be lost in the isolation of consciousness as well as in its errors and sufferings.

The distinguishing character of Tamil in the way it was written and projected in tradition was that the intellect did not become imprisoned in itself because it had already sacrificed, and that willingly, its supremacy by acknowledging the value

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\* Page 8, "Siva in Dance, Myth and Iconography" by Anne—Marie Gaston

of other aims. Thus the language was able to escape the thousand vulgarities of which the human entity is made. The whole of the language was musical because the peak of development was only possible that way and it is to the uniqueness of the Tamil development that one has to point that no other language of the world has thus been able to move out of profanity into the sacred in which alone lies music. The correlation with dance was the final and majestic fulfilment because it led to the Cosmic Dance of Siva.

## CHAPTER VII

# Dance Culture in Tamil

Poetry (*Iyal*), music (*Isai*) and dance (*Nāṭakam*) make the combined strength of Tamil in what is called *Muththamizl*. This was possible only due to the essentially religious development of thought in Tamil which was able to traverse many unknown regions of the psychic consciousness. While Tamil was able to understand the galactic universe in its true meaning there was realisation of the Dance within it of which the human element was considered a participant. That understanding accepted the divinity in man.

In contrast the modern world with its utterly profane concern with science has reached the point of turning the world into an inferno with preparations for star wars threatening the whole galaxy. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the 50,000 nuclear warheads already accumulated have a total yield of more than a million times the Hiroshima bomb. The Tamil on the other hand developed a cosmic consciousness which focussed the world into a single pattern of rhythmic dance for which the Creator was made the supreme exemplar. The Dance is enacted not merely in the universe, but in the very hearts of men thus making creation itself meaningful and justifiable.

Siva as Natarajah found place in Tamil land, though the worship of Siva was known throughout India. That was because the Tamil mind represented the heart-beat of India—nay of the world in its relationship with the universe. The Dance of Siva became truly the dance of Bharata. It was the Dance of Gnosis - that of nature and enlightenment - enacted all the time where love is that of the divine order and no trace of the profanity is left.

Today in Bharata Natyam, the dance is the most expressive, with a discipline which extends beyond all that goes with other modern forms of dance. As Ragini Devi comments in "Dance Dialects of India", "Bharata Natyam has become one of the world's art forms, if not the greatest, in terms of discipline and unity with ideas of cosmic evolution and involution as well as poetic grace. No dance in the world conveys the 120 fundamental dance motifs set to feet articulation, gestures, and rendering of symbols through stylised movements of the body. There is equipoise and stillness in all the movements as near as can be to the Cosmic Dance of Shiva."

In the architecture of the temple as it was with the life of the people, dance became an integral part and it was carried across into the mind through a disciplined education. At the peak of poetry which Tamil reached the inevitability of this growth became natural. The *āgama sāstrās* of South India had the rules for making temple images and the visual performance of dance became a sacred rite in the great temples such as Chithamparam and Thiruvaiyar. A *thevāram* of Sambanthar depicts beautifully the dance of the maidens round the Thiruvaiyar temple - their circum-ambulations to the accompaniment of music, drums and cymbals - which made the monkeys around run up trees through fear that a rain - storm was ahead.\* Incidentally both temples today suffer from neglect due to the withdrawal therefrom of the dance of *thevathāsīs* and the musical renderings of Thirumurais by Othuvār - moorthis. The worshippers at temples too lack the needed education and discipline to make the culture of the Tamils radiate from the temples. Concert halls and *Sabhas*, following the Western examples, confine art and culture to select circles whilst withdrawing altogether the disciplines that come only through the religious impulse. This in turn calls for the rigid disciplines of education associated with the Tamil tradition.

The empty Brahmanical rituals have in addition led to the divorce of religion from culture leading as at present to commercial

\* 2ம் திருமுறை — திருவையாறு பதிகம்

"புலனைந்தும் பொறிகலங்கி....."



Miss. Subhadra Sundharalingam of Sri Lanka gives an interpretation of a theme which connects the human with the Divine in a combination of music, thematic posture and rhythm. She learnt Bharata Natyam both in Sri Lanka and India and has given performances in India and London.



activity in and around all the leading temples. The multitudinous small ones that creep up in all places including pavements of the big cities reveal the extent of the degeneracy that has set in. The invasion of Western - based education has helped to create only an industrial and commercial - based society which in turn has created the needed vacuum for alien cultural values to creep in. The vendors of cheap commercial ware who form part of Western cultures have insidiously crept into the sacred areas of the temples as they have in the hearts of modern men.

The *Thevathasis* were the true votaries of what was the divine in man and they carried the cosmic order into a relative world. Theirs was a disciplined life from childhood from when they were taught all that was strictly traditional in music and dance, the rites even of temples as well as classical literature in Tamil, Sanskrit and Telugu. Seven years of disciplined education qualified them for the *Gajjai Puja* where the initiatory sacred ankle bells were worn for the first time.

It has been recorded by Abbe Dubois, who was a Christian missionary working in South India in the 19th Century, that *devadasis* accompanied the king or distinguished visitor when they visited a temple. Here the temple ritual was modelled on Court ritual because the king represented the supremacy of divine justice over the temporal. It is, in similar manner, recorded of King Jalanka of Kashmir that "a hundred out of his seraglio who had risen to dance (in honour of the god) at the time fixed for dancing and singing he gave out of joy to Jyetharudra (Siva).<sup>\*</sup> The *devadasis*, it has been stated, "were in, general, far more educated than married women, and formed the chief magnet of Hindu society."<sup>\*\*</sup>

More important was the role of dancing girls in giving meaning and a living expression to *Thevara Isai*. This was reported as recently as 1920 in the Rameswaram Temple. Also women

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<sup>\*</sup> Kalhana, Rajatarangini, translation Stein M. A, Vol. I, I, 151 ; Page 28.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Page 8, "Landmarks in the History of Tamilnad" — K. K. Pillai — University of Madras.

danced till ripe old age as was the case with Kamakshi (1810-90). She danced till she was 75.

Dance and music became interwoven on account of the tradition of deep devotion (*bhakti*) in Tamil. Great mystic-poets such as Appar and Manikkavasahar had a whole and affirmative understanding of divinity as it surged from the depths of their psychic nature. Dance meant the Still Point where out of the opposition which causes movement, there was created a new birth. It was these mystics who brought creativity into religion. Nearly the whole of the dance symbolism was carried into the temple of which the peak was reflected in Thillai or Chithamparam.

In the 19th century too almost every temple had eight to twelve *devadasis* attached to them and two of the large temples of Kanchipuram had about 100 such dancers attached to them. This was related by F. Buchanon in his narrative, "Journey from Madras through Mysore, Kanara and Malabar" (Vol. I, Page 12). The dance so overtook the imagination that it was represented on rocks as rhythmical dance poses or *karnās*. Thillai became the culminating point where dance was able to liberate because it evoked the beauty and creative power of the psyche. It brought the world inside and outside man into a transcendental background so that Thillai became the only Reality. This is beautifully expressed in the description of Sezhiār of how the mystic-poet Suntherar stood lost in self—forgetfulness before the image of the Great Cosmic Dancer of Thillai: (The translation here cannot capture the poetry interfused with music and therefore must necessarily suffer)

"Overflowing he stood there in endless delight,  
His senses five lost in that One Vision ;  
His four instruments of perception  
Centred only in the mind, his three *gunās*  
In pure state of *Satva* he stood.  
His joy constant and unchanged  
Interfused with that Supreme Bliss—  
That Dance before him he mingled  
In unending delight, that Dance of Him



One of the MUDRAS common to BHARATA NATYAM which is one of the most expressive and significant aspects of the dance. This is seen even today in the Siva temple at Chithamparam where subtle dance figures adorn the portals and corridors (see page 43). The above is Miss. Subhadra Sundharalingam of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

The language of gesture is most communicated through the hands of which the total number is twenty-eight. In Natya Sastra it is twenty-four.

In braided locks—that Dance its own  
In splendour, incomparable,"\*

The bhakthi element took meaning through understanding of the cosmic Dance and a vast volume of the most beautiful poetry in Tamil came into being because of this understanding. Bharatha Nātyam was the artistic way towards self—realisation. It brought before everyone's mind the divine plan to make beauty co—equal with God since God alone is beautiful and all other beauty is by participation. It also gave meaning to the dance of matter as against the Dance of Gnosis as Manikkavasahar conveys in Thiruvāsaham.\*\*

Here a proper distinction is drawn between the dance of matter which modern science had found in the movement of the minutest particles and atoms and the Dance of *Gnana* or *Gnosis* which distinguishes matter from the reality of Siva. It is in the latter understanding that Bharata Nātyam was originated in *Nātya Sastra* of Bharata as coming from Siva. To give meaning to the concept of divine origin that Maheswara was the Originator of dance and as Nataraja he was the greatest Dancer, the concept takes embodiment in the greatest temple for Dance at Chithamparam.

In this connection Prof. Chandra Pandey observes, "And, as if it were, in recognition of Him as the Originator of Dance, the

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- \* ஐந்து பேரறியும் கண்களே கொள்ள  
அளப்பருங் கரணங்கள் நான்கும்  
சிந்தையே யாகக் குணமொரு மூன்றும்  
திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே யாக  
இந்து வாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த  
எல்லையில் தனிப்பெருங் கூத்தின்  
வந்த பேரின்ப வெள்ளத்துள் திளைத்து  
மாறிலா மகிழ்ச்சியின் மலர்ந்தார்.

- \*\* ஊனை நாடகம் ஆடுவித்தவா  
உருகிநான் உணைப்பருக வைத்தவா  
ஞானநாடகம் ஆடுவித்தவா  
நைய வையகத் துடையவிச்சையே

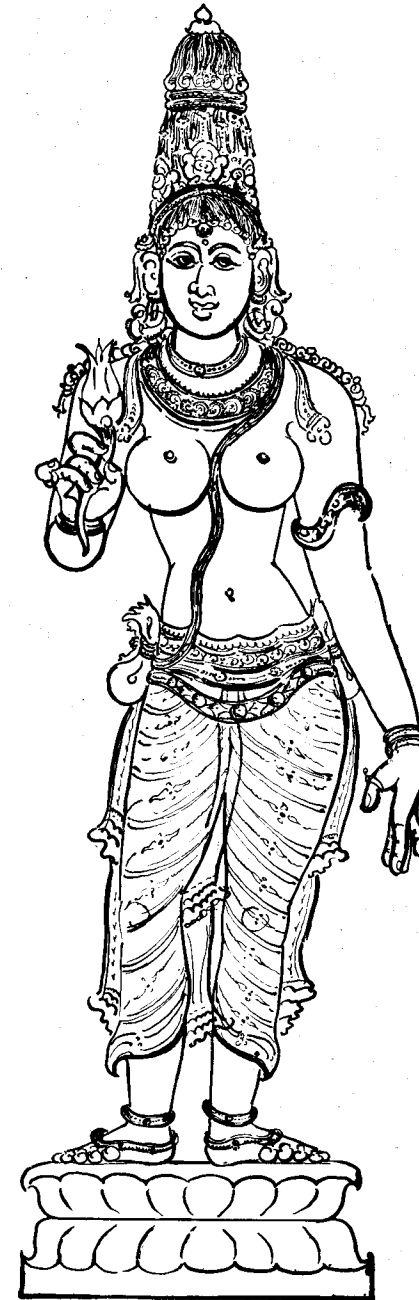
various rhythmical dance poses (*Karanās*) even today are cut on rocks with the appropriate verses from the *Nāṭya Sāstra* of Bharata inscribed under each posture in the compartments of the eastern and western Gopurams of the temple. Similarly Vishnu is recognised to be the originator of the different forms of action (*vṛtti*) which drama presents.\*

*Nāṭya Sastra* is also known as *Sadasiva Bharata* attributed only to Siva and is different from anything found at the empirical level. Abhinavagupta says, "It is neither an imitation, reflection or pictorial representation of things of the empirical world; nor is it something in which similarity with them is recognised. It is different from what is expressed in superimposition, determinate cognition, unrestrained imagination and dream as also from the products of magic or sleight-of-hand. It is essentially *rasa*, the aesthetic configuration which consists of situation, mimetic changes, transient emotions and basic emotions so harmoniously mixed that the configuration presents to the aesthetic something very different from mere juxtaposition of the said contents. It can be experienced, not through any means of empirical knowledge but through aesthetic susceptibility only."

Music and dance, having been written right into the concept of the Tamil language, became the whole life of the Tamil people, though history, which can only give a weak profile of the primordial civilisations, speaks of *Pānar* and *Viraliyar* as the old representatives of music and dance.

Subsequent efforts of historians to recapture the efflorescence of culture in Tamil has given way to a very profane view of the development. That besides, the culture underlying Tamil was intervoven into a living expression and not destined to decay or death through the sands of time. Music and dance formed part of the very life of the Tamil people expressed through their understanding of linguistics. The function of succeeding rulers—Chera, Chola or Pandya—was to preserve the inter-connectedness of the musico-linguistic dance tradition.

UMA DEVI



This sculptured figure of UMA represents STANA or composture prior to movement.

The flower in hand is symbolic of an offering and the pose in itself reveals serenity, poise and adoration prior to the actual progress into the movement called dance. Here the eyes are narrowed at the corners presenting charm, cheer and love. The eyebrows are knitted. All these are characteristic of the pose called LALITA in classical Indian dancing.

\* "Comparative Aesthetics" Vol. I by Prof. K. C. Pandey

On account of this, architecture and sculpture too reached their peak of development under the Cholas.

Tamil history is unique in that it has to remain outside profane levels of reference. That is because the word conveyed no meaning of race nor was it a concept for the symbiosis of a group of human beings. Tamil meant the substance which could be called the sole and natural carrier of life throughout nature and therefore relates mainly to the individual as the carrier of such life. Hence in Tamil there was no suffocation for the single individual which is the profanity of modern history. Thus in it was reflected the universality of the collective psyche which excluded all individual differences. In the steady flow of life was all the time seen the union of opposites and there was no need of history to follow up any conflicts within or without.

The attempt to write Tamil history at the profane level in order to keep in tune with the Western outlook has cost Tamil dear because that had naturally failed to take note of what is represented by 'Tamil' which is eternally the same amid the floods of change. The concept of dance for example did not have relationship to the profanity of things. To make the Dance eternal it was carved in the most sacred places—the temples. It lived in the tradition because it belonged to eternity, just as music was. It was the *Now* that stays outside the movement of time and because time is made in the moment that passes away—"nunc fluens facit tempus *nunc stans* facit aeternitatem." \*

The dance became the ever—recurring timeless moment which Manikkavāsahar called the Dance of Gnosis (*Gnāna Nādaḥam*). Hence it was that Ananda Coomaraswamy said that the Dravidians represented universal India being bearers of a continuity extending from the stone age. They took dance and music together to create the rhythmic universe. They invented and preserved as the divine instrument the harp or *vāzhl* right

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\* Boethius De Consol. 5.6)

from the time of Kumarikandam. In this kāndam or continent grew Tamil music, dance and drama which were the specialised functions of distinct classes called *pānar*, *kuthar*, *porunar* and *kodiyar*.

X.S. Thaninayagam, after great deal of study and research, observed: "In the architecture of Champa and Cambodia, in the sculptures of the museum of Tourane, in the Saiva Siththantha system of religion once followed in Indonesia and Indo-China, in the bronzes of Siam, may be seen the traces of Tamil influence. The Bharata Natyam has affinities with the dances of Cambodia and Bali; the Tamil sacred verses are recited by the court Brahmins of Thailand and during the coronation of the kings, certain tribes in Sumatra go under Tamil names of Chera, Chola, Pandiya, Pallava, and the Temple of Dieng plateau, of Po-Nagar of Mison (Vietnam)" \*\* The sacred verses of Thailand referred to above are from Thiruvasaham - namely "*Namasivāya Pāthikam*".

Recent research has proved that even Lemurian Tamils were highly advanced in music and dance as they had been in arithmetic and astronomy. Further theories prevail that Tamil flourished as the primary classical language of the world. Since the culture underlying Tamil created order and beauty, the influence became all-pervasive. It is unlike cultures that parade as modern or 'pop' which are destined to collapse, as they are already collapsing, under pressure of the disorderly appetites they have aroused in the masses. Tamil spread because of its all-pervasive and spiritually developed culture unlike all those that parade as modern which only unloose the brute forces of matter. In the modern the individual sinks to the level of a mere function because in that is the only possibility of livelihood representing a collective value.

In dance is differentiation of function within a cosmic concept. The cosmos and the Lord of Dance are brought into focus thus bringing the unifying principles together. In Bharata

Gnana - Sambanthar



*The great child mystic who gave life to temples in rhapsodies of song and dance peculiar to the Tamil expression.*

*(With grateful acknowledgement to the Director of Museums, Madras, N. Harinarayana)*

\* Page 9, "Tamil Culture—its past, its Present, its Future with Special Reference to Ceylon"

Natyam there is completeness because it swings to a one-sided orientation without cleavage of the inner personality or being. In the rhythm and movement there is the capacity to transcend which is the essential quality of the psyche. That provides a sort of deliverance to the dancer from wasting and enslaved functions. Dance here helps to restore the harmonious life because it functions to fulfil the demands of truth wherein alone Siva plays His part.

To preserve freedom in dance there has to be knowledge of what is to be delivered from the conflict of opposites. At the Still Point of the Dance of Siva is the complete reconciliation of all opposites. That is the *Saiva Neethi* or Divine Law of which the dancer becomes conscious if the dance is to achieve its goal and fulfilment.

The dance vocation created the *Theva-Thisis*. Their vocation became so supreme as to find a place in the sacred Thirumurais. They sanctified the temples with their calling in the process making the images and representations on granite speak. These images were never allowed to be turned into stone. The Tamil tradition, due to its very age and maturity, knew that vocation acts like a law of God from which there is no escape. Thus the mystic Gnana-Sampanthar sings at the sacred shrine of Thiruvai-yaru which he visited and where he saw the damsels dance :

"O thou sacred Thiruvaiyaru where to beat of '*them*'—'*Tham*,'  
That rhythm and music set to raga *gāndhāra* the damsels sing :  
Their *arangetram* dance indeed those youthful maidens  
Round the temple perimeter perform.  
'Tis the temple too where the Lord,  
King and Counsellor to celestials  
And to those on earth, enters —  
His braided locks adorned with sweet—smelling  
Kondrai flowers." \*\*

A living presence is awakened in this music which gives the true meaning of dance as understood in Tamil. Siva becomes a

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\*\* See Page 92 for Text of Tamil original.

Living Presence beyond our every day human world of profanity—something more purposeful than electrons. The great dance tradition even of today shows that there is life and purpose in Tamil and no new generation can ever pass beyond the climax reached in the past.

Death is born when the secret hour of life's midday, the parabola, is reversed. Though external influences have played havoc with Tamil culture and caused the death of the spirit in temples, dance and music remain, though shorn of their proper application and meaning, because the Tamil language itself embraces their actuality, Tamil has a self all its own which is the deposit and totality of all past life. There can be no death for the language and its culture so long as the *Thirumurais* remain and their meanings understood. For this, changes have to begin in socio-economic thinking and this is being analysed in a separate chapter in this book. The mercenary outlook of today was seen clearly by Meister Eckhart when he said: 'Some people want to see God with their eyes as they see a cow and love Him as they love a cow—for the milk and cheese and profit it brings them'. Given time Tamil will return to its own which will be its rebirth. Rebirth, as Jung says, "is an affirmation that must be counted among the primordial affirmations of mankind."\*

The death-knell of temple dance came after the law passed in 1930 called the Anti-Nauch Bill. The invasion of Western values which made the Tamil an *alien* being outside man and Nature, the use of sex as an end in itself — (again a predominant influence from the West) —, the denigration of the feminine personality held so sacred in Tamil tradition, all contributed to Bharatha Natyam becoming a Nauch dance. The truth is that the Tamil concept in dance became alienated from religion the moment money transformed values and made even great artistes exiled and dehumanised beings. Money, the intermediary of exchange, became alien and made life itself invariably alienated. That caused poverty for Tamil culture because the intermediary took the

\* Page 207 "Concerning Re-birth." In CW 9 Part I "The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious."

the place of God and threw Saivism overboard. Money became the 'universal whore'.

What is being attempted now to bring dance back to the temple where it belongs is commendable. In February 1985 took place what is called the *Natyanjali* at Chitamparam Temple which had been intended to "create to a socio-religious cultural awareness in the rural areas and take classical dance back to where it once belonged, thus bridging the gap between classical dancers and the common man", according to a contemporary observer.\* It is vital and even more important that the *Thirumurais* become the life of temples and not the poojas merely whilst also becoming a compulsory part of school education. The impoverishment and stagnation which has invaded the psyche of the Tamil man has to be arrested and obliterated. Truth is not something external to the human personality and thus it invokes a programme. This in turn calls for the formulation and execution of a strong-willed programme of action. Tamil in music, dance and literature should not be allowed to be insulated from the springs of life.

The strength of Tamil culture is in its vitality which calls for growth, not stagnation. In the life that is Tamil there is a fundamental law for the being. In this is a stronghold and reality, both secure and enduring, which can reanimate the forms that exist with the vision of what is to be.

\* Padma Subramaniam — "Indian Express" of March 2, 1985

\*\* வேந்தாகி விண்ணவர்க்கும் மண்ணவர்க்கும் நெறிகாட்டும்  
விகிர் தனாகிப்  
பூந்தாம நறுங்கொன்றை சடைக்கணிந்த புண்ணியனார்  
நண்ணும் கோயில்  
காந்தார மிசையமைத்துக் காரிகையார் பண்பாடக்  
கவிஞர் வீதித்  
தேந்தாமென்றரங்கேறிச் சேயிழையார்  
நடமாடும் திருவையாறே (2ம் திருமுறை)



## CHAPTER VIII

## Relevance Today of Tamil Social and Economic Concepts

The social system of the Tamils before the capitalist system took root did not exclude the individual being and his right to self-expression. The concept of *Aram* as an all-embracing divine principle gave the human identity the greatest sanctity. Sangam literature gives evidence nowhere of the evils associated with greed and self-interest. To put it broadly, money played hardly a decisive part in the lives of the Tamil people before the advent of British rule. The Sethu coin for example issued by the kingdom of Jaffna had only a symbolic spiritual value giving significance to the control that the Jaffna kingdom had over Rameswaram.\* In the monarchical tradition associated with Chera, Chola and Pandya rule there was collective responsibility for social justice than any concern with private property. In fact the latter never existed as the aim and driving force of life.

The social systems imposed on India by the West are based on the concept of politics and economics as being tied together. Indian economy was made into a politically conceived economy which would not easily abjure the forces that create the lust for gain. This lust merely produced a continuing war between the seekers after gain thus destroying the very basis of Tamil life resting on the highest spiritual and metaphysical principle, namely *Aram*.

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\* "Ancient Jaffna" by Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam :

Page 293 — "The kings who reigned at Jaffna up to the 17th Century until the kingdom fell ultimately, in 1618 AD, into the hands of the Portuguese, claimed that they were descended from two Brahman kings who were appointed by Rama himself, after his conquest of Ceylon and the establishment of the Rameswaram

In the sense in which modern industrial - commercial life has been accepted as a de facto and necessary way of improving economic and social conditions, it has simultaneously only created ideal conditions for the multiplication of desire and greed.\* This has called for the formulation of monetary policies confined only to sophisticated econometric models. The well-known economist Keynes has already cautioned about this development. He says, "Too large a proportion of 'mathematical' economics are merely concoctions, as imprecise as the initial assumptions they rest on, which allow the author to lose sight of the complications and interdependencies of the real world in a maze of pretentious and unhelpful symbols".

To lose sight of the real world and create a so - called industrially - based 'democratic' world has already produced a serious ill - balance. The result was that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had, as first step in office, to announce a war on black money—an evil that could not be conquered by other means. Under - invoicing, over-invoicing, numbered accounts, kick backs, commissions on contracts, all connected with trade, had led to other evils such as tax evasion. It had been noted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that parallel economy in India accounted for 50 percent of the Gross National Product (G. N. P.).

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temple to rule over the North District of Ceylon including Rameswaram. It is also said that Rama gave them the title of Arya kings and granted to them the parasol, the single conch, the bull standard and the emblem of Setu."

Page 299 — The fact that they called themselves 'Sethukavalan' or 'Sethukavalavan' clearly proves their dominion over Rameswaram. The Sethupathis became the chiefs of Ramnad including Rameswaram during the reign of Muthu Krishnappa Naik of Madura .....

Page 300 — "The fact that the kings of Jaffna used the legend 'Setu' as their emblem can be seen from the Kotagama inscription where it is used as an invocation in place of 'Svasti Sri,' found in the Chola and the Sinhala inscriptions, and from the coins used by them."

That was a serious indictment of the economic and political systems India had inherited from the West.

By contrast, Tamil culture precluded any excessive involvement in economics. In fact the involvement was nowhere seen to be of deep or abiding interest and it was mainly because the Tamil cultural and religious growth was altogether independent of economics. Where the fundamental basis of economic thinking developed the laws of supply and demand, the Tamil evolution was away from the banalities of these pulls. Where modern civilisation keeps on increasing the quantum of artificial needs, Tamil tradition and culture in their very true and deep foundations rejected such needs mainly because of their tendency to multiply desire regardless of necessities.

Where one can visibly see modern civilisation going towards its catastrophic end, its collapse has to be solely under the pressure of disorderly appetites aroused in the masses. Those who unloose the brute forces of matter must necessarily perish. Also symptoms are seen of strife and division in all directions unless there is going to emerge, and that soon, a reversal of values. This reversal will have to be out of the field of economics into the spiritual dynamism of *Aram*.

The Tamil life, having forsaken tradition and adopted all the aberrations of the modern world, will only become party to the general spreading of disorder. That would be repugnant to the whole Tamil way of life based on the three doctrinal and cardinal principles — *aram*, *porul* and *inpam*.

The Western encroachment even today is in the material sphere. Even the urge to proselytise is to secure the control of the resources of other countries heedless no doubt of the rich spiritual inheritance of valuable and intrinsic cultures such as Tamil. Tamil culture, though it achieved great and unparalleled strength in agricultural, artistic and cultural development, precluded excessive involvement in economics as an end in itself. The life of Ezla-singan, the great sea-faring merchant who was disciple of Valluvar, provides the type of classic example of the concept of property in wealth.

Even the earliest extant Tamil writing dating to about 1000 B. C. expressed a truth which is only now understood in the concepts of socialism so ably expounded by Karl Marx. Tolkappiam was clear that modern devices such as legal enforcements only give evidence of detraction from transcendental truths written into *Aram*:

பொய்யும் வழுவும் தோன்றிய பின்னர்  
ஐயர் யார்த்தனர் கரணம் என்ப

It was precisely due to the overpowering influence of *Aram* both as a transcendental and inviolable principle guiding life that the Tamil Tradition was able to survive many vicissitudes of fortune and even the pressures of external forces. Valluvar emphasised the imperatives of this principle and its continuity in Tamil life under a single chapter entitled '*Aran Valiyuruththal*'.

Whilst reflecting on the forces which have brought India too within the whirlpool of inconsequent activity caused by the profanities of modern history, it has become necessary to consider what goes on as revolutionary movements in the world and which follow upon Marx's unrelenting exposure of the Western evil called capitalism as a way open even now to understand *Aram*. To Karl Marx it is only "the criminal who produces the whole apparatus of the police and criminal justice, detectives, judges, executioners, juries etc., and all these different professions, which constitute so many categories of the social division of labour, develop diverse abilities of the human spirit, create new needs and new ways of satisfying them".\*

Marx says in his anger what can be taken as a fierce indictment of "the influence of the criminal upon the development of the productive forces". In the same refrain he says, "The criminal produces not only crime but also the criminal law, and even the inevitable text-book in which the professor presents his lectures as a commodity for sale in the market !"

The influence of the West through industry, commerce and laissez-faire has been devastating. It has made the Tamil people

\* "Theorin Uber den mehrwert" pages 385-7 Karl Kautsky's, edition published (1905-10).

'earthy' which is a lamentable imperfection. Any noble well-known tree cannot disown its dark roots. Growth is a two-way movement, both upwards and downwards. To grow one has to stretch out through the past and through culture which only a long past can produce and which at the same time is outside the purpose of Nature. We have today chosen to live by bread alone and have made a business of money-making, social achievement, family life and prosperity. Instead of wanting to forego compulsion and turn to self-development, the Tamils have been busy for many generations in the mindless destruction of old and abiding values. Having wrested all that was valuable in the meaningless flux of nature, they are uncertain about their future so that they have to look all the time to the West for guidance on economics and the art of living.

The transforming life in *Aram* has been destroyed also through politics which in turn has created only mediocrities in every walk of life. Thus the decline is becoming more and more precipitate in all aspects—social, political, economic and cultural,

The economic animals that are being produced have as sole occupation consumption of sorts. As consumption increases, the evil of desire multiplies. Like in metaphysics where every possibility of manifestation has its roots in the corresponding possibility of the unmanifest, so too the artificial stimulation of prosperity has its reverse in the gross presence of poverty and privation.

All efforts to sustain the economy through development of new technologies, sophisticated markets and the like become evil as can be seen. That is because *Aram* is no longer understood, realised and practised. The subject of *Aram* is too vast but, that it was the norm of social and economic life, can be seen as evidence of the great importance attached to it right down the corridors of Tamil history:

அந்நிலை மருங்கின் அறமுதலாகிய  
மும்முதற் பொருட்கும் உரிய என்ப (தொல். 1363)  
சிறப்புடை மரபின் பொருளும் இன்பமும்  
அறத்து வழிப்படு உம் தோற்றம் போல (புற நா. 31)  
அறம் பொருள் இன்ப மென்றும் மூன்றின் (கலித். 151)

ஐம்புலனும்

அழிந்த சிந்தை யந்தணுளர்க்கு அறம் பொருள் இன்பம் வீடு  
மொழிந்த வாயான் (ஞானசம்பந்தர், தேவா. 575)  
அறம் பொருள் இன்பம் வீட்டைதல் நூற்பயனே (நன். 10)

Arichandra Puranam gives the duties of the King which are all enjoined in *Aram*:

தல்லோர் வகுத்த முறையாமறங்கள்  
நாலெட்டி லொன்றும் குறையோம்.

The Western industrial—commercial outlook has only made the Tamil people creatures of time. When they identify themselves with the psycho—physical they are no longer in the path of *Aram* but just creatures of time. They have indeed been made to forget, through that system of modern education, the power in their souls which is untouched by time. They live in an age of chaos and catastrophe and accept as true the modern world's aberrations. Einstein, the greatest scientist of our age felt the despair when he said "The international catastrophe has imposed a heavy burden upon me as an internationalist. In living through this 'great epoch', it is difficult to reconcile oneself to the fact that one belongs to that idiotic, rotten species which boasts of freedom of will. How I wish that some-where there existed an island for those who are wise and of goodwill! In such a place even I should be an ardent patriot!" \*

*Aram* has its laws which are immutable and unchanging. It is like the *Law* which holds the stars together and pulls them towards a central force. In the poetry of the atoms and stars is a sublime rhythm written where the nuclei and nebulae speak the totality of the cosmic order represented in the Dance of Siva. Whilst we are attempting to read the poetry of the atoms and stars, we have even lost sight of immediate perceptions known only through *Aram*,

The inscrutable discipline and order in the entire world of events has been brought to light only in the Tamil tradition. The field of economics and the concept of wealth, the social relations of produc-

\* "Encyclopaedia of Physics", page 407.

tion and the like were not to left any greedy, individualistic and selfish society to deal with. Rather it has to be understood that anarchy in the division of labour and the despotism of the workshop were altogether absent in the Tamil tradition. Thus Marx was able to concede one truth to India despite his colossal ignorance of *Aram*. He was in a position to concede the simplicity in the organisation of production in Asiatic societies. "The structure of the economic elements of society remains untouched by the storm—cloud's of the political sky". Marx observes here further: "Whereas, in a society with capitalist production, anarchy in the social division of labour and despotism in that of the workshop mutually condition one another..... those small and extremely Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day, are based on common ownership of the land, on the association of agriculture and handicraft, and on the unalterable division of labour which serves, whenever a new community is started, as a plan and scheme ready cut and dried". \*

The concept of law on which modern societies are based is different and alien to the Tamil tradition;

“பொருளும் இன்பமும் அறத்து வழிப்படு உம் தோற்றம்”

This gives clear emphasis to the meaning that wealth and love are the mere external appearances of *Aram's* governing principles. By wealth was not meant mere worldly possessions but the things that make for life and experience. In that sense the highest meaning to wealth was given in the Thirumurais. Manikkavaskar sings:

“போற்றின் வாழ்முதலாகிய பொருளே”

Appar joins chorus,

“திருவே என் செல்வமே”

pointing to the springs of wealth in the inner being. On the other hand Karl Marx writing on the “Dynamics of the Revolution”: said, “Proletariat and wealth are antinomies. As such they form a whole. They are two forms of the world of private property.” He continues to castigate the latter in the strongest terms calling it wealth “forced to *maintain* itself and consequently to *maintain*

\* Das Capital (V.A1, pp. 374-6 “V.A. stands for Volksaugab”).

its opposite the proletariat”. Both the possessing class and the proletarian class, he says, express the same human alienation.

When the greatest products of Tamil civilisation abjured wealth in the material sense, they were able to give the proper meaning to what the moderns labour themselves with as wealth. The latter is protected by one form of laws which Marx attacks strongly. He says that “Civil law develops concurrently with private property out of the disintegration of the natural community.”\*

On the other hand the Tamil people in tradition were never allowed chances of disintegration through civil law-propped private property. The call went very strongly for the *Divine Law* சைவ நீதி *Saiva Neethi* which was intended to embrace the whole of humanity:

“மேன்மை கொள் சைவ நீதி விளங்குக உலகமெலாம்”

This was written into the heart of every Saivite. It was development of the universal spirit of love transcending all laws made by man. There was a consciousness of the Guiding Principle which alone knows with what indisputable authority it rules life. Also *Saiva Neethi* reflects that the spirit is not absolute, but something relative. That calls for completion and perfection through life. Social and economic needs were intended to be satisfied up to the point where they did not detract from the needs of the spirit because in the latter only is growth. In such growth alone can the bounds of personality be extended.

Modern economic theories have created sick psyches. This is because the world revealed by the senses is a reflection of one-sidedness and this is particularly so with the Western man as well as with the products of modern education copying from the West. What is needed is that the Tamil people should carry with them their ageless history which they have latterly failed to do because in that history is written the history of mankind.

If private property has been condemned as the product of alienated labour, the Tamil people could not consciously as Saiv-

a Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe (I/5, pp. 52-53).

res allow their knowledge to emerge as part of the present confusion. Shakesphere in his 'Timon of Athens' called gold the "Yellow slave" which will knit and break religions" and

"place thieves,

And give them title, knee, and approbation,  
With Senators on the bench".

Marx in his inimitable way describes the attributes of money as :

1. "The visible diety, the transformation of all human and natural qualities into their opposite, the universal confusion and inversion of things ; it brings incompatibles into fraternity.
2. "It is the universal whore, the universal pander between men and nations".(a)

That should clear the understanding of what Valluvar said in no uncertain terms ;

“அருட்செல்வம் செல்வத்துட் செல்வம் பொருட்செல்வம்  
பூரியார் கண்ணுமுள்”

*Pooriyar* have something to do with that 'Universal whore' Those who depend entirely on money for living and self—assertion can today be castigated as the real whores. In the ordinary sense the whore means a woman dependent on money and not on love. When Valluvar elevated the concept of house-holder to the position of love and trust in society, he made every individual responsible for the economic liberation of man. Hence a deep and abiding love of humanity was called for when one chose to study Valluvar's concept of the இல்வாழ்வான் or householder.

Horace said, "You may pitch Nature out with a fork, yet she will always come back again", (b) In this context Jung correctly observed that the ancient world contained a large slice of nature : "No penal code or moral code, not even the sublimest casuistry, will ever be able to codify and pronounce just judgement upon the confusions, the conflicts of duty and the invisible tragedies of the natural man in collusion with the exigencies of culture" (i)

a Marx-Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 1984.

b Epistola 1, X, 24.

c "Paracelus as a Spiritual Phenomenon" 1942 — C.G. Jung.

By abjuring the path of religion what can be the only path has been left out. The balance of Saivism and social life kept the economic order secure. By permitting the learning and discipline associated with Saivism to shrink, thought too is being emptied of intellectuality and spirituality. Even more have Tamils allowed themselves to be caught in the modern disorder which has its origins entirely in the West. Repudiating traditional and superhuman truth naturally has compelled people to take to the law of the jungle which modern economics is. Economic goals without self-surrender and discipline must necessarily lead to social chaos. The Western way threatens to overrun everything and also to involve the whole world in the whirlpool of inconsequent activity.

Great harm has been done already through dependence on or rather complete subservience to modern economics. That Indian currency in circulation has already surpassed Rs. 24.279.21 crores is staggering. H. Robert Heller, Vice-President of the Bank of America, recently pointed to the growth in world money supply which had risen to an alarming 2.3 trillion U.S. dollars and which, if laid end-to-end in U.S. 100 dollar bills, would stretch to the moon 85 times. People's faith in paper currencies has already begun to decline. On the other hand Keynes observed rightly that gold was "a barbarous relic". The scramble for gold accompanying the declining value of paper currency shows the extent of confusion and self-centredness in people's impulses. There can be no question of social welfare and justice in a world caught in the iniquities of modern economics. In *Aram* alone can the ideals of man in every direction be fulfilled and his growth assured in the spirit. Saivism engendered that spirit in what was once Tamil society.

It is the divorce of religion from life which has created the alienation of man from man in the economic sense. An example of this has been the chaotic developments in Sri Lanka which, in wanting to run away from social responsibilities in the name of sectarian issues which are political, has demonstrated its alienation from tradition.

Any subservience to economics tends to create a bourgeois culture on the one hand and uncultured masses on the other.

This bourgeois culture might even be said to stem from the Universities where everything has been reduced to empirical and factual information. The efforts of modern educators have been subversive of the living spirit in tradition which absorbed the weak and backward into the all-embracing love of *Aram*. Instead of *Aram* has been substituted surplus value and its appropriation by a few.

Where once culture spread and was all-pervasive through consciousness of *aram*, there has emerged the constant use of propaganda through radio and news rags to make the people subserve the interest solely of a degenerate culture. The daily recourse to film and pop music, the mass circulation of the vilest newspapers and magazines in the name of press freedom have made economics the sole corrupting force in Tamil territory. Until and unless radical changes take place irradiating the old impulses of the Tamil heritage, there would necessarily arise the need to relive it. That would be a painful change though necessary to make *aram*, *porul* and *inpam* coequal.

The growth of modern economics has only succeeded in measuring up to the growth of modern science and technology both of which are monstrous and portentous of evil. The modern industrialised State has in its hands the infernal engines of destruction both of man and his boasted achievements. A moment of madness is sufficient to trigger nuclear annihilation so that the question arises how the man entrusted with the control of the 'skills' of science should be constituted. It is the illusion of power coming out of Western growth stretching to scarcely a thousand years. It is a mere one-sided growth which naturally can be called barbarous,

The Tamil mind is the whole of the Indian but with deeper insight. It is different from the Western for which "nothing is in the mind which was not previously in the senses". Tamil growth in music, dance and a variety of disciplines was outside the senses. That is why there is in it immense transfiguration and creativity. As one gets deeply stirred the sense-world fades into a dream. The world is no longer a facade or appearance but a reality enjoyed by the soul solely. In the great creative

arts of poetry, music and dance can be seen the flow of the redeeming water of wisdom - the *aqua doctrinae*, as Origen would call it.

It is "that other pole of the psyche where the world as illusion is abolished", in the inimitable words of Jung in another context.\*

The Tamil people's economic break-down may be traced to nothing less than their cultural, religious and linguistic decline. The thoughtless pursuit of Western concepts and methodologies in almost all things, has shaken Tamil itself out of its roots in poetry and music. It is relevant to quote here an observation of D. R. Hardman on 12th January, 1946, while he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, at the General Meeting of the Middlesex Head Teachers' Association. (Also quoted by T.S. Eliot in his "Notes towards the Definition of Culture" -- page 105):

"The age of industrialisation and democracy has brought to an end most of the great cultural traditions of Europe, and not least that of architecture. In the contemporary world in which the majority were half-educated and many not even a quarter educated, and in which large fortunes and enormous power could be obtained by exploiting ignorance and appetite, there was a vast cultural break-down which stretched from America to Europe and then from Europe to the East." Eliot himself observes in the context that "*Education* in the modern sense implies a disintegrated society, in which it has come to be assumed that there must be one measure of education according to which everyone is educated simply more or less. Hence *Education* has become an abstraction."

The tradition of Tamil learning was profound, more because it belonged to memory. It universalised the individual whilst elevating his levels of reference from mere observation to that of vision. The individual on the whole developed an

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\* ("Psychology and Religion : East" Jung - page 568)

intuition of things as they were on higher than empirical levels of reference unlike at present where Western influence has made a shambles of true knowledge and wisdom. That influence has produced a perverted individualism where we are at the mercy of our thoughts and corresponding desires. The anarchic undercurrents of modern life have opened no opportunity for consciousness of the inner opposite.

In thinking of the life around there was concern only with liberation so that economic wants were satisfied easily because they proportionately dwindled with the growth of the individual and society. The desire for liberation was not merely from the pulls of opposites but from the pulls of increasing material wants created by desire and avarice. A pure Tamil education and culture in the traditional sense enabled fulfilment in a balanced society, which today we are unable even to dream of. Such an education becomes an act of self-recollection where the conscious side of the being is made aware of its selfish aims which ultimately leads to the integration or humanization of the self. Here, while the thought of separateness as being is obliterated, the sources of conflict are dried up and the ego nature ceases to prevail as the force of evil it has become today.

This fullness and perfectibility were attained in Tamil mystical tradition and brought out forcibly by Manikkavasagar for example. It pervaded the entire society creating in turn a perfect balance of social and economic forces. It did not create defence or population problems which modern India faces being unable to generate the spirit that surrenders for greater values and perceptions which lead on to liberation.

Life taught more than words as against the modern outlook which overprizes words at the expense of example. In modern instruction there is an injurious inferiority however excellent the method or brilliant the intellectual capacity. What is needed today is an estrangement in favour of the inner object which no one seeks to discover. Hence can be seen all the problems of modern India in the field of economics, demography, sociology and all else imposed by modern life

and "progress". The real world can only emerge to a nation which has surrendered itself to the soul and that was India's true progress. Without it, there is no message India can give the world.

It is important here to take note of what the Tamil people's great sociologist had to say in his "*Kural*". That was the clearest and most scientific exposition of a state of society where the "state" had withered away when 'surplus value' had no place and society had to perform duties only. There was no clamour for rights which is the plague of modern societies. Even where duties took the place of rights they had a sanctity all their own. Every work became sacred where *Aram* ruled the Tamil mind and the king as ruler represented the meaning of *Aram* in all people's actions in whatever functions or duties that were theirs.

The confusion created by Sanskritists who spoke of *Aram* in terms of *Dharma* needs therefore to be removed. This calls for a full and comprehensive exposition of *Aram* as part of a scientific economic theory by itself.

## CHAPTER IX

## The Growth and Function of Atheenams

The beginnings and growth of Atheenams or *Māths* may be traced to the consolidation of the Saiva Siththantha philosophy in the Tamil mind from the time of Thirumoolar and Meikanda Thevar. These Atheenams were more of significance to the Tamil tradition than the efforts of kings to preserve it. They carried with them the needed disciplines of learning and propagation during the worst periods of the Aryan-Sanskrit domination.

It is the modern confusions in historical thinking which have ignored the binding force of tradition and side-tracked the role atheenams played in preserving the learning and discipline associated with tradition. One is therefore called upon to tread carefully on matters which present the modern outlook as Tamil and thus look with favour on the pitiless logic in the events that unfold themselves to modern eyes.

In tradition the people felt everything through the pulse of Tamil which only meant things of beauty and significance. Tamil society was what may be called unanimous because it signified order and meaning. It was therefore able to function over millenia through the strength of its own integration. The contentment and forward outlook in such a society took strength from within, ie, in men of renowned wisdom and learning. These repositories of traditional wisdom were found in the *ātheenams* and their learning gave importance to things hierarchical even as the monarchy was in a different sense. They did not yield to foreign and the more vicious missionary pressures. Whilst the monarchy surrendered due to many external pressures, the *ātheenams* still survive despite the

modern and commercial over-valuing of all things. In the traditional society there could not have been anything secular gaining significance, more so because in Tamil there was an unconscious self-expression which gave it a doctrinal base. Thereby it reflected an unanimous culture which meant that the people knew which part of life served a purpose and communicated a gnosis.

The Madāthipathis—those who presided over the Atheenams—were learned men and saturated with traditional wisdom. They reflected the inner and outer life of their time in the light of tradition and therefore activated a living theme altogether doctrinal. They were certain about the Eternal Law which governed life and which humanity represented. As the elite it became their vocation to know metaphysical truth. This in turn gave Tamil the quality that life represented.

The canonical literature grew from ages past and in turn produced a vast body of men deeply dedicated to its disciplines. The *Medāthipathis* took over the great responsibility of preserving, interpreting, publishing and circulating the vast compendium of Tamil poetry and literature. Today the Tamil world owes them a debt of gratitude for carrying on this task at a time when the disciplines of Tamil have no relevance to a commercial and distracted society.

The poet and mystic remained outside the pale of history and never paraded their names. *Pattinaththār* was as common to the poet as *Avvai* was to the poetess. In the same way authors of religious works went under edifying common names such as Siva-prakasara, Gnana-prakasara, Thathuva-prakasara, Marai-Gnana-Sampanthar and Siva-vakkiar. The Saiva Atheenams too have a history which escapes research, but recent scholars place the beginning in the 14th and 15th centuries A.D. especially of the Meikandar *Paramparai* or tradition. Meikanda Thevar from whom was bequeathed Siva-gnana-pothis antedates all modern renderings of history. Thus truth in tradition was never contained in time.



The Veera Saiva Atheenams are said to have been different from the later atheenams coming under eight names :

1. Kānchi Gnānapraksa Ātheenam.
2. Kaavai Ambalanātha Thambiran Paramparai Atheenam
3. Kannudaiya vallal Paramparai Atheenam
4. Thiru-vādu-thurai Atheenam
5. Tharumapura Atheenam
6. The Sepparai Mada tradition traced to Arul Namasivaya Thesikar
7. Thuzlavūr Atheenam to which belonged the commentator of Thiru-vatut-payan.
8. Kamalai Gnana-prakāsar Atheenam

Of these only (1), (4) and (5) continue to exist enabling some form of continuity in the Saiva tradition even now. These three base their origins on the Mei-kanda *Sastras* which gave the grammatical and scientific base of Saiva Siththantham.

The lack of history in tradition gives meaning to the Saiva Atheenams. It is the same with the great custodians of Tamil, namely the Pandians, that it is difficult to identify the rulers of any particular period. As protectors of the language the Pandians were known as '*Muththamizhi Kāvalar*', but no poem helps to identify the Pandias of any particular period or genealogy though attempts have been made through the Sinhala chronicle—the Mahāvamsa, The beauty and greatness of the Tamil tradition was its anonymity because the concern was not with individuals but with Truth. The *paramparai* of the Atheenams too reflected this deep sense of anonymity.

The learning associated with Atheenams was of a profound order and different from the present day 'bookish' concept where, through total sacrifice of quality to quantity, whatever is accumulated in the end becomes for the most part rudimentary and heterogenous. In the sort of 'compulsory' education and 'research' entirely with profane understanding, the outlook of investigators

has had bearing only on the contingent and pragmatic or rather utilitarian than on the deeply realised and integrated. This research has sown the winds of dispersion into multiplicity leading the way to many speculative and facile assumptions.

The Tamils were able after long years of study and application to see the need to transcend conflicting ideologies because these stood in the way of realising life's inherent possibilities. They knew the over-riding aims of education which alone led to fulfilment and enrichment of life. The Atheenams were able to provide an ecology of the human evolutionary enterprise. They maintained the right balance between continuity and change. Their task was firmly grounded in the knowledge that what the ego needs is to be assimilated to a wider personality. They have no use for the vocabulary of pathology because the Tamil tradition had gone far enough to be able to live a life both independent and creative. Life they knew was real only when it is *known*.

The Tamil people's history and tradition under so-called scholarly investigation has produced an effect of nothing more than individual preference. It is like the illusion of self-government that universal suffrage has produced where the majority are not anything but an expression of incompetence. The human reality has in this context passed into a thousand vulgarities. In anonymity was preserved the true because the ego can never protrude into realms of self-realisation.

In Western society the cult of individualism grew out of the ideas of the Renaissance. In Medieval art very few names have been transmitted but this yielded to self-esteem when beauty became divorced from truth. In Tamil the tradition quietly gave way under the spell of superiority in academic learning which recognised no other inspiration higher than the human mind. In Atheenam tradition the antithesis between Tamil and the art of living was removed in the same way that gold is cared for when it has been separated from the ore and dross. The Atheenams gave meaning to the world itself when they transformed it into Siva's own handiwork. They were able to retain what was intrinsically Tamil and thus prevented chaos supervening the social

order. The doctrine was able to continue only because it was upheld that it was intended for hierarchical, if not hereditary transmission.

The Atheenams were able to preserve freedom in thinking because the disciplines involved study of the Eternal Law in *Saiva Neethi* and there was also the necessity for an elite to exist for the purpose. There was awareness of the priority of principal knowledge and wisdom which Tamil meant. It is therefore noteworthy that, in the midst of the wide acceptance of deformities introduced by Western civilisation, the men of distinction and genius who administered the Atheenams kept to the direct path of Tamil in which Truth never became stale or trite. They arrested the dangers of any descent even as truth underwent change and bore witness in new images. They did not allow the hands of the clock to be put back when living in the universality of the collective psyche.

If the soil of Tamil held a mystery, it was unravelled by the Atheenams. Strictly, Tamil refuses to assimilate things sprung from foreign soil more especially those leading to materialistic prejudice which turns the psychic into the physical. The Tamils owe a debt of gratitude to the tradition now established in the Atheenams which has kept the doctrinal intact without yielding to powerful pressures from every direction.

The Atheenams gave Tamil studies the doctrinal approach which was and is essential to its continuance as poetry and music. Siva embraced the universal and that universalised puranas and epics in the same way that the mystics and *gnanins* belonged to the whole of India. Even the idea of kingship arose out of the wearing of Siva's Resting Foot upon the head which meant complete surrender of the ego to Him. The Saiva Nayanmar did their natural and appropriate functions and thus even kings returned to Saivism from what was considered apostasy where for some time some of them embraced Jainism and Buddhism. These organised and powerfully entrenched religions were uprooted through the force of Tamil in song and poetry from the lips of Appar, Sambandar and Manikkavasagar.

The Atheenams had to a great extent conserved the tradition against grave odds mainly stemming from foreign proselytising religions such as Christianity and Islam. If today one has to look for centres where the flame of Saivism is kept alive, it is the Atheenams that clearly point the way. The foreign religions functioned as appendages of State power and their proselytising missions were furious and unrelenting on that account. The onslaughts against Tamil and Saivism had to be contained through Saivism's superior power and the Atheenams reflected that power through precept and example.

The Dravidian outlook had grown and flowered into an enlightened process capable of penetrating the obscurity and darkness of the ego. It was difficult to dislodge this outlook without violence to the human personality which the foreign religions as handmaids of imperialism were able to achieve. The Christian infiltration was achieved through well-planned systems of education under cover of commercial-industrial prosperity. Numerous Missions began to function with powerful financial support from foreign vested interests. The deliberate attempt was to divert the mind from objective realisation to subjective prejudice. Historical conditions of knowledge were substituted for the psychological as it was no longer needed to view the world as a psychic phenomenon. The Atheenams could not be touched because they possessed a very ancient and preserved tradition.

While external pressures were working overtime to destroy the oral tradition, the Atheenams were able to prevent the total obliteration of that tradition because they remained the media whereby the unconscious could be integrated and the individual truly regenerated in spirit. They remained true to the soil because the soil of the Tamil people always held a great mystery. Even today they are able to show the way to the ever-lasting truths of Tamil because they never allowed themselves to be deceived by the allurements of the new-born commercial world.

The great value of the Atheenams is that they continue to remain even today the only expositors of the science of religion called Saiva Siththantham having in this respect been the focus

of attention down the ages. The atheenams represented the conscious mind whilst giving a historical continuity to the supra-personal consciousness. They never allowed reckless adventure because they never woke up in a world they did not understand. They valued the secret order in the cosmos because they knew that the ego always needs the self. Saivism meant for them the deep root of all being so that their relations with the world became consciously relativised.

Following the grammatical and scientific exposition of Saiva Siththantham by Meikanda-Thevar there were successions of teachers and expositors of the science of Saivism. The repositories of this tradition were called *Pandarams* who became the purposeful and disciplined functionaries of the Tamil people's religion, giving examples of their own austere disciplines and the scholarship so essential to maintain the learning and tradition. The Meikandar tradition drew the distinction between the advaitism of Vedanta and Saivism where the former was sought to be established through Sanskrit especially by the Brahmanical class who used to advantage the hold on temple worship through rites and rituals.

All the Atheenams had almost identical functions but they differed according to the scholarship, learning and spiritual strength of the Madathipathi or Pandaram. Even today the Atheenams are the great repositories of Saiva learning. Kundraikudi Adigal of Thiruvannamalai Atheenam and the Madathipathis of Dharmapuram and Thiruvaduthurai are examples. It is an experience in itself to see and hear them as the real torch-bearers of the great learning and discipline associated with Saivism in an age of materialism and utter profanity. They remain even now celebrates which is distinct from the Brahmanical order. That is because celebacy became inevitable to the great disciplines of Atheenam life steeped in Tamil wisdom and learning. In that learning all profanities of time and temporal factors disappeared because it involved not merely mental but spiritual growth. The meaning can only be understood in the particularly Tamil and to some extent Platonic sense that all change is a dying.

The tradition calls for a constant recourse to memory because in recollection alone was found the way to step out of profanities

so that it was easier to be put into the experiences that really belong to the spirit of man. The trustees and repositories of this difficult task of keeping memory alive were the atheenams which fortunately even today continue to exist despite the wretched conditions created by industry and commerce. The highest state of these trustees has been described in untranslatable terms such as முப்போதும் திருமேனி தீண்டுவார். They passed through the best and highest disciplines available for the whole of man — (time—tested through centuries before the Western impact) — called *Viseda Nirvana Theekshai*. It is a Tradition that belonged only to Mei-kanda-thevar, meaning literally "the one who saw the Truth". The teachings of the latter form the bulwark of Saiva Siththantha and handed down through a consistent and profound line of teachers.

The Aryan, through the strength of Brahminism, could not over-power the mind disciplined through the Mei-kanda Sastras despite the hold of the Brahmin in temple ceremonial. It was no doubt a retrogressive development which eventually caused the disappearance of *Pan* music from temples at the expense of Sanskrit ritual. To compensate for this lapse, the Atheenams kept alight the flame of true learning contained in Thevaram and Thiruvasaham. When the atheenams and temples were able to carry on without interference, the thirst for the light of consciousness was not merely unquenched, but unquenchable.

Further, the duties of kingship brought out the concept of the thirty-two *arams* which had to be made alive and in this effort the temples and Atheenams became rooted in the fabric of Dravidian society. They also reflected within them the ageless melody of India. People were able to perceive the meaning of time in eternity. They were able to see the light without the shadow and to hear the silence without the noise; thus they were able to see the wisdom without the taint of foolishness. The desire to see the light of consciousness was not merely unquenched, but unquenchable when the Atheenams and temples carried on with their objectives in mind. They no doubt had the sense of direction conscious as they were of the deep springs of being.

The Atheenams never allowed surrender to the outer world because the real world was all the time there before them. The demands of the latter took the Tamils directly to their souls because Atheenams and temples knew that no man can escape the reality which is inner and real. It was already recognised in the Tamil mind as part of the whole discipline of life that *Pasu (anma)*—one of the three ultimate irreducible categories—was the central archetype or psyche as distinct from the ego which is entirely subjective. Since there can be no reality without polarity, the self became the supreme psychic authority. The Meikanda-Sastras gave the self a depth of analysis over and above the best of modern exponents, namely Jung. The latter no doubt said with cogency that the conflict between science and religion which the West has developed is a new disease. The demands of the real world took the Tamils directly to their soul because the Atheenams and temples knew that no man can escape that Reality which is inner and real.

Unlike the modern world which has lost direction, the Tamil life was heroic being able to hold on to the bitter end. The self—governing and regulating Atheenams represented a polarity which continues even today to remain aloof from the modern world's distractions. That is a marvel of Tamil as a language despite the milieu that present—day political endeavour creates which is infantile as different from Tamil which is independent and creative. The Atheenams have so far escaped the problems today of neurosis and psychosis which bring out the vocabulary of pathology. There is a consistency in Atheenam outlook which refuses to be subdued by the one-sided belonging to the empirical. In other words the Atheenams are able to comprehend the full inventory of the psyche and the continuance of the Atheenam tradition is proof of the marvellous potentiality of the Tamil language—a language conceived by Siva Himself—to carry through and survive even with diminished refrain a period of the greatest confrontation with falsehood and detraction.

Even today there is no need in Tamil for any outstanding intelligence such as that of Einstein because the spiritual power inherent in Tamil does not create a void calling for a genius

without personelity. As Jung has observed. "Psychic wholeness will never be attained empirically, as consciousness is too narrow and too one-sided to comprehend the full inventory of the psyche." (Page 759—"Mysterium Coniunctionis" CW 14). The milieu that present—day political endeavour creates is infantile and alien to the independent and creative that was Tamil. To-day one is largely confronted with problems of neurosis and psychosis which only bring out the vocabulary of pathology. Thus there is no possibility of creating the poets and artists as well as the deeply committed and scholarly men who were the beacon lights of Atheenams. It is however necessary to remember that Atheenam life has all along been the life of individuals reflecting the efficacy of the Supreme Law or *Saiva Neethi*.

Down the corridors of history the Atheenams kept alive the great tradition of Tamil poetry and thus reflected the course of life ordained for the truly liberated minds. The Atheenams lived through the individuals who really mattered in society and that became the true law of life. It is good for the Tamils of today to realise that their conscious life needs to be corrected which means that the ego has to be assimilated to a wider presonality.

The Atheenams widened and enriched the scope of consciousness due to the discipline radiated through those centres. The substitution of economic and political thinking for the religious has today more or less isolated the atheenams because through these there can be no unification of the human personality in the midst of stress and strife. From self-surrender to self-assertion has been the precipitate decline which one can observe in all things today.

There was another noteworthy Atheenam tradition called *Veera Saiva* which bravely practised and proclaimed the Saiva doctrine. In this was the true liberation emphasised outside the dualities which in turn was able to break through the illusions that pass for life. What was affirmed here was something positive. In that sense it was different from the Vedanta where stress is particularly on the illusory nature of the world.

The world is a reality, though narrow perspectives of it drawn from profane sciences such as modern geography have made man alienated from the material depths of nature. Where the Western man confronts himself as a stranger, the Tamil concern with self-knowledge has led to the growth of a more exacting and disciplined science in Saiva Siththantham—the End of all knowing. Here man himself becomes the sole cause of his higher development with the world in turn offering the greatest opportunity for self-fulfilment. Thus a mystic such as Manikkavasahar is able to affirm that even Brahma and Vishnu—the dieties behind creation and preservation—wish to take birth on earth :

“Without birth on earth our existence is futile—  
The earth alone is where Siva's Grace  
Lays path for liberation.” Thus,  
O Lord of Thirupurumthurai, sacred Brahma and Vishnu  
too.  
Their longing express. (\*)

Thus Siva becomes the Universal Being in Whose chaos there is cosmos and in whose disorder there is a Still Point, a secret order. Where all else lose their meaning in life and death, Siva alone lives through all the phenomenal change.

Even in the modern world the Atheenams have great content and bearing because the world as it is today is only able to provide an unadorned balance-sheet. Whatever their present inhibitions and deficiencies, they are still able to provide a supra-personal consciousness with a sense of historical continuity. The courage of the Tamil people derived from the strength

\* “புவனியிற் போய்ப் பிறவாமைமினனும்  
போக்குகின்றோம்மவமே யிந்தப் பூமி  
சிவனுய்யக் கொள்கின்ற வாறென்று நோக்கித்  
திருப்பெரும் துறையுறை வாய்திரு மாலாம்  
அவன் விருப் பெய்தவும் மலரவன் ஆசைப்  
படவுதினன்னலந்த மெய்க் கருணையும் நீயும்  
அவனியிற் புகுந்தெமை யாட் கொள்ளவல்லாய்.

(திருவாசகம்—திருப்பள்ளியெழுச்சி)

of their language alone still provides the needed continuity in the Atheenams. They were able to strengthen consciousness by not allowing the Tamil mind to be enveloped and thereby shattered in the tension of opposites.

Even as science tears to shreds all religions based on anthropomorphism, the Atheenams gave the sun-like human eye the power to see the world objectively. It is the West which gave religion the reprehensible form of idleness which is because the Western man confronts himself as a stranger—the value of the self to him having sunk to zero. Where the Western consciousness is historically conditioned, the Atheenams kept alive the spirit of truth and widened consciousness beyond any form of limitation.

How the Atheenams functioned and how they have been able to maintain their age-old tradition which implied the highest discipline and learning is one that calls for some attention. It is only relevant here to note that those who receive Siva initiation (சிவதீக்கை) are the ones who perform duties as heads or as functionaries called Thambirans. For example those who receive *Siva Theekai* at Thiruvavadu-thurai Atheenam are initiated with the words :

“அலகிலாவுயிர்கள் மலநடைக்கு இலையாய அருணடைக்  
குண்மையாய் நின்ற....அம்பலவாண”

meaning,

“That life endless, O Lord of Thiru-Ambalam,  
May go forward in the way of Grace  
And not along the blind alley of the *Malas*”.

This is a *Viruththam* from *Ulakudai Nayanar Kalih-nedil* signifying the way of divine Grace or அருநடை *Arunadai* which leads on to understanding the nature of Siva as the Highest Intensity of Life. Besides by the appellation *Pandaram* applied to Siththantha Saiva Atheenam heads is communicated the meaning of ‘well-endowed’ with learning and wealth both held in trust for the keeping alive of Saivism. These Heads were extremely learned in all the manifold branches of study involved in Saivism—being even today the most scientific of religions.

Their trust was great to keep alive the torch of Saivism codified in the Sastras called *Mei-Kanda* because centred in them was the distilled essence of that difficult discipline and learning. The branches of learning were both extensive and intensive brought under one classified whole called *Thasakariam* (தசகாரியம்). This included *Thatvaroopam* (தத்வரூபம்), *Thatva tharisanam* (தத்வதரிசனம்), *Thatva-suththi* (தத்வசுத்தி) *Anma-roopam* (ஆன்மரூபம்), *Anma-tharisanam* (ஆன்மதரிசனம்), *Anma-suththi*, (ஆன்மசுத்தி), *Siva-roopam* (சிவரூபம்), *Siva-yoham* (சிவயோகம்) and *Sivagnanam* (சிவஞானம்).

Here is seen kept alive today the genuine traditional spirit—the *Atheenams* becoming the repositories of the Primordial Tradition. It has endured for inconceivable lengths of time and the marvel is that it still survives in Tamil land despite Kali Yuga and the poisoning of the atmosphere by modern civilisation. It has not yielded to the fabrications arising out of modern confusions. The elite in its proper sense and application deriving from the highest disciplines of mind, body and spirit is essential to the modern world so much lacking in the living traditional spirit because this spirit will always and everywhere be the same. The *Atheenams* no doubt upheld the highest in man whilst the purpose of their endeavour was to provide a hierarchical dependence so much needed for a scientific and disciplined religion such as Saivism. Their greatness is that they were able to survive the pitiless logic of an apathetic industrial-commercial age—an age which calls solely for the physical accumulation of objects and the satisfaction of desire through the sole end in pleasure. The *Atheenams* should not be allowed to be caught in the shipwreck of the modern world.

The *Atheenams* showed the way of walking erect and with head held high. That is because they were unconcerned with the materialistic, commercial world where alone values are upside-down. Marx observed that "the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production." He saw an implied and latent revolution in that society. Tamil

society was formulated on principles that escape mere profane understanding. There was no need of revolt in it because the demand for self-knowledge was not caught in a blind alley and the concern for a meaningful existence could not be easily snuffed out. Supported by an incomparable culture filled with understanding and beautified by the world's greatest literature, poetry, music and dance, it became so uneasy to continue the *Atheenam* tradition despite the violence of external forces.

The *ātheenams* no doubt today have lost their contextual bearing because the society called Tamil or Dravidian has lost its connection with the culture and religious life that identified it with a distinctiveness all its own. To revive that society so that poetry, music, art and architecture are not allowed to die within the covers of books or inside archives or museums is a near impossibility. Man today is a creature of time whilst being a slave of economics.

More important are the *Thirumurais* which the kingly order preserved with the utmost reverence and care. A long and continuing line of teachers, learned and disciplined, enabled these *Thirumurais* to live on the lips of people on the whole. It was sufficient to reach the poorest intellect to make it live wholesomely. Outside the darkness of ego was an immediate push into the archetypal regions of the psyche.

Today most *atheenams* have declined so that they have become more showpieces. Some have amassed wealth but do not seem to know the aims and goals of the disciplined Saiva life for the masses. Poverty of spirit and mind even around the *atheenams* calls for immediate and even revolutionary corrective measures if Tamil is once more to take root, grow and bloom.

## CHAPTER X

## The Aim and Role of Astrology

Astrology was a science reflecting a profound order linking man with the universe—at least with the closest celestial bodies which have been found to involve each individual life in time and space. The basis of astrological knowledge is even today formulated on what are known as *Panchangams* which are annually brought out as focussing on man's own needed knowledge of and inevitable involvement in time and space. These entities exist in the movements of the sun, moon and planets which together form the order or disorder, progress or regress in individual events.

Time is an independent variable but manifests itself in the objects in space. The *Panchangas* decode time and space and each individual helps to make the situations arising from and out of those entities. *Panchangas* relate the nature and functions of space in its relationship to time.

The Tamil civilisation, because of its great age and enormous wisdom was able to restore human action to certain pre-determined factors. Action was brought in line with the temporal in which was reflected the profanities of time. Nevertheless, the latter courses along certain chalked out axes and planes of reference. In the axis was reflected the speed of temporal events conditioned by past, present and future. The solar system keeps on marking the time axis which astrology has developed into a profound science taking the individual out of profane, quantitative and ego—based understanding.

The *grahas* have reference to stars which are observed as unmoving. But the *grahas* themselves move. Time takes in astrology certain co-ordinates closer to the systolic and diastolic actions of the heart or the winking of the eyes. The solar system to which man belongs in time has the ability to run the course of

time in a natural but also realisable way. The individual human entity becomes part of this procession of time where the future to a great extent does not escape identity as part of present and past actions.

"Behind a man's actions there stands neither public opinion nor the moral code, but the personality of which he is still unconscious. Just as a man still is what he always was, so he already is what he will become. The conscious mind does not embrace the totality of a man, for this totality consists only partly of his conscious contents. In this totality the conscious mind is constrained like a small circle within a larger one. The symbols of the outside world and the cosmic symbols form the psychological basis for the conception of man as a microcosm whose fate, as we know, is bound up with the macrocosm through the astrological components of his character.

"The term 'self' seemed to me a suitable one for the unconscious substrate whose actual exponent in consciousness is the ego. The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to subject because the determining factors which radiate out from the self surround the ego on all sides and are therefore supra-ordinate to it. The self, like the unconscious, is an *a priori* existent out of which the ego evolves...""\*

Astrology is connected with the divine or cosmic order which brings out forcibly the meaning that man is not an end in himself and the way of liberation is out of the recurring cycles of birth and death. There was the ever-present reality of *Arul* or divine Grace which was needed to escape the cycle. Manikkavasahar, the great astronomer that he was, makes it evident that man's growth is in the spirit and hence Siva's help was needed for that growth... "*Ennai Valarppavane*" (என்னை வளர்ப்பவனே), he says in Thiruvassagam *Neethal Vinnappam*. The compulsion of a psychic content which is divine has in astrology been recognised as the inevitable factor in the urge to be liberated.

\*(Pages 258-259 — Collected Works — C.G. Jung — Essay on "Psychology and Religion : West and East").

C. G. Jung gives an insight into the role of destiny which would be apposite here : "Consciousness is always only a part of the psyche and therefore never capable of psychic wholeness ; for that the indefinite extension of the unconscious is needed. But the unconscious can never be caught with clever formulas nor exercised by means of scientific dogmas, for something of destiny clings to it—indeed, it is sometimes destiny itself."\*

Astrology, unlike modern concepts which seek completely to sever the connection between the sciences and any higher principles, gave deep meaning to life. It had little to do with the world of matter and the things of the senses and it presents Kali Yuga as the age of impure residues where, as time proceeds, impurities grow more and more. Though astrology and alchemy, from the purely modern historical angle, have become modern astronomy and chemistry, it would be wrong to think of astrology only as an 'art of divination'. That would be a perversion and such an outlook would imply some of the inferior applications which today have made it a commercial art.

Astrology was a sacred science such as for instance the three wise men from the East who guided the way to Christ's birth. Astrology became the circumference only because the Centre existed. It was all the time connected with the transcendent truth and supreme knowledge. There was nothing aimless or illusory about it. Truth, as René Guénon says, is not a product of the human mind. "It exists independently of ourselves, and it is for us simply to apprehend it; outside of this knowledge there can be nothing but error." \*\*

Under modern conditions where everything outside the field of 'science' has been peremptorily dismissed, astrology has suffered. But there is also today a growing scepticism against human ability to understand all things through science alone. The impact of 'technical progress' through science on old cultural traditions has been damaging because the end result of science

\* Foreword by C. J. Jung in *Collected Works II : Psychology and Religion : East and West*. Page 906.

\*\* René Guénon, "Crisis of the Modern World" Page 53

has been the proportionate growth of the commercial view in all things. Modern cultures are consumerist and based on the unrestricted and unlimited satisfaction of desire. The compulsive urge to possess has invaded every nook and corner with desire multiplying at every turn.

The more important quest about man made through the science of psychology especially of Jung is that the essence of man is found in *illumination*. This means that there shall be no more traffic in man as a commercial entity. It is the quantitative element—the mere size today—which determines man's loveless conduct in his intoxicating 'conquest' of nature. The lust for quantity has brought about the impoverishment of the soul of modern man. The psychic life on the other hand always found expression in a metaphysical system of some sort and the application of astrology had its most intimate connection with that psychic life.

Further, it was the reversal to profanity and commercialism in modern life which really accounted for the slow process of strangulation and death in the hands of commercial vendors who took to astrology. The psychic forces understood in astrology can no longer be fitted in with our rational world order. Even the metaphysical certainties of Saivism are being torn asunder by the greed and avarice generated by science and industry. Every step we take in material progress adds more power to what threatens to be a more stupendous catastrophe. In time of peace we are preparing for war because we are today governed by the law of blind contingency. There is chaos in the inner recesses of our minds so that religion too like Sunday attire or worn-out clothes has become fit to be laid aside at desired moments.

Astrology belongs to the psychic world and no one today seeks experience of the depths of the psychic life. Therefore the question which an astrologer would ask does not arise : "Beyond the reach of my conscious intention, what are the effective forces and determinants of my fate?" Jung felt an inner revolt against the modern aberrations when he asked, "After setting the whole East in turmoil with our science and technology, and exacting tribute from it, we send our missionaries even to China. The stamping out of polygamy by the African missions has given rise to prostitution



on such a scale that in Uganda alone twenty - thousand pounds sterling is spent yearly on preventatives of venereal infection, not to speak of the moral consequences, which have been of the worst. And the good European pays his missionaries for these edifying achievements! No need to mention also the story of suffering in Polynesia and the blessings of the opium trade. " \*

The inner life of man is capable of great depth as well as beauty unlike the outer which is always in conflict where it comes to external actions governed by notions of right and wrong of good and evil. A people's age is the result of many a life—time of ethos. It is indifferent towards life and death so long as the course is understood. Astrology provides that understanding. It erects the substructure of the possibilities of the individual in terms of ends. Until his freedom is reached in the light of transcendent Truth, man is driven on by imponderable psychic forces both foreseen and unforeseeable. Astrology liberates man along the great highways where aims and ends seem desolate or outworn. Governed by the Doctrine of the stars and planets or heavenly bodies, it enunciates a pre - determined law in all things. Man is only a product of time and therefore the heavenly orbs and configurations, their position and movements cannot be treated as outside him. Man represents the highest where life in the cosmos can lead to.

In tradition astrology, astronomy and mathematics were linked which gave man a greater self—awareness and his spirit a freedom outside the mere temporal and physical. It is said that the antiquity of astrology can be traced to about 20,000 years. Thus, through reference to a fixed zodiac, astrologers have fixed the time of Rama as beginning in 2055 B. C. It is said that, when Rama was born, five of nine planets were in exaltation. The date of Mahabharatha too has been fixed as around 4045 B. C. at the end of *Dvapara yuga*. According to H. Brailly, the Hindu zodiac has been fixed by Western orientalisists as 2250 B. C.

Astrology is able to distinguish the accidental simultaneity of things in time from their essential simultaneity apart from time.

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\* C. G. Jung, "Modern Man in Search of a Soul" Page 226

The Now or *Nunc Stans* is distinguished from the discontinuous events of the present. Astrology had a liberating influence on man because it gave an insight that the opposites are the ineradicable and indispensable preconditions of all psychic life.

The pursuit of astrology as a science is to place the time—boundness of the individual against the psychic life of the archetype which is timeless. It had a purpose which was liberating unlike what can become of it in the hands of quacks and professionals who today are part of the greedy and soulless capitalist system. It gives full and satisfactory proof that, unless properly applied, life can become a disease with a very bad prognosis and lingering only until death. In astrology was the statement of the opposites making for the individual life leading to the knowledge of God as the *coincidentia oppositorum*.

Astrology too had a social function which was able to focus attention on the individual being's inner and qualitative identity as distinct from that of others. It was part of the whole of life's discipline and therefore had a sacred import. There was no question of astrology becoming a subject of study as understood today in the universities. It did not fall prey to the tentacles of the modern 'scientific' approach which would have taken it into the confines of universities to serve as another branch of our profane studies. It has to be said emphatically that the narrow limitations of those who deny suprasensible reality form the one impediment to letting astrology enter the portals of Universities. What university education stands for today is so—called supremacy given to reason which logically excludes all true metaphysical knowledge.

If astrology lives today in our societies and its prognostications on individual lives have by test and application been found to be true, this science perhaps offers hope that we can one day recover our sense of perspective without reducing the whole nature of our spirit to thought and our bodies to extension. The sort of Cartesian rationalism we apply to scientific thinking has reduced all things to a collective level of mediocrity from which the modern world suffers. It is our empiricism which is at fault when we look

forward to arrive at a pleasurable sensory experience in the result of our work.

To judge of astrology there is need to understand the whole compendium of Eastern knowledge, especially the Tamil, and its metaphysical base. An astrologer is an artist who fits the kaleidoscopic pattern of life. His occupation is a *sadana* and his operation in scholastic terms might be called *actus primus* denoting freedom as distinct from *actus secundus* which is the servile. What is seen with the soul's eye is laid down in the form of a science where planetary aspects at time of birth give indication of the disposition and character of the individual horoscopes,

To be an astrologer is to practice a vocation which corresponds with his most intimate nature. It deals with transcendental knowledge which directs itself to an understanding of the course of life in which the individuals play their necessary and inevitable part. This course is ordained and unalterable while taking on its cyclic procession. Astrology has no relationship to modern sciences where emphasis is given to mechanics, engineering or economics in which the understanding of people or of the course of events no longer exists. Our minds today are cluttered with facts but we are singularly ignorant of the principles to which all operations can be reduced.

Astrology has a social function which subordinates the economic. First it helps to organise society on the basis of vocation and second it gives the karmic laws that need application so that social disharmony does not arise. It determines an evolutionary way of fulfilling the natural and allotted task of each individual which comes to him in line with his natural evolution through many births. In René Guénon's words, "Human nature is present in its entirety in every individual, but it is manifested there in many diverse ways, according to the inherent qualities belonging to each individual; in each the inherent qualities are united with the specific nature so as to constitute the integrality of the essence: to think otherwise would be to think that human individuals are all alike and scarcely differ among themselves otherwise than *solo numero*." The

detailed precisions in the analysis of individual charts are based on the need to arrive at concordances and the forecast is to enable a plan for the future for parenthood, offspring and compatibility.

The being is not considered a time-controlled, servile entity but as one proceeding along an evolutionary path which the doctrinal aspects of the Saiva religion show as one of liberation. Astrology is therefore not concerned with reason which is an inferior principle denying anything superior to it. The reference to astrology today is in fact to a form of neo-astrology which specialises in using much of what are called statistics to establish itself 'empirically'. This has nothing to do with the true traditional astrology which has its relationship to a primordial tradition such as Tamil. Stripped though of this relevance, astrology still retains its divinatory character and for that reason is able to give interpretations which, if taken in their proper context, have an intrinsic bearing on those whose lives are conditioned by the limitations of Kali Yuga.

Take for instance marriage which is even to this day subservient in South Indian and Sri Lankan homes to the compatibilities determined by various factors other than free choice. Astrology lays down the essential aspects of compatibility to enable marriage to fit people for social and religious functions far removed from the Western theory of romantic love. Hence logically a Saiva marriage is indissoluble due to predetermined factors and, where it comes to the begetting of children which is the payment of a debt, it follows that the curtailment of population is quality-directed against quantity.

The astrologer therefore performs not merely a social but a divine function when he considers the astrological *Jati* or *Yoni poruththam* of the bride and bride-groom to the exclusion of all other mundane considerations. Swami Vivekananda aptly said: "If a man or woman were allowed the freedom to take up any woman or man as wife or husband, if individual pleasure or satisfaction of animal instincts were to be allowed to run loose in society, the result must be evil, evil children, wicked and demoniacal." Compatibility as well as social responsibility

come into play not as determined by man but by surrender of the self to the governing principles of the cosmic universe closely identified with the central luminary, the planets as well the shadowy planets—Raghu and Kethu.

The sun and other *grahas* exert their specific influences on man and his destiny and certain deductive calculations are based on the movements of the heavenly bodies to determine how the karmic elements are driven to external activities in each being. Beyond the voluntary application of man's knowledge and power which contribute to his destiny called *mathi*, there are other perceptible and imperceptible forces potent enough to help or hinder his destiny. This is called *vithy*.

The sun is different from the supernal sun which transcends all differences and identities in the relative and perceptible world. There is in the latter a transcendent principle which can be conceived as principally its own continuity and hence it is, as F. Schuon would put it, "the entire circle and the truth in its entirety." Time gets measured by the passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac making what is known to us as the annual cycle. The zodiac is an imaginary belt encircling the heavens and extending about eight degrees on each side of the elliptic within which are the larger planets.

When time ceases and with it human astrology, the twelve 'suns' will shine simultaneously because the wheel would have stopped turning. The rishis and sages of old who knew time and space in relationship to absolute determinants gave attributive qualities to each sign of the zodiac and the planets themselves had their 'beneficient' and "maleficient" aspects which had the effect of receiving and condensing the influences on the terrestrial environment. Man was the '*pindam*' or individual embryo. He became the microcosmic analogy of the '*andam*'—the macrocosmic universe of 'immeasurable nature and abundant phenomena', as Thiruvasham would put it.

In astrology time is measured not in terms of individual lives acting independent of each other but in relation to a

cosmic pattern. Hence chronologically time begins with a *tatpara* and ends with a *kalpa* which is equal to 4,300,000,000 sidereal years. It is in relation to the map of the heavens that life flows and ebbs and unless this relationship is established and understood, human life becomes a mass of evil. The Buddha's birth and renunciation were prior-determined and it was Kondanna, the astrologer, who predicted that he would of certainty become a Buddha. Time stopped even when the Buddha exercised the first degree of contemplation under the Jambo tree whose shadow also did not move.

What we call Kali Yuga is the descent into profanity which is the darkest enigma of the modern world. The determination of spatial and temporal magnitudes is taken by astrology outside the relativity of time and space which so much limit and dwarf our present outlook. The study of astrology is in relation to the traditional concept of cycles which is of a qualitative kind and has therefore no relationship to the profanities of modern education.

## CHAPTER XI

## The Universe: The Mystic's View

When the concern only with intellect took hold of modern education especially in Tamil lands, the passion for thought and cognition ceased. This concern with intellect has led to a form of imprisonment for the spirit of man because there is an arrogance in the intellect which will not sacrifice its supremacy through recognition of the value of other aims. The field of science has without doubt led to imprisonment and stagnation for the psyche.

The result of complete involvement in science has been the multiplying number of worthless people who are led only through the byways of their minds. The refuge of the inner life has been destroyed by science and what has emerged is the purely material character of civilisation which makes of it a sheer monotony. On a broader level, instead of enlightenment, what is apparent today is intellectual atrophy. This naturally has provided the breeding ground of all manner of strife and conflict. The more the involvement in matter, the more do the elements of division on gross and vulgar levels gain force and scope.

In the Tamil thinking down the ages before the industrial impact there was realisation possible through consciousness of universal principles. "Progress" today is a veritable regression in all that concerns the intellect. It has tied man to particulars depending on all the fancies and distractions that are produced through science on a mass scale. Hence he is no longer aware of the deep root of being whilst being equally unconcerned with the material depths of nature. There is a law that governs the plenitude of life and C. G. Jung was right when he said: "The further we go in the direction of reason, the

surer we may be that we are excluding the irrational possibilities of life which have just as much right to be lived." \*

Saivism held sway over India and embraced a vocabulary that connected the Indian people despite barriers of time and space. That religion was able to throw light on all the inhabitants. It was indeed a glaring light upon the dirt, darkness and evil of the psychic hinterland which prevented the people over many millennia from seeking anything behind them. The flow of life was sacred and pure as the flow of the sacred rivers unlike today where everything has become a nauseating pollution. In the Saiva ontology the people were naturally drawn to the fascination of the psyche. No doubt physics has succeeded in volatilizing our material world but the dismal undercurrents of the modern psyche has more to do with the sickness naturally accompanying the commercial and industrial life. What we see today along the great highroads of the world is all that can be called desolate and outworn.

The Tamil-Saiva tradition embraced no history as there was in it no hardening or ossification. The spirit of man had a coherence and lived in the minds and hearts of the people escaping every limitation of time and space. On the contrary our world today has become emptied of meaning as it carries with it more and more of what could be called the nominalistic.

The inner dynamism which symbols correctly employed had been able to transmit from generation to generation is no longer there. Since the content of symbols was metaphysical, the modern world has no relevance for them. The result is that Tamil has been overnight compelled to step down from its unique position as a musical and poetic language which means that growth has been stifled prematurely to give way to the lowest and most profane understanding whilst the people's lives enshrined in beauty has been destroyed by the withering touch of civilisation.

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\* C. G. Jung "On the Psychology of the Unconscious" Page 72 from Collected Works.

The same can therefore be asked of the Tamils as of any other Western nations that they are hated not merely for economic reasons but even for spiritual. Thus their temples are in neglect, their *Thirumurais* are dying in the pages of books where they once lived on the tongues of every person and their sole interest today is with the Western man's concepts of democracy and the ballot shorn of the deeper norms of righteous government.

Where once the Tamil life served a purpose and the oral tradition communicated a gnosis, that very life today has lost meaning except that of bread and butter as the people slip into convulsions of desire. The Tamil mystic was the universal man and generated the springs of life through all that poetry and music could convey. He gave life a meaning and purpose through dance having made Siva the Supreme Dancer. The word Saiva communicated the mysticism needed to understand the world order in relation to the universe.

There were innumerable ways of making the concept of Siva a reality and the first was to provide the anthropomorphism with literal, allegorical and anagogic meanings. There is no doubt that it is the spirit that can give life its highest meaning in the same way that love alone can give it full stature. Since we see colours, not wave lengths, the symbols amply found in Saivism took the people outside the purely relative and conceptual. It was found necessary to resort to the antinomial postulate to know how things are in themselves. Siva implies the recognition of the unconscious but this is outside the field of the ingrained and thoughtless materialism behind modern science. It is also as true that nothing is more vulnerable and ephemeral than scientific theories. Scientific sectarianism is as evil as ignorance and bigotry.

It is the sectarian and ego-centric attitudes that science has generated which are making the earth inhospitable and ecologically out of focus. There are dangers of all sorts—lack of awareness and love as well as a new humanism militarily conveyed in favour of nuclear justice. This is contra-opposed to what belongs to Tamil intrinsically as Saiva Neethi or the

justice that is of Siva Himself. The application is as governing everything called order in the universe of which the earth is an infinitesimal entity.

In order to make the concept of Siva real to a relatively confused world, the tradition in Tamil gave expression to well-grounded and easily realised images. Through anthropomorphic forms such as the Dancing Siva was created the idea of stillness in all movement. The concept of Siva had taken the place as one outside the pull of the dualities. When the formless took form, the latter became real and expressive in manifold renderings in song and poetry which poured out from the lips of mystics. The reality of the Siva concept took possession of the Tamil mind when the vast compendium of mystical poetry with its manifold and deeply realised imagery became the whole of the memory of the people. There was no need of a greater education and discipline than that. The mystics sang through what are known as *Thirumurais* which enriched the whole culture and which even today are the only hope for the Tamil people's regeneration into a life of fullness and experience *here* and *now*. What is deeply to be regretted is the great harm being done by sinister forces engaged in proselytisation which have to be dislodged even more than what remains of the colonialist heritage.

Modern psychology has no doubt advanced into a great science through the efforts of Jung who found the truth of religion rooted in the human psyche. Since something must stand between the opposites, it is not possible through rational functions to create the symbols without being involved in single meanings which comprehend only themselves with neglect of the other. It has been found that a conscious differentiation is needed in order to separate into the pairs of opposites. It becomes necessary to merge in the original and fundamental activity of the psyche ultimately. Thus through differentiation the consciousness grew of Siva—also the detachment of the libido from both sides.

Siva, in popular legend and in the best mystical and most majestic outpourings of poetry, was full of every contradiction giving

vent to the feeling that everything that exists goes over to its opposite. This state is best expressed by Heraclitus: "From the living comes death, and from the dead, life; from the young, old age; and from the old, youth; from waking, sleep; and from sleep, waking; the stream of creation and decay never stands still."\*

The sex character of Siva is the complementary character of the soul—both masculine and feminine undifferentiated. In the Siva legends are found the appropriate symbols to give meaning to the innermost in nature though sundered by stellar distances. In Siva is found the universal and homogeneous substratum when all the outer contradictions are reconciled. He becomes the Reality, as something common and living and as the one true explanation of the psychic process. It is not possible therefore to fathom with our intellect because that can only lead on to paradox and relativity, as Jung has clearly expressed.

The *Siva-imagery* is found in all the best Tamil poetry but we might confine ourselves to the most clearly—expressed in *Thirukovaiyar* of Manikkavasahar.

1. The Third Eye of Siva burnt to cinders the god of love, *kaman*, because the profanities of love which are temporal do not belong to that Eye, which is that of Gnosis.
2. Siva kicked asunder time - *kalan* - because in his love there is no death. That is the legend of Markandeyar.
3. He destroyed the three celestial fires of Thakkan because before Him there are no lesser lights such as the sun.
4. He took away all concepts of relativity implied in creation by destroying the creator Brahma himself.

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\* (Zeller, "History of Greek Philosophy": translated by S. F. Alleyne, Vol. ii. p. 17 (London Longmans & Co.)

5. He burnt the three mighty fortresses which confine existence to *anavam* (ego-sense), *kanmam* (fruits of action), and *mayai* (illusion).

With all these powers that are His, Siva is conceived of in the most humble garb and eccentric attire. It is that the spirit is not absolute, being something relative that needs completion and perfection through life. The typical representation of Siva's attire as unique in its absurdity is given in all the mystical poetry of Tamil, one aspect of which is brought out by Ananda Coomaraswamy in his "Dance of Shiva": "In His hair may be seen a wreathing cobra, a skull and the mermaid figure of Ganga; upon it rests the crescent moon, and it is crowned with a wreath of cassia leaves. In His right ear He wears a man's earring, a woman's in the left; He is adorned with necklaces and armlets, a jewelled belt, anklets, bracelets, finger and toe rings. The chief part of His dress consists of tightly-fitting breeches, and He wears also a fluttering scarf and a sacred thread. One right hand holds a drum, the other is uplifted in the sign of "do not fear"; one left hand holds fire, the other points down upon the demon Muyalaka, a dwarf holding a cobra: the left foot is raised. There is a lotus pedestal, from which springs an encircling glory (*tiruvasi*), fringed with flame, and touched within by the hands holding drum and fire."

To be able to understand the meaning of all these absurdities and contradictions, one has to become conscious of even a fraction of one's unconscious. To do this there is need to move out of one's own time and social stratum. That means the knowledge has to dawn through a sort of solitude. There is therefore the need to return to one's own deepest being outside all the blindness which reigns at the present hour.

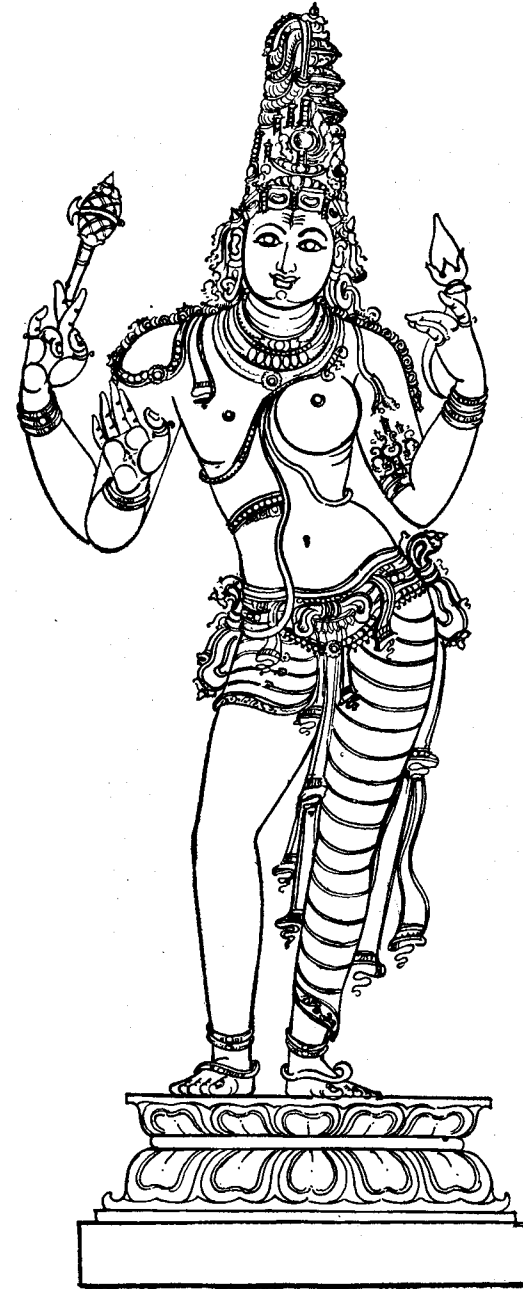
To know the supreme Being is to invest Him with all the contradictions because His Form and Wisdom do not belong to our relative world. His is like the inversion that light undergoes to form a negative image in photography. He is the Light of lights before whose presence our sun fades out of existence

His adornment is the snake which we dread, His food the poison we shun. His garland is of the skulls of as many Brahmas as there have been *Manvantaras*. His nakedness, so covered that it cannot be seen. His marriage to Parvathi, daughter of the Himalayas is described in Bengali literature by A. Sarkar thus: "Siva's coming to Himalaya's house as a bridegroom, the description of the marriage party and the feelings and impressions of the members of Parvathi's house, are the common subject matters of poems of different parts of India. These interesting features of the life of the god have been well presented by Vidyapathi and Tulasidasa, the poets of the Mangala Kavyas of Bengal and the authors of the marriage songs of Assam and Orissa. The picture of the god's marriage procession has been drawn in the same way by the various authors. Siva arrives with His uncouth train of imps and goblins, He Himself appears as an ascetic, with matted hair and body smeared with ashes, wearing serpents round His body and head and skulls for His necklace. When the people on the roadside and the members of the wedding party look at this strange sight of the bridegroom, they are struck with awe and terror"\*

In another description- (Bharatachandra's ("*Annadā-mangala*") Siva is portrayed in His dotage with Parvathi in her bloom of youth. Her face is likened to the full-moon whilst Siva's beard is like raw jute. Thus in the tersest and most poignant manner Siva becomes the life of the universe and the touchstone for the truth of the spirit. It shows that only a life lived in the spirit is worth living. Siva becomes the Centre of the universe and not any non-existent periphery. He is free from the opposites whilst becoming the archetypal symbol.

When the ego intrudes life becomes dull for all. In the Siva legends are seen the irrationality of the cosmic process in which itself is hidden the great Truth transcending time and space. The eternal is undeniably real while the temporal has a compelling power all its own. In Saivism is given the meaningful that divides itself from the meaningless. A new cosmos arises out of the force of meaning in sense. The world

\* "*Siva in Medieval Indian Literature*" by A. Sarkar, Pages 80-81



Arthanareeswarar

*The conjoint principle in  
Saiva metaphysics brought  
to clear focus in art.*

(மாதொரு பாகன்)

can be understood more by feeling than by intellect because the latter is always compelled to admit its inadequacy.

The concept of Siva as Redeeming Principle is brought out beautifully through many contradictory positions both in mythology and mystic poetry. These in turn serve to emphasise the centrality of His position in the cosmos which in itself is a contradiction. Saivism outlines the freedom struggle of the spirit thus to be able to wrench the light half of the picture away from the dark. The contradictions in Siva became the focal point of poetry springing from the depth of mysticism and thus there is no poetry in the world to equal it. A few of the basic concepts need to be stated here.

- a. Siva is the Omnipresent Reality—the Creator of creative, protective and destructive principles, but He is also mad (*Piththa*).
- b. With the universe His own, He is a beggar dressed in rags. Before Parvathi He is both ascetic and beggar so that sex is emptied of profanities for Him.
- c. He is Lord of all Creation, but He wears only a torn span cloth. Manikkavasahar explains the span cloth as the substance of eternal wisdom or gnosis meaning the Eternal Four Vedas.\* All knowledge becomes naked in the same way as truth and the Cosmic Self is beyond *mayai* or obscuration.
- d. The outer poverty of Siva becomes subject of ridicule. His whole body is seen numbed with hunger and His destiny is that of beggar wherein He symbolises the total negation of desire.
- e. He holds the mighty Ganga in His locks, "the river being within Him and the sea all about Him". If He did not contain the elements, there would be certainly destruction.

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\* Thiruvasaham - 'Thiruchchalal'

மன்னுகலை துன்னுபொருன் மறைநான்கே வான் சரடாய்  
தன்னையே கோவணமாய் சாற்றினன் காண்



The rational and irrational factors in the concept of Siva gave the only true explanation for the plenitude of life and for its right to emerge out of darkness into the fullness of being. That growth has to be outside the sensuous appeal of the immediate situation. Hence imagery in all its beauty and appeal took grip of the whole of India and brought about its unity until the Christian West and Islamic forces took upon themselves the task of creating division and discord.

From the Himalayan North to Cape Comorin, Siva worship gave profound meaning and significance to the Indian people's lives. It was given to the best and most cultured Indian of any part of the sub-continent to wear the Himalayan emblem of Siva as *Rudraksha*. These nuts of the tree *Eloecarpus ganitus*, representing the eyes of the Lord, signified all that was needed in humility and helped to preserve India's ecology from all that goes on today as devastation whilst at the same time uplifting the mind and spirit of the people, Missionary education too has wrought havoc because Christian outlook for example is readily prepared to accept the test tube in a laboratory than the total surrender implied in the Saiva rosary. It has therefore taken a long time indeed for scientific thinkers such as C.G. Jung to proclaim: "Through scientific understanding our world has become dehumanised. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos. He is no longer involved in Nature and has lost his emotional participation in natural events, which hitherto had a symbolic meaning for him."\*

That Saivism was able to produce all the best in Indian culture has been due to its force and influence with all strata of society. It represented the ultimate truth and therefore gathered the concert of many voices. It opened the eyes of man to the mysteries of the universe whilst giving him the certainties to make the course of life edifying and significant. Man's own inner depths covered the immensities of space and none can understand this who has not like the ancient Tamils carried the Thirumurais on their lips

\* "Approaching the Unconscious" in *Man and His Symbols* Page 95 by C. G. Jung



"In consciousness alone, in love alone  
The negation of all forms previously lived through".

and in their memories. That indeed can be said to be the highest in education and in that even today lies the future in education for a highly evolved people like the Tamil.

The concept of Siva brought to focus in Thiruvasham, for example, is unlike the Christian which places the Throne of God in Heaven somewhere above the clouds. That made Nietzsche declare that God was dead and the first astronaut Gagarin of Russia was constrained to say that God was not found in space. Today the 'death of God' theory has been found to be valid for the greater part of Europe invaded by a fog of '-isms'.

In Saivism the individual is time-bound but the psychic life of the archetype is timeless. In Manikkavasahar's *Thiru - andap - pahuthi* the ego-conceived universe gets dissolved in the self. Also the divine world-soul becomes liberated from imprisonment in matter. Manikkavasahar was mystic and *avathar* and hence brought creativity into religion. He saw beyond the dead emptiness of inter - stellar space and reconciled the infinitely small revealed through mathematical physics with the vision of Siva. He saw in the plenitude of life a Divine Law and thus presents before us a new cosmos. It is unlike the profane scientific view through which and by which the world today has become dehumanized progressively as man became isolated in the cosmos.

The mystic's consciousness is outside the ego. There is in the storehouse of memory all that is needed to be known which has nothing to do with the non-psychic, external world. The mystic influence through poetry and music to a great extent prevented the transformation of the Tamil elite into half-baked Europeans, but with the clamour for 'modern' education more and more neurotics are being produced for whom the cause is overwork, endocrine disturbances, sex or lack of vitamins. The inner roots have been torn today due to alienation from the inner being.

The mystic was able to give all things their meaning, order and direction. The succession of mystics in Tamil land gave kingship its meaning, purpose and intent. The victory of Appar and Sampanthar over the Jains ended royal patronage of the latter leading to the triumph of Saivism. Life's meaning was

found in all that Saivism represented. In this was the only possibility of truthfulness to the law of one's being and of being able to rise to one's personality. Into the entelechy of the self the ego enters and the modern world's worst evil in the pre-occupation with the ego solely. The Tamil growth was in the trampling down of the ego so beautifully communicated in the Dance of Siva. The demon Muyalaka which Siva tramples under foot is the ego itself because, where the ego protrudes, there cannot be a Dance meta-physically conceived in the cosmic universe.

The irrational union of opposites can be made possible as exemplified in the lives of the Saiva saints and in the deep meaning given to the theme in the sacred hymns (*Thirumurais*) sung by them. That is a vast compendium now being lost in modern Tamil life and education. Very few today are aware that the *Thirumurais* are the only light that shines in the darkness because the psyche, which is man's greatest instrument, is actually mistrusted and despised so that it cannot offer the only way of hope. The *thirumurais* only can bring to focus the unknown factors which form the unconscious part of our personality. The blank incomprehension of their meaning to those who come out of our modern universities shows how precipitate the decline is in all things including education.

Why one may ask did the *Thirumurais* become the base of the most enlightened oral tradition in the world that belonged until recently to the Tamil people as a whole? There was in them the magic of liberation from the pulls of the opposites. When one looks at the growth of modern industrial - commercial civilisation, in its outward semblance of prosperity, it has produced an endless growth in forms of addiction including drug which is today so serious as to become national problems in many countries. "There is no greater imprisonment than being dependent on any chemical substance for one's existence", is what most people who have become drug addicts would say. Still the world talks in terms of 'progress'.

The *thevara* hymns came to light through a miracle which brought kingly power its glory. The influence of Sembianmadevi on

### Kunippu (குனிப்பு)

*One of the 108 Karanas interpreted in Siva Tandava. It renders an imagery that gives meaning to the complex tissue of life.*



*Also it conveys the incredible psychic growth speaking to the untold and abundant images of the non-spatial universe.*

subsequent rulers is seen in the reclamation of these hymns by King Rajaraja. The latter came to know for certain from the several endowments created by Sembianmadevi for the singing of *Tevara* songs in temples that there was a large volume of such hymns still not generally known. The discovery of the hymns through Nambi-Andan-Nambi and their popularisation by this king was associated with a miracle popular in the history of the Saiva faith. The great wisdom of the kingly order is equally seen here. Rajaraja caused the 8,200 verses that comprised the new discovery to be inscribed in copper plates for the benefit of posterity. It was these hymns which also inspired the construction of hundreds of Siva temples by subsequent Chola rulers.

All the hymns point to the Great Dancer Siva and hence it became that the Nataraja figure symbolised the entire philosophy of the Tamils. The Tamil mind was trained through the incomparable beauty of poetry and music to understand the mystic's mind liberated from the pulls of the opposites. The mind of the sage was altogether in the beauty of that Divine Form called Siva Thandavam which was seen entirely outside the verdict of the senses. It was a primordial image, ever—renewing and constantly effective, because *it is*, in the sense of *nunc stans*, the fundamental law of being. It is where the psyche is able to meet the process of Nature with an image truly symbolical and redeeming, bearing witness to the creative activity of living matter. It liberated the Tamil mind from bondage and led it along to sheer uncomprehended perceptions which one may say is the only real focus and function of Nature.

It is on the other hand tragic that the modern Tamil is imprisoned by science and its products. On its own, science has extended and multiplied its specialised terrains which in turn have lost all connection with one another. The deep spiritual suffering of the Tamils today is also proof of psychic stagnation and impoverishment which have resulted from abject surrender to science and its by-product, commerce.

## CHAPTER XII

## Cause of Decline and Future Prospect

The greatest achievement of Tamil was that it translated life into an art whilst giving religion also its proper meaning. Through Tamil alone is available the understanding of what really is life's innermost calling. Thus the language became what could be called culture's own finished product. From the transitory to the realm of the ever-enduring is a progress that necessarily calls for very long evolution and it was true of the Tamil lineage more than that of any other that it was able to produce all the wonders from the storehouse of eternity.

Many religions having their roots in the West have ended as appendages of colonialism and its selfish impulses. In order to conquer the world they turned away from whatever was rich in the psyche and even more descended to the inferior level of the personal ego. The result has been a distortion of the religious perspective which naturally followed the personal ego descending to the most primitive and inferior levels. What followed naturally was ruthlessness, selfishness, vanity and other infantile traits.

Having gone over the past of Tamil embedded mainly in the Saiva religion and seen the extent of this influence throughout India extending up to Kashmir, it would be useful to see how different the Indian and particularly Dravidian outlook has been even in the recent past. In his book, "The Discovery of India", Jawaharlal Nehru writes: "In Kashmir a long - continued process of conversion to Islam has resulted in 95 percent of the population becoming Moslems, though they retained many of their old Hindu customs. In the middle nineteenth century, the Hindu ruler of the State found that very large numbers of these people were anxious or willing to return *en bloc* to Hinduism. He sent a

deputation to the pundits of Benares inquiring if this could be done. The pundits refused to countenance any such change of faith and there the matter ended." This was long before Jinnah raised the religious cry to serve the ends of politics which resulted in the division of Kashmir between Pakistan and India.

It is the imperialist device of Western religions no less than the Islamic to build up numerical not qualitative values. This even despite Christ's injunction: "O, ye hypocrites, that would encompass the world to gather one proselyte!" In India, though the British have formally left, the proselytising fury continues even in Tamil Nadu in subtle and more than open ways. On the other hand, the sense in which 'Hindu' is applied today as intended to embrace Saivism makes it difficult to disentangle the latter from notions of an organised religion. The meaning given to Siva is outside all the utilitarian applications of modern religions. Sufficient attention has been given already to the Siva concept that it is needless to repeat here. But, when the Brahman pundits of Benares refused to countenance conversion, that was in line with Indian tradition whatever harm politically it may have caused to the people of Kashmir.

The role of foreign religions has been and continues to be now even more imperialist. Christian institutionalism was throughout a growing challenge even in the West when it began to vie with temporal authority for power, influence and prestige. That implied vast institutional power of a commercial kind. It was found that, on the eve of the Reformation, no less than one-third of the land of Europe was in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church no less than half of the wealth of Europe. H. A. L. Fisher has dealt with this subject historically and Middleton Murray damned the religious hypocrisy in his book, "*Betrayal of Christ by the Churches*". The latter said, "The intellectuals of the Church might theorize in the abstract about the principles of social justice; but the Church itself showed no inclination to sacrifice some of its wealth to realize them." Supported by enormous foreign funds from the proselytizing West, the other Christian denominations too carry on regardless of every scruple even today.

The Moguls were openly imperialistic and ruthless whilst they made religion the cover for colonialist expansion. Saivism throughout India disintegrated as a force of cohesiveness, strength and purposiveness yielding way to geographical and cultural fragmentation. Saivism was no organised religion and its existence was only in the cultural, economic and intellectual growth of the whole people. It integrated India in the richness of vision and perceptions as apart from the aggressiveness of the Judaic tradition to which Christianity and Islam belonged. Marx, when he came down heavily on religion, no doubt had in mind the Christian and Islamic religions. Irrefutably and forcefully he said: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people." (*Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*).

There was nothing on the profane level in the understanding of history and geography in the Indian mind before the foreign impact. Kashmir, for example, represented the Himalayas symbolically because the Saiva faith embraced the entirety of Nature and flowed from eternity into time like the river Ganga—the daughter of the Himalayas. In the Ganga was seen the Mother of the seas in which was the flow of time from the present (*Nunc fluens*) into eternity (*nunc aeternitatis*). Jawaharlal Nehru whose origins are Kashmir described the Ganga as "a symbol and memory of the past of India, running into the present and flowing on to the great ocean of the future."

When Saivism was held sacred throughout India, the Ganga remained pure and sacred. But today, as evidence of the precipitate decline in all that was sacred and valuable in India, the river has called for measures mechanically devised to prevent pollution. The Ganga traverses nearly 1,550 miles on its journey to the sea covering nearly 27 major towns and cities discharging the dirt and filth of modern civilisation. As a commentator said recently (M. V. Kamath writing in "Indian Express" of 18/08/85): "From Hardwar to Calcutta, the river is treated as one unending sewer fit only to carry urban liquid waste (both sewage and sullage), half-burnt dead bodies, carrion, pesticides and insecticides and the sins of millions who

annually take a dip in it. The desecration of the river is mind-boggling, when it is not positively sickening."

When Saivism strengthened the social personality, its obliteration through industry and commerce has produced only the eternally discontented and rapacious in human nature. Saivism made the state of peace a desideratum but the industrial-commercial growth has projected in the Indian mind the pleasure derived in naked egoism as the only objective of life. Truth is indeed precious in our delusion-ridden world because today no opportunity is offered by the external and alien forces at work to perceive the only thing valuable in the human mind, namely its profound and supra-personal continuity.

Man has to impose upon himself the penalty for his own self-interest and, since ugliness comes from non-recognition of that divine beauty from which the being of all things is derived — (*ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur*)—we have an ugly world divided by the contending forces of evil in the very land of hoary wisdom and spiritual insight, namely India.

When Giselbertus, sculptor of the "Last Judgement of Autun" inscribed as perhaps a reminder of his own self-mortification, "*Terreat hic terror quos terreus alligat error* (meaning "Let this terror frighten those to whom terrestrial error holds in bondage") he was conveying to the world what is meant by the Divine visitation on those who build their own prisons in a world of freedom and beauty. What is today holding India back from Saivism is the love of the industrial-commercial man for bondage. The Western influence has so encroached that it is threatening to involve the whole world in its own downfall. Working through commerce and conquest as well as by propaganda, religious and otherwise; helped considerably by the media—visual, mental and aural; through an education system copying from the West which in its turn seeks to facilitate the alien conquest, the Indian mind is now to a great extent anti-traditional if it is not submissive to its own superficial interests. The Indian has now become the 20th century man who can no longer participate in the Divine

Beauty which brings together things that wander—"the Intelligible Light which assembles and unites all things that it illuminates."

The whole change to the physical, commercial and egotistic in the Tamil mind today is due to the mistaken belief that it is possible to reach this world through the medium of the body. Hence the hankering after speed, the allurements of modern gadgets, craze for the ephemeral in the form of political, fashion and novelty devices resulting in the inward contempt for the Tamil in the form of poetry, arts and crafts. Where Tamils struggled through millenia to reach the world through the medium of the psyche, they have today the more bestial way of the body assuming that to be the only medium for the struggle to know and liberate. There is frightful devastation proceeding apace for the spirit of man as known and understood in Tamil which in turn has brought about rapid personality disintegration.

The Western invasion was never more completely achieved than today even though the so-called European and Islamic aggressors have pulled out physically. The modern Tamil mind continues to reflect the enslavement even in the approach to historical studies. The past of Tamil was always involved in radical change but giving room for any impoverishment for the psyche was altogether remote from Tamil thinking —

பழையனகழிதலும் புதியனபுகுதலும்  
வழுவல கால வகையினாலே

The path of wisdom, says Valluvar, is to be with the settled form called Truth, however the world may change outwardly :

எவ்வது உறைவது உலகம் உலகத்தோடு  
அவ்வது உறைவது அறிவு

The very concept of Siva embraced constant rediscovery because He is the psychic factor proven on all fours as the archetype of the unconscious. The proof today has become more and more difficult since the procession is from wholeness

to sectarianism as well as from the metaphysical to the physical. The religious need is a longing for wholeness and this is found only in the stillness of the soul. The essence of Tamil is its soul and therefore it gave birth to the most wondrous images. That soul was never intended to be squandered as today in every form of licentiousness.

From childhood the Tamil language performed the task of gradually awakening consciousness because the tradition knew that such consciousness was the precondition of being. The individual is the carrier of this consciousness. Thus the psyche was given great importance in Tamil education because it alone carries with it the dignity of a cosmic principle. In the very education at alphabet level was instilled this discipline which enabled thought to be elevated to consciousness. Thus Nature played a true and direct role because the Tamil outlook recognized that all Nature found its fulfilment in man. There were no delusions of the modern schizophrenic because Tamil education, as it proceeded, fathomed the polarities whilst regulating and motivating the conscious contents.

The great psychologist Jung found the archetype in "the invisible, ultra-violet end of the psychic spectrum" but in Western approaches this will always remain a far-fetched goal. Tamil education—(certainly not the profane and imitative one of today)—was able to reach this goal through a variety of literary, artistic and cultural disciplines. Where the physical world outside has driven man to speed, disease and to the verge of final disaster, Tamil gave direct access to the archetypal world inside him which is even more real than the gross and physical outside. Thus in Tamil alone is found what the modern world in the ultimate wants to gain — the self-liberating power of the introverted mind.

Where the ego is stripped or becomes unaware of its importance there comes into being a new vocabulary of experience and understanding. That accounts for the most wonderful growth in poetry, music and dance peculiar only to the Tamil people. That called for a single definition in Tamil covered by the word *Muthamizl* which under Western influence has no

longer relevance or meaning. Apparently it is the subjective in the modern world which shows how much the ego needs to be catered for. The contrast between the two worlds has been effectively put by Jung: "On a primitive level people are afraid of witches; on the modern level we are apprehensively aware of microbes. There everybody believes in ghosts, here everybody believes in vitamins. Once upon a time men were possessed by devils, now they are not less obsessed by ideas, and so on." \*

Epidemics can be of two kinds but the psychic is the most harmful because resistance to it is very little. The Christian and Islamic invasions have been of the psychic kind with people embracing the faiths being compulsively tied through various devices such as baptism, circumcision, change of names and the like. Take for example what happened in the typically Saiva territory of Kashmir. Untold misery was caused through Moghul, Pathan and Sikh rule.

S. M. Iqbal and K. L. Nirash writing on "The Culture of Kashmir" refer to Kashmir Saivism as "one of the most beautiful and most highly developed school of Indian philosophy." (P. 27) Abhinavagupta is associated with the depth of Saivism and among his numerous writings "*Pratyabhijna Vimarsini*" is one. Like in Saiva Siththantham there is concern with the three-fold scene called *Trika* (Tamil—*Mupporul—Vilazkkam*). The same authors vouch for the hold of Saivism in Kashmir which they say "has produced masterpieces of history, philosophy, poetry, romance, fable and mythology.... Apart from Kalidasa, to whom some scholars have sought to assign a home in Kashmir, we come across Ksemendra, a prodigious writer, who summarised the whole of Ramayana in his *Ramayana Munjari*, and the entire Mahabharata in *Bharata Manjari*." (ibid Page 65).

Other points to take note of are that there had been a remarkable revival of Sanskrit learning in Kashmir during the

\* "The Collected Works Vol II on 'The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation' P. 486

reign of King Avanthivarman (855-883 A. D). The Kashmir pundits are even today divided into 133 exogamous gotras, each gothra claiming descent from a rishi. Kashmir, like the Tamil counterpart, had made a large contribution to aesthetics. The twin disciplines of *Alankara* and *Natya-sastra* were built up in Kashmir.

Wherever there was Saivism in India or elsewhere there was achieved a synthesis in life and outlook as reflected in the philosophy. That synthesis elevated the personal and impersonal as well as monistic and dualistic to the Still Point that the Dance concept engendered and in which alone there was a reconciliation possible for life. Hence *Natya* had its greatest expositor in Kashmir while the Dance lived gathering meaning and significance for the Indian mind of the South.

Saivism had an universal grip over India because it offered a scientific base for life and thus was able to release the psyche from the stranglehold of the ego. On the other hand it is the combination of the ego and intellect today which has inflated the ego and with it the needs of men. In the crazy pursuit it has become necessary all the time to embrace science and technology as ends in themselves. None sees that in this trend is also a great decline for the spirit of man. Modern science has despiritualised the world whilst creating a mercenary commercial outlook all around which provides the ideal conditions for the nuclear annihilation of mankind.

The experience of the psyche today is no longer numinous. The ego with its unfathomable obscurities cannot create reality and this is clear when one sees today the inexorable moral degeneration of society while the individual element is rapidly being transformed into something baneful, if not destructive and anarchical. Whatever 'progress' has been made rationally has to yield to the psychological in the scientific sense in the same way that Siva was understood in the Indian mind only through His manifold contradictions.

The effort in this book has been directed to rescue the present Tamil mind from being enveloped wholly by technological



and 'scientific' thinking — a thinking that can only multiply mechanised greed and so far has only produced a culture that is consumerist. The mind of Tamil was never the eternally suckling crying for the bottle as it indeed today is. Consumerism is now a pathological phenomenon such as alcoholism and drug addiction because it keeps on multiplying desire all the time. None would like an escape from industrialism into drugs which the West has shown by example as the way of modern 'progress' through science and technology.

Tamil education in tradition never created problems of illiteracy because it was never imitative or external to the being. Living as it did in memory it belonged to the creative process since it built the inner polarity of the psyche. The Tamil people never lost the sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. Their poverty today therefore is great, if it is not unpardonable.

In Tamil education as understood in tradition, man became the world's epitome and his struggles represented those of the elements and of the world alike. It was different from what can be seen as the result of the present devaluation of the psyche which is seen everywhere in the form of social chaos.

There is confusion today following the repudiation of social hierarchies such as Tamil which gave strength and significance to the human personality. The interplay of distinct natures found their fulfilment in Tamil since there was no imposition of a complete uniformity as seen through politics and modern education. The merely verbal and 'bookish' education of today which dallies only with the rudimentary and heterogenous, has produced even more confusion. What naturally has followed is the contagion of deception everywhere. Thus the argument put forward by René Guénon calls for serious attention: "The superior cannot emanate from the inferior for the simple reason that the greater cannot be derived from the less; this statement is an absolute mathematical certitude which nothing can gainsay." ("Crisis of the Modern World" Page 70.)

## APPENDIX—I

The norms of government laid down for the kingly order were drawn from the truly traditional spirit which gave value and place to things in their natural order. The king was not the symbol of a political system where, as Arthur Toynbee observes, "People often put the interests of the political party above those of the nation and those of the nation above the interests of mankind as a whole." (Page 121 "*Choose Life* - dialogue between Toynbee & Ikeda"). The duties here enjoined prevented the king from usurping power. In the sense in which there was abuse as seen in almost all monarchical systems of the world, the Tamil kingly order was not just the focus of loyalty and power exercised arbitrarily.

The Tamil king was not the result of any undesigned historical development. He represented the peak of what could ultimately be the focus of loyalty. The kingly power was seen and felt in every strata and life of society because, as can be seen in the following functions, it embraced even the most humble and lowly. No individual was ignored because kingship here embraced a participation in the art and science of government by the entire community.

There was no descent to the low and mean level of the voter who knew nothing of the urgent imperatives of participation in self-government. The king in Tamil was symbol and highest living expression of each person's duties and functions in society which gave life in all its aspects the highest identity and self-expression.

All these duties took man into account while providing stability for the eco-system. The *Law (Aram)* was unwritten and uncodified because it bridged the gaping differences where the smallest detail could not have been omitted. For instance ஐயம்

or charity was written into the life of the community even before the thought of one's food (ஐயம் இட்டுண்). The destitutes were so few that they rarely called for intervention of kingly duty. Inns, tanks, groves etc. were those of the king directly. Equally were the proper division of function in society. As one takes the overall view, the needs of society were simple and the demands made on the king were to see that the well-springs of the human spiritual life were not dried. That enabled a great level of learning through poetry, music and art.

The tradition of kingly rule which characterised Siam (present Thailand) was typically Dravidian. The coronation of these kings, though they went by the great epic name Rama—(the founder's first title being Ramadhipathi I) - was inspired and sanctified by Thiruvassagam. These kings represented a strong and abiding Dravidian tradition and one recent writer refers to "Waves of Indian Saiva Brahmanism reaching the Peninsula probably between the 8th and 11th centuries A.D."

Kingly duties provided for social justice and human relationship within the context of a communal way of life. It provided for the development of man in consonance with the natural environment. The thirty-two kingly duties as given below were the constituents of justice whilst they defined a way of life with the most universal value for the people of the day. The society of the day was value-based. There was no subordination or sacrifice of the welfare of the people nor was there manifest as today permissiveness or restrictiveness.

The kingly duties were concerned mainly with the following:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Homes for the destitute   | — ஆதுலர்க்குச் சாலை    |
| 2. Food for Othuvār namely teachers of traditional Saiva poetry set to music | — ஓதுவார்க்குணவு       |
| 3. Food for the six religious sects  | — ஆறுசமயத்தார்க்குண்டி |

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|---|-----------------------|
| 4. Feeding the cow even with a morsel         | — பசுவுக்கு வாயுறை    |
| 5. Food for prisoners                         | — சிறைச்சோறு          |
| 6. Alms for the poor (a duty enjoined on all) | — ஐயம் (ஐயம் இட்டுண்) |
| 7. Food for the traveller or way-farer        | — தீண்பண்டம் நல்கல்   |
| 8. Food for the destitute                     | — அறவைச்சோறு          |
| 9. Midwives for child deliveries              | — மகப்பெறுவித்தல்     |
| 10. Oversee and nurture child growth          | — மகவு வளர்த்தல்      |
| 11. Milk for infants                          | — மகப்பால் வார்த்தல்  |
| 12. Cremation facilities for the dead         | — அறவைப் பிணஞ்சுடல்   |
| 13. Clothing for the poor                     | — அறவைத் தூரியம்      |
| 14. Chunam and perfumes for those in need     | — சுண்ணம்             |
| 15. Medicine for the sick and ailing          | — நோய் மருந்து        |
| 16. Barbers for the community                 | — நாவிதர்             |
| 17. Dhobies for the community                 | — வண்ணாரர்            |
| 18. Looking glasses                           | — கண்ணாடி             |
| 19. Ornament for ear                          | — காதோலை              |
| 20. Medicine for eye                          | — கண்மருந்து          |
| 21. Oil for head                              | — தலைக்கெண்ணை         |
| 22. Marriage for those in need                | — பெண் போகம்          |
| 23. share grief of others                     | — பிறர் துயர் காத்தல் |
| 24. Set up sources for water supply           | — தண்ணீர்ப்பந்தல்     |
| 25. Construct inns                            | — மடம்                |

\* ("Siamese State Ceremonies" by H.G. Quaritch Wales)

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|---|-------------------------------|
| 26. Construct tanks                               | — தடம்                        |
| 27. Set up gardens & groves                       | — சோலை                        |
| 28. Pillars for cattle to scrub                   | — ஆவுறுஞ்சுதறி                |
| 29. Food for animals                              | — விலங்கிற்குணவு              |
| 30. Provide stud forms                            | — ஏறு விடுதல்                 |
| 31. Pay ransom to save life                       | — விலைகொடுத்துயிர்<br>காத்தல் |
| 32. Financial aid for maidens<br>towards marriage | — கன்னிகாதானம்                |

All the above embraced a pristine culture which lived only within the constraints imposed by a natural eco-system. It was not as today the end of living to usher the beginning of survival. The king knew best how the species could be sustained at a high level of culture without damage to nature. It brought to focus the world of Francis Thompson:

"O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee."

("In No Strange Land")

The kings represented the highest wisdom and sense of justice so that the most learned and wise men became Prime Ministers. Two classic examples are available through the outpourings of their mystical poetry.

Both Manikkavasagar and Sekkilar gave the Tamil people their grandest mystical poetry. Rev. G.U. Pope describes how Manikkavasagar carried out his duties as Prime Minister: "Though he beholds men around him as souls imprisoned through ante-natal evil, and feels how profitless all human existence is, and how surely all sentient beings are mere actors walking in a vain show, he nevertheless continues with unflagging diligence to dispense impartial justice as his sovereign's representative..." (P. XIX - "The Thiruvacagam" by Rev. G.U. Pope).

The Tamil king and his court were not mere representatives of time. They confronted it through every fleeting moment to present kingliness as an ever-lasting Now — the *Nnuc'stans*. Hence even today remain the marvels of Art and Architecture in temples and in the lives of people, their song and dances. The temples sprawling Tamil Nadu are evidence of the validity of kingship. They created a wave rather the result of the collective consciousness of an age swamped not as today by conquest and alienation. What that collective consciousness would have been is difficult for us of the present age to understand. In a different context Virginia Woolf gave expression to it:

"Life is not a series of jig-lamps symmetrically arranged: life is a luminous halo, or semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end." (Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", *Collected Essays*, 106).

If the temples extant today are sufficient evidence, we have to look as T. S. Eliot did with "the backward look behind the assurance of recorded history". (The *Dry Salvages*, 11). It calls for intensity of understanding and feeling—the same "intensity" which Eliot offers:

"Not the intense moment  
Isolated, with no before and after,  
But a lifetime burning in every moment.  
And not the lifetime of one man only  
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered."

(East Coker, V)

The Tamil hierarchical structure leading to the apex in kingship called for more and more severity of discipline. Thus the king meant the peak of discipline. In him inhered the concept of order and discipline. The will to govern began with the will to govern oneself and that was how the Tamil kingly authority was found to be the *sine qua non* of just government. It was the sole inspiration for the renewal of Dravidian society in all that was beautiful in human life.

## APPENDIX-2

### Thevaram Period and the Tamil Social Order

(Paper read by author at International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, South India at a Seminar held on 20th June 1986,)

The period covered by Thevaram and Thiruvagasam long preceded the Islamic and Christian. The latter were of Judaic origin with certain hide-bound and intolerant attitudes which paved the way for modern colonialism. The destructive impact on Saivism was most felt from these external and alien forces. Historians influenced by pro-Western and Judaic thought have in their own way, created a segment or division called *Anno Domini* (A. D.) by which to perpetuate the alienation and subjugation even of the great primordial Dravidian tradition. The Mohenjodaro and Harappa excavations point to Saivism in India millennia before Christ.

Modern literatures both Indian and Western are culpable for their many facile assumptions and prejudices. The result is that the Christian view of the world has paled for many people. The symbolic treasure-rooms of the Thirumurais still remain marvellous store-houses though the modern world has gone decrepit if not diseased by the mummeries and show pieces of science. We have robbed ourselves of our roots and guided instincts in order only to become particles in a mass. Nietzsche would say about this situation that we are ruled only by the spirit of gravity. Our historians have deceived us by their haste to copy the Western and Christian counterparts. This has made us indifferent and perverse caught as we are in a meaningless and accelerated tempo of life with little or no time left for the things that once belonged to our memories.

When we neglected our Thirumurais, we allowed ourselves to be caught in all the haste of the devil as the Latin saying goes "Omnis festinatio ex parte diaboli est" — "All haste is of the devil". Hence Manikkavasagar made Siva stand outside all concepts of speed.

வேகங் கெடுத்தாண்ட வேந்தனடி வெல்க''

(Thiruvagasam "*Sivapuranam*")

Siva becomes the great enemy of speed and the accompanying excitement.

We are today empirical and therefore sinful. Our ego is at fault because the ego can grow only out of the darkness of the psyche. In *Thevaram* and *Thiruvagasam* are the richest experiences of mankind. They are so rich that their understanding became projected into the world's greatest musical system. They are great and unequalled because they trampled on the ego as Siva symbolically did in his Dance.

The pre-Christian Judaic tradition also had a law or *Torah* set down in the so-called "Five Books of Moses". It was tribalistic or Jahvistic leading ultimately to the priestly. The "Ten Words" or Decalogue were closely akin to the Ten Commandments. The injunctions for example found in the "Book of the Covenant" were profane and tribal. The Christian Old Testament followed this pattern and so too the Islamic which was a synthesis of the Judaic and Christian. The sacred book of Islam expressed the impeccability of the prophets.

The Tamil or Dravidian grew into fullness of experience by sheer force of distinguishing between the products of the mind and the spirit. It was all the difference between individual points of view and the perspectives that were universal. This tradition produced a radiation all the time of the being's Divine Essence. It was the state where the world was not renounced but the world either had left or been transformed. Wisdom remained not in any remote possibility but in the very applicability of its Science to everyday life. Thus Tamil Tradition continued in terms of *yugas* stretching over vast periods of

time literally understood as Sangam. Today where modern perspectives for example would put social existence as the determinant of consciousness it becomes either ephemeral or short-lived. In the Tamil tradition which covered millenia there was *numinosum*. There was full view before the Tamil people of the Archimedean point outside the mind.

To put it more clearly what the Tamil people today accept as the marvels of science and technics are just the things contributing to their appalling lack of wisdom and introspection. All that goes for modern Tamil writing is banal if it is not surface—scratching. There is an universal law contained in the tension of the opposites which only the Tamils of tradition knew. We who label ourselves Tamil are only caught in the snares and delusions, the lies and arbitrary opinions of the modern mind. Thus we are creating a history of alienation from ourselves as from our inner being.

When reading into Tamil history called the sacred and which covers a vast stretch of time before the beginning of the modern, one has to look entirely without modern lenses. What we see now is only a soulless rationalism reinforced by a narrow materialistic outlook. The rational has pursued an unrelenting path into the gutter of commercial and industrial progress. Further afield it has through nuclear physics opened the frightful prospect of annihilation for mankind. But fortunately in a different direction, pointing to the way of recovery found in Tamil, there is the transcendental territory of the archetype. Jung would term it the “psychic infra red and ultra-violet” which exist outside the human eye. The archetype therefore in Jung’s terms belongs to the “invisible ultra-violet end of the psychic spectrum”.

This transcendent element constitutes the world within us. In Jung’s own words: “The archetype as an image of instinct is a spiritual goal towards which the whole nature of man strives; it is the see to which all rivers wend their way, the

prize which the hero wrests from the fight with the dragon”.\* In the long and only significant period of Dravidian history identified with Saivism, the modern rational stand-point of consciousness can only be found to be worthless. That meant Tamil history was able to turn the objective world into the artistic. It also found without the slightest room for doubt that the archetype is a psychic organ present in all of us.

What price do we pay today having cut loose from our archetypal foundations? We are neurotic in the same way as our consciousness is rootless. We are total victims of the worst epidemic which is that of the psychic. We have not merely devalued our past but have become incapable of revaluation.

Our history today lacks meaning or continuity. We have lost our past and have now become devalued and insignificant. We are creatures of time. In the most vulgar and profane sense the eternal life of our species is no longer reflected in our individual lives as we meander from timelessness to the time-bound, from the eternal to the irrelevant.

What has modern physical science done? It has opened the way to a knowledge of atoms, electrons, atomic nuclei, electron waves etc. unknown to sight, touch or hearing. Outside and beyond these is the reality of Siva, the realisation of Whom calls for a heightened sense of life. This heightened sense of life pervaded the entire Dravidian outlook before the Western blight destroyed every vestige of it.

Sociologically, under the all-pervasive influence of *Aram*, there was harmony, symmetry and beauty in Tamilian life. Thus Thirumoolar said:

“திறந்தரு முத்தியும் செல்வமும் வேண்டின்  
மறந்தும் அறநெறியே ஆற்றல் வேண்டும்”

(திருமந்திரம் - 244)

\* “On the Nature of the Psyche” (1947/1954). In C. W. 8: “The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche”, p. 415.

Thiruvalluvar stressed *Aram* because he was witness to the decline in the Tamil people's perceptions after the golden age of the Thirumurais ended.

Tamil was outside the profanities of time and all that goes for modern Tamil is a deceit on the Tamil people.

“கண்ணுதற் பெருங்கடவுளுங் கழகமோடமர்ந்து  
பண்ணுறத் தெரிந்து ஆய்ந்த இப்பசுந்தமிழ்”

is an ancient saying giving emphasis to the growth of Tamil outside the reach of every profanity.

The social order which created Tamil mystical poetry and preserved it in the memories of people has no relevance to history as understood today. Such voluminous compilations circulated in book form have ceased to create and enliven thought and experience as they did in the past. In fact time was not a determinant in Tamil thinking as it unfortunately has become today. To be more precise I would here quote Boethius :

“*Nunc fluens facit tempus,  
Nunc stans facit aeternitatem*”

(De Consol : 5-6)

Meaning: “The now that flows or moves creates time ; the Now that stays makes eternity”.

Gnanasambanthar sings :

“இன்றுநன்று நானே நன் றென்று நின்ற இச்சையால்  
பொன்றுகின்ற வாழ்க்கையைப் போகவிட்டுப்போதுமின்”

(இரண்டாம் திருமுறை - திருக்கோடிகா)

இன்று meaning ‘now’ here refers to the time that passes or the ‘nunc fluens’. Manikkavasagar in “*Koilar Thiruppathikam*” brings out very forcibly the meaning of the Now that stays (*Nunc-stans*). This Now gives the meaning of Eternity as something ever-present called in Latin the ‘*Nunc Stans*’



SUNTHARAR - Another of the Tamil people's evidence of the product of mysticism where the surrender of the ego became compulsive and inevitable. It led to the grandeur of poetry and music.

“இன்றெனக் கருளி இருள்கடிந்துள்ளத்  
தெழுகின்ற ஞாயிறே போன்று  
நின்ற நின்தன்மை நினைப்பற நினைந்தேன்  
நியலால் பிறிது மற்றின்மை  
சென்று சென்றனுவாய்த் தேய்ந்து தேய்ந்தொன்றும்  
திருப்பெரும் துறையுறை சிவனே  
ஒன்றும் நீ யல்ல அன்றி யொன்றில்லை  
யாருன்னை அறியகிற்பாரே”.

Sufi mysticism has some great resemblance to this where the call goes out to live in the present by withdrawing from the past and the future. The luminous state is the Ever-present and therefore outside the pull of the dualities. That is why the *Thevarams* are replete with this call :

“இடரினும் தளரினும் எனதுறு நோய்  
தொடரினும் உனகழல் தொழுதெழுவேன்.

(Sambanthar-  
திருவாவடுதுறை)

Sunderar sings :

“தூண்டாவிளக்கின் நற்சோதி  
தொழுவார் தங்கள் துயர் தீர்ப்பாய்  
பூண்டாய் எலும்பைப்புர மூன்றும்  
பொடியாச் செற்ற புண்ணியனே  
பாண்டாழ் வினைகளவை தீர்க்கும்  
பரமா பழைய னூர் மேய  
ஆண்டா ஆலங்காடா உன்  
அடியார்க்கடியேன் ஆவேனே.

(திருவாலங்காடு)

Manikkavasagar calls Siva “the Redeemer from the Dualities” in many places, Some examples are :

மீட்டிங்கு வந்து வினைப்பிறவி சாராமே  
கள்ளப்புலக்குரம்பை கட்டழிக்க வல்லானே

(சிவபுராணம்)

வினையின் தொகுதி  
ஒறுத்தெனை யாண்டுகொள்

(நீத்தல் விண்ணப்பம்)

தனித்துணை நீ நிற்க யான் தருக்  
கித்தலையால் நடந்த  
வினைத்துணையேனை விடுதிகண்டாய்

(நீத்தல் விண்ணப்பம்)

வினைகடிந்த வேதியன்

(திருவம்மாளை)

குழைத்தாற் பண்டைக் கொடுவினை நோய் காவாய்  
உடையாய் கொடுவினையேன்

(குழைத்தபத்து)

என்புள்ளருக்கி இருவினையை ஈடழித்து

(குலாப்பத்து)

வினைப்பிறவி என்கின்ற வேதனையில் அகப்பட்டுக்  
தனைச்சிறிதும் நினையாதே தளர்வெய்திக் கிடப்பேனை  
எனைப்பெரிதும் ஆட்கொண்டென் பிறப்பறுத்த இணையிலியை  
அனைத்துலகுந் தொழுந்தில்லை அம்பலத்தே கண்டேனே  
(கண்டபத்து)

How close the Tamil mystic has come to understand what is really the totality of man! Jung would say — though he knew nothing of Tamil — that the pairs of opposites constitute man's totality or the phenomenology of the paradoxical self.

Man in the Dravidian context was wholesomely integrated to the life of the Universe. The Thirumurais are sufficient evidence of this. There was an universality and validity in the psychic content of the Tamil man as he belonged to tradition. That Tradition was out of reach of modern history or geography. Further, it embraced a numerology which had nothing to do with the modern concept of numbers. Thus Thirumoolar gave definition to the ageless state, literally making each *manthiram* cover an year of the mystic's time - bounded existence. His life therefore stretched to nearly 3000 years. As a Siththar his awareness reflected the super-conscious state outside the profanities of time.

It is also clear that Thirumoolar was responsible for delving into the deeper aspects of the psyche—thus giving meaning to

Yoga as it began to take root in the Aryan mind as well as in the Vedas and Upanishads. Thirumoolar is sufficient evidence of the timeless nature of Saivism long before religion became Aryanised as Hinduism. He codified the Saiva doctrine which stretched to millennia before Christianity and covered the Indian sub-continent from the Himalayas to the South. To signify the length and duration of the Saiva doctrine, he, as expositor, even entered the body of Moolan, a cowherd. His exposition of Thirumanthiram took place near Chithamparam and it comprised the entire final truth of Sithantham.

“வேதாந்தஞ் சுத்தம் விளங்கிய சிந்தாந்தம்”

(Verse 1422)

The basis of Dravidian life was a common understanding and outlook on the substance of living. It was not as today a greedy display of instincts to amass and exploit the products of industry. Such greed was not permissible in a society whose guiding principle was *Aram*. When the Aryan influence began, it was retrogressive with its substitute virtue in *Dharma* which carried with it an exclusive hierarchy which became dominant and oppressive. The *Thevaram* period was the peak in the struggle to liberate along the norms of *Aram*. Manikka-vasagar represented this peak because he was kingly power in every sense both as Prime Minister and liberated being. His liberation was from the pairs of opposites and he saw easily how values need to be inverted to be one with the self.

“தனித்துணை நீ நிற்க யான் தருக்கித் தலையாலேநடந்த  
வினைத்துணையேனை விடுதிகண்டாய் வினையேனுடைய  
மனத்துணையே யென்றன் வாழ் முதலேயெனக் கெய்ப்பில்  
வைப்பே

தினைத்துணையேனும் பொறேன்றுய ராக்கையின் திண்வு  
லையே.

(நீத்தல் விண்ணப்பம்)

This explains in an incomparable imagery how man, during the normal course of day-to-day living is driven by values which are topsy-turvy and therefore it is necessary for a pur-



positive existence to reverse these in order to arrive at meanings away from mere profanities and banalities.

In the normal course we all think that we walk erect but "to walk on the head" is a directly meaningful way of stating the reversed analogy. In truth, if man has to live by the Truth, there has to be a complete reversal of mundane and, what we today go by, of commercial values. The self is an unconscious prefiguration of the ego and here the way is shown of going over to realities that transcend consciousness. The mind is not severed from its primordial oneness with the universe which is where the West fared miserably with philosophy. Thus has inevitably resulted in the modern world the conflict between science and religion.

The Tamil growth was marvellous evidence of the mind becoming a cosmic factor which modern psychology is proving to be of the very essence of existence. That Manikkavasagar and Sekilar had been chosen Prime Ministers shows the tremendous growth of kingly rule to reach and captivate the humblest mind. Periyapuram is evidence of the pervasive influence of Saivism into every strata of Tamil society. Images of the Nayanmar were installed in temples and the Thirumurais were on the lips of all people. It was therefore already proved that the psyche is the *sine qua non* of all experience and that the unconscious is part of the psyche. To reach this state of positive affirmation and proof had naturally called for millenia of growth.

The Tamil decline of recent times is an alarming signal which calls for revolutionary change both in State policy and education. The tragedy is that, what grew into maturity over many millennia is now being sacrificed at the altar of expediency and commercial gain. The Siva of the Tamil was not an anthropomorphic concept put away in the clouds. It was the Redeeming Principle where all time conceived in terms of yugas was resolved. The beautiful song of Appar which brings out the meaning most clearly is:

காலமு நாள் களுழிபடையாமுன் ஏகவுருவாகி மூவருருவில்  
சாலவுமாகி மிக்க சமயங்களாறின் உருவாகிநின்ற தழுவோன்  
ஞாலமுமேலை விண்ணொடுலகேழு முண்டு கறளாயொராலினிலேமேல்  
பாலனு மாயவற்கொர் பரமாயமூர்த்தி யவனு நமக்கோர் சரணே.

This address has touched only on a few silent points because the subject needs to be covered in all the vastness of its application to human life. Tamil holds out the only hope of liberation even in this disease-ridden age. This disease has spread fast due to the conflict between science and religion especially in the West.

The West prides itself on the nuclear bomb as a devastating fact but, simultaneous with the growth of science, has been the failure to establish the reality of thought itself. The alienation from the inner being is the most catastrophic development of modern scientific thought, research and application.

The Tamil people no doubt lived wholesomely in the many millenia of their existence and they have a contribution to make to the world even to-day. That contribution will be when they have succeeded in retracing their steps so that they can re-live their great and un-surpassed tradition now being submerged in assimilating only the external world through the gateway of the senses. The time has now come for them to grow into the stature meant for humanity by translating, as they have done in the past, into visible reality the world within us.

## THE COVER PAGE

(Cover page representation of the Dance of Siva)

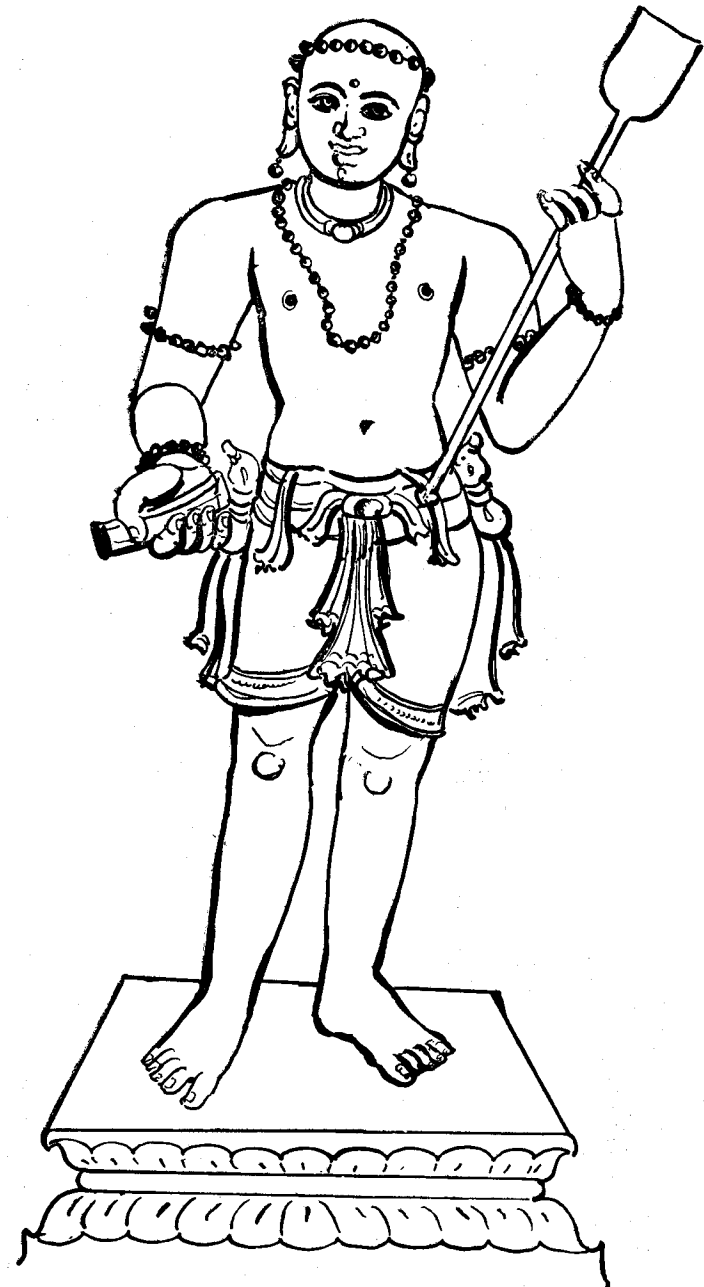
*Nallur bronze - (Tanjore District)*

"*The Dance of Shiva* of Ananda Coomaraswamy gives a view from which much meaning was arrived at but it was unable to reach the experience that Tamil alone was able to give in poetry, dance and music. The manifold revelations of the Cosmic Dance laid down a fundamental Law which was the stronghold and root of what was realised and understood as the enduring Reality.

Once the Dance became understood in all the experiences of song and poetry, the psyche became more and more alive that it was able to create reality each day. It is different from the intellect which tends to remain imprisoned in its own narrow fields being entirely insulated from the springs of life. *Nataraja* as *Dancer* calls for unconditional surrender to the fundamental law of one's being. In Tamil the image of the *Great Dancer* lived in the most expressive, elevating and deeply-realised song and poetry that the world has ever produced.

Nallur Natarajah reproduced on the cover page is unique in many ways giving meaning, *inter alia*, to what is called the ceaseless flow of energy as well as endless motion and activity - (the rhythmic dance of creation and destruction) - now understood in high-energy physics.

In the Resting Foot which is the "Still Point" unaffected by all the movement and activity which constitute the essential properties of matter, was found the genesis of the *Supreme Being* called *Siva*. The entire gamut of Tamil poetry including the greatest—*Kural*, *Thiruvasham* and *Thevaram* - bring out the metaphor of the Cosmic Dance and the Resting Foot of *Siva* wherein lies the centre of being and consciousness. It



APPAR - Until ripe old age this scholar-mystic grew into the stature of poetry and music. He was perennially on pilgrimage at the same time sanctifying the great temples of Tamil Nadu.

was all science, poetry as well as mysticism intermingled and inter-related.

The following *Thiru-Thandavam* of *Thirunavukkarasār* or *Appar*\* is a complete rhapsody in poetry and music of the Great Cosmic Dance linked with Nallur in Tanjore District. It is untranslatable because it belongs to music set to the raga *Ari-Kampanthi* and called by name *Thiru-Tandavam*. The peak of Tamil is reached outside mere poetry. The poetry here communicates itself only through one pre-ordained and deeply-moving Raga. The repetition of the two last lines in each verse has been intended to give intensity and beauty to the rhapsody. It is a re-distribution of total energy into new patterns and is really a transmission beyond words. It is outside the mere verbal and therefore penetrates the very being which at the same time becomes luminous. In the knowledge of this dedication to the Feet of Siva the ego is no more and a sort of rhythm and dance come into the soul. Each moment in the song is transformed into a goal. The divinity here is a constancy as seen in the repetition of the last two lines of each verse which is what really belongs to the self. The whole poem brings out consciousness without an ego.

Where this Nallur Bronze of Tanjore District goes the Department of Archaeology. Government of Tamil Nadu, has not gone into the concept fixed in the minds of ancient Tamils regarding the special significance, meaning and imagery as rendered in this particular Tamil poem of Appar. Their task has been merely descriptive such as "the Cosmic Dancer dances with His right leg placed on the back of Muyalaka who is lying on the *Padma Peeta* over the *Patra Peeta*."

Where archaeology goes especially of the ancient Dravidian, it is necessary that it should work towards the true supporting data found in Tamil poetry. The purely Western outlook is one of disconnection and its tendency is to view things only from a misty distance. This distant view can also become rigid where what is wanted is absolute cognition. The guidance of archaeology therefore must necessarily enable the return to a state of equilibrium.

## திருநாவுக்கரசர் (அப்பர்) திருத்தாண்டகம்

திருநல்லூர்

திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

நினைந்துருகுமடியாரை நையவைத்தார்  
நில்லாமே தீவினைக ணீங்க வைத்தார்  
சினந்திருகு களிற்று ரிவைப் போர்வை வைத்தார்  
செழுமதியின் றளிர்வைத்தார் சிறந்துவானோர்  
இனந்துருளி மணிமகுடத்தேறத்துற்ற  
வினமலர்கள் போதவிழ்ந்து மதுவாய்ப் பில்கி  
நனைந்தனைய திருவடி யென்றலைமேல் வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

பொன்னலத்தநறுங்கொன்றைசடைமேல் வைத்தார்  
புலியுரியின்னதன்வைத்தார் புனலும் வைத்தார்  
மன்னலத்ததிரடோண் மேன் மழுவாள்வைத்தார்  
வார்காதிற்ருழைவைத்தார் மதியும் வைத்தார்  
மின்னலத்த நுண்ணிடையாள் பாகம் வைத்தார்  
வேழத்தினுரிவைத்தார் வெண்ணூல் வைத்தார்  
நன்னலத்திருவடி யென்றலைமேல் வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

தோடேறுமலர்க்கொன்றை சடைமேல் வைத்தார்  
துன்னெருக்கின்வடம்வைத்தார் துவலை சிந்தப்  
பாடேறுபடுதிரைக ளெறிய வைத்தார்  
பனிமத்தமலர்வைத்தார் பாம்பும்வைத்தார்  
சேடேறுதிருநுதன்மே னுட்டம் வைத்தார்  
சிலைவைத்தார் மலைபெற்றமகளைவைத்தார்  
நாடேறுதிருவடி யென்றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

வில்லருளிவருபுருவத் தொருத்தி பாகம்  
பொருத்தாகி விரிசடைமேலருவிவைத்தார்  
கல்லருளி வரிசிலையாவைத்தா ரூராக்  
கைலாயமலைவைத்தார் கடலூர்வைத்தார்  
சொல்லருளி யறநால்வர்க்கறியவைத்தார்  
சுடுசுடலைப்பொடிவைத்தார் துறவிவைத்தார்  
நல்லருளாற்றிருவடி யென்றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

விண்ணிரியுத்திரிபுரங்க ளெறியவைத்தார்  
வினைதொழுவார்க்கற வைத்தார் துறவிவைத்தார்  
கண்ணெரியாற் காமனையும்பொடியாவைத்தார்  
கடிக்கமலமலர்வைத்தார் கைலைவைத்தார்  
திண்ணெரியுந் தண்புனலுமுடனேவைத்தார்  
திசைதொழுதுமிசை யமரர்திகழ்ந்துவாழ்த்தி  
நண்ணரியதிருவடி யென்றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

உற்றுலவுபிணி யுலகத்தெழுமை வைத்தார்  
ருயிர்வைத்தா ருயிர்செல்லுங்கதிகள்வைத்தார்  
மற்றமரர் கணம்வைத்தா ரமரர்காணு  
மறைவைத்தார் குறைமதியம் வளரவைத்தார்  
செற்றமலியார்வமொடு காமலோபஞ்  
சிறவாதநெறிவைத்தார் துறவிவைத்தார்  
நற்றவர்சேர்திருவடி யென்றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

மாறுமலைந்தாரரண மெறியவைத்தார்  
மணிமுடிமேலரைவத் தாரணிகொண்மேனி  
நீறுமலிந்தெரியாடனிலவ வைத்தார்  
நெற்றிமேற்கண்வைத்தார் நிலையம்வைத்தார்  
ஆறுமலைந்தறுதிரைக ளெறியவைத்தார்  
ரார்வத்தாலடியமர்ப்பரவ வைத்தார்  
நாறுமலர்த்திருவடி யென்றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே

குளங்கள்மிகு மலைகடல்கண் ஞாலம் வைத்தார்  
 குருமணிசேரரவைத்தார் கோலம்வைத்தார்  
 உளங்கிளருமரவத்தி னுச்சிவைத்தார்  
 குண்டருளிவிடம்வைத்தா ரெண்டோள் வைத்தார்  
 நிலங்கிளரும்புனல்கனலு ளனிலம் வைத்தார்  
 நிமிர்விசிம்பின்மிசைவைத்தார் நினைந்தாரிந்நாள்  
 நலங்கிளருந்திருவடியென்றலை மேல்வைத்தார்  
 நல்லூரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

சென்றுருளுங்கதிரிரண்டும் விசும்பில் வைத்தார்  
 திசைபத்து மிருநிலத்திற்றிருந்தவைத்தார்  
 நின் றருளியடியமரர் வணங்கவைத்தார்  
 நிறைதவமுமறைபொருளு நிலவவைத்தார்  
 கொன்றருளிக் கொடுங்கூற்றநடுங்கியோடக்  
 குரைகழற்சேவடி வைத்தார் விடையும்வைத்தார்  
 நன்றருளுந் திருவடியென்றலைமேல் வைத்தார்  
 நல்லூ ரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

பாம்புரிஞ்சி மதிகிடந்து திரைகளோங்கப்  
 பனிக்கொன்றை சடைவைத்தார் பணிசெய்வானோர்  
 ஆம்பரிசுதமக்கெல்லா மருளும்வைத்தார்  
 ரஞ்சுடலைப் பொடிவைத்தார் ரழகும்வைத்தார்  
 ஒம்பரியவல்வினைநோய் தீரவைத்தார்  
 ருமையையொருபால் வைத்தார் ருகந்துவானோர்  
 நாம்பரவுந்திருவடியென் றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
 நல்லூ ரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

குளங்கிளரும் வருதிரைகளேழும் வைத்தார்  
 குருமணிசேர் மலைவைத்தார் மலையைக்கையால்  
 உலங்கிளர வெடுத்தவன்றோண் முடியுநோவ  
 வொருவிரலாலுறவைத்தார் நிறைவாவென்று  
 புலம்புதலுமருளொடு போர்வாளும் வைத்தார்  
 புகழ்வைத்தார் புரிந்தாளாக் கொள்ளவைத்தார்  
 நலங்கிளருந் திருவடியென்றலைமேல்வைத்தார்  
 நல்லூ ரெம்பெருமானார் நல்லவாறே.

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## ERRATA

Page	line	error	to read as
V	2	"Thirundappaguthi"	"Thiru-andappahuthi"
VI	11	கடுறை	காடுறை
IX	16	the more of the foreign culture that	more of the foreign culture than
XVI	20	தாங்கள்	நாங்கள்
4	32	Principal	principial
18	16	Principal	principial
20	6	We is the	Where is the
30	23	these is	there is
55	3	then to exist	then cease to exist
74	1	as dear as	and are as dear
82	9	in the hearts	into the hearts
118	10	zoer	Zero
120	7	uneasy	easy

## ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is the outcome of considerable thinking, research and objectivity. Its intent is to give a world coverage to Tamil culture at a time when the Tamil people especially in Sri Lanka have suffered much due to lack of understanding, sympathy and love.

The author, who has been with our Institute for some years now, brings out a forceful and traditionally true view which calls for serious study by all scholars concerned with the oldest living civilization of the world—the Dravidian.

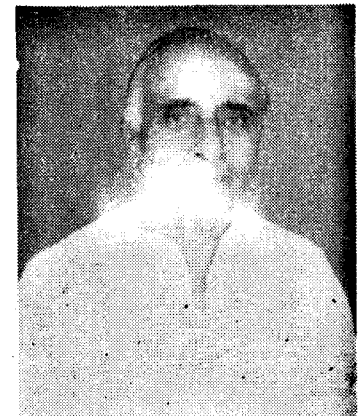
The book is sponsored by distinguished Tamils in the U.S.A. and a percentage of its sales proceeds in India and abroad will go towards the rehabilitation of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu.

The author Mr. C. Rajasingham of Sri Lanka deserves our fullest sympathy and support for undertaking this unparalleled and unique venture into the field of Dravidian studies.

**Dr. A. N. Perumal**

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THE AUTHOR

