

SRI LA SRI  
**ARUMUGA NAVALAR**  
THE  
CHAMPION REFORMER OF THE HINDUS



**A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY**  
BY  
**V. MUTTUCUMARASWAMY, B. A.**



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19th December, 1965

AN APPRECIATION OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL  
STUDY OF

SRI-LA-SRI ARUMUGA NAVALAR

I have read with great pleasure the first imprint of the Biography of Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar in English, a revised edition of which is being released today by the Indu - Ma - Manram on the occasion of the Gurupooja of this eminent "Champion Reformer of the Hindus".

It is from the pen of Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy, B.A., the well known author of a popular series of "Historical Readers in Tamil". He is a leading spirit in numerous Hindu activities; and is a patron and one of the founders of the Colombo North Hindu Paripalana Sangam

His study of Arumuga Navalar meets a long felt want. It introduces to the English speaking public, the salient facts of Navalar's life and accounts for the esteem in which Navalar is held by the Tamil speaking people in Ceylon and abroad.

We are deeply grateful to Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy for this book and hope that he will give us many more biographies of the worthies of Ceylon.

A. MAHADEVA.



SRI LA SRI

ARUMUGA NAVALAR

RAR-2

THE CHAMPION REFORMER  
OF THE HINDUS

(1822-1879)

அருமுக நாவலர்  
யாழ் மாணவர் பிரதிநிதிகள்  
சுரு

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

BY

V. MUTTUCUMARASWAMY, B. A.

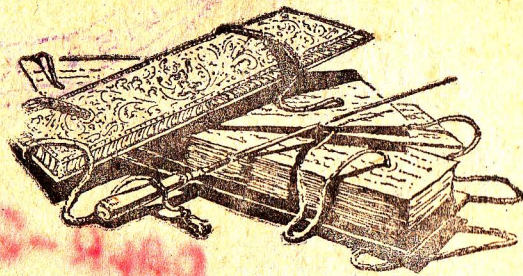
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## SRILA SRI ARUMUGA NAVALAR ANSWERS:- WHAT IS SAIVA RELIGION?

A Saivaite is he, who believes and lives in accordance with the following tenets. Sivaperuman is the first absolute God; Vedas and Sivagamas are his first works; Vedas are common to all, but Sivagamas apply in particular to the Saiva faith. Holy Ashes and Rudrakshas are the symbols of Siva, Panchadsara is the 'Sivamula' manthra; the worship of the Sivalingam is the highest form of the worship of the Lord Siva. Although the besmearing of Holy Ashes and wearing Rudra Beads and the chanting of Panchadsara is laid down in the Vedas, yet one should receive Siva Deekshai (initiation) according to the Sivagamas, and practice his Religion; then only will he obtain both Mukti (Salvation) freedom from the bondage of the soul.

Thiruthondar Periapurana Vacanam (Page. 40)



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Judge's Chambers,  
Supreme Court,  
Colombo.

## FOREWORD

Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy has several useful publications, in Tamil and English to his credit and is, therefore, well known and needs no introduction.

He is a teacher who has devoted himself to writing school books like the "Modern Historical Readers". He contributes articles regularly to papers and journals and writes radio-plays. He is a founder member of the Colombo North Hindu Paripalana Sangam and is now its Patron.

He has been contributing to the Hindu Organ articles about the great Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar, who is held in high esteem all over the Saiva world and who may be truly called the Champion Reformer of the Hindus. He now intends gathering them in book form and has done me the honour of asking me to write a foreword to it. I accede with much pleasure.

Arumuga Navalar was born at a time when the Tamil Language and the Saiva Religion were almost breathing their last in Jaffna and Tamil Literature was lying buried in Ola munuscripts. He ended literary monopolies by writing and preaching. He did immense service by printing and publishing great Tamil works which were till then in Ola munuscripts.

It is, therefore, most fitting that another book involving commendable hardwork and considerable research should be published about the famous man. It is also fitting that Mr. Muttucumaraswamy should be its author.

**P. SRI SKANDARAJAH,**  
Judge of the Supreme Court  
of Ceylon.

21st June, 1965.



**Dr. K. Kanapathipillai, B.A. Hons., Ph. D. (London).  
Vidvan (Annamalai)**

Department of Tamil,  
University of Ceylon,  
Peradeniya,  
25th April, 1965.

## **PREFACE**

Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar is the most dynamic figure not only in the History of Hinduism in Ceylon but also in Tamilakam. He was truly a Champion Reformer of Hinduism.

His Biography should be read by everyone interested in the development of the Hindu religion and Tamil.

Scholars claim that Navalar is the father of modern Tamil prose. His entire life was dedicated to the promotion of Hinduism and Tamil. The renaissance of Hinduism which we see in our land today is due to Navalar's yeoman service in this direction.

Mr V. Muttucumaraswamy, a trained-graduate of considerable experience as a teacher, has rendered valuable service by writing this comprehensive biography, in which he has brought out the many facets of Navalar's personality and greatness.

It gives me great pleasure to commend this work to the world of letters.

**K. KANAPATHIPILLAI,**  
Professor of Tamil, University of Ceylon.

## **Note by the Author**

During my teenage, among the books which inspired me, was the book entitled "Prophets, Priests and Kings" by A. G. Gardiner—biographical sketches of great personalities. Accordingly I desired to write on some of the great men of our land at some time or other. When I came across the phrase "The Champion Reformer of the Hindus" as applied to Sri-la-Sri Arumuga Navalar by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, my mind was kindled and I resolved to write a biography about him.

This remained a pious wish, till February 1962, when I started contributing a series of articles, under the heading "The Champion Reformer of the Hindus" to the "Hindu Organ" Jaffna.

I had a copy of biography of Sri la Sri Arumuga Navalar by his nephew Sri T. Kailasapillai. I wanted to see more biographies. Mr. V. S. Nadaraja of the Govt. Publications Bureau was so good as to lend me his copy of Suddhananta Bharati's Navalar Peruman and give me his encouragement. I came across a copy of S. Shivapadasunderam's brochure on Arumuga Navalar, at the Saiva Prakasa Press which I bought immediately. I had access to a rare edition of Navalar's biography, that of Mr. Kanagaratnam's Life of Arumuga Navalar published in 1882. This was kindly given to me by Mr. C. Muttucumaraswamy B.A. (son of Sri A. Kumaraswamy Pulavar) of Mylany, Chunnakam. Not only did he go through my manuscripts during the last December holidays, but also he gave me valuable suggestions. I am beholden to him and others who helped me in this literary venture, among whom I am very thankful to Mr. S. U. Somasegaram, Retired Assistant Director of Education for his advice and encouragement.



I am deeply grateful to Saiva Sikhamani the Hon. Mr. Justice P. Sri Skandarajah, Judge of the Supreme Court of Ceylon, who with his worthy wife are true devotees of our ancient religion, for his great kindness in giving a foreword to this Biographical sketch of Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar.

I should also express my gratitude to Dr. Kanapathipillai, Ph. D., Professor of Tamil, University of Ceylon for his stimulating appreciation in the Preface to this book.

I sincerely offer my warmest feelings of thankfulness to Swami Prematmananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, Ceylon and also to (Miss) Nahammal Kasipillai, Principal, Saiva Mangayar Kalagam, Wellawatte, Colombo and President of the Colombo Teachers' Association and Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva for their very esteemed Opinions.

At a time when there are signs of a Hindu renaissance, I hope that this humble attempt of mine will assist the public to have a fair glimpse of that unique personality Sri la Sri Arumuga Navalar, who occupies a very high place in the galaxy of National leaders in our country.

Navalar Kottam,  
Vannarponnai,  
Jaffna.  
21-12-65

**V. Muttucumaraswamy.**



This book is humbly dedicated by the Author to the venerated memory of his grand - uncle

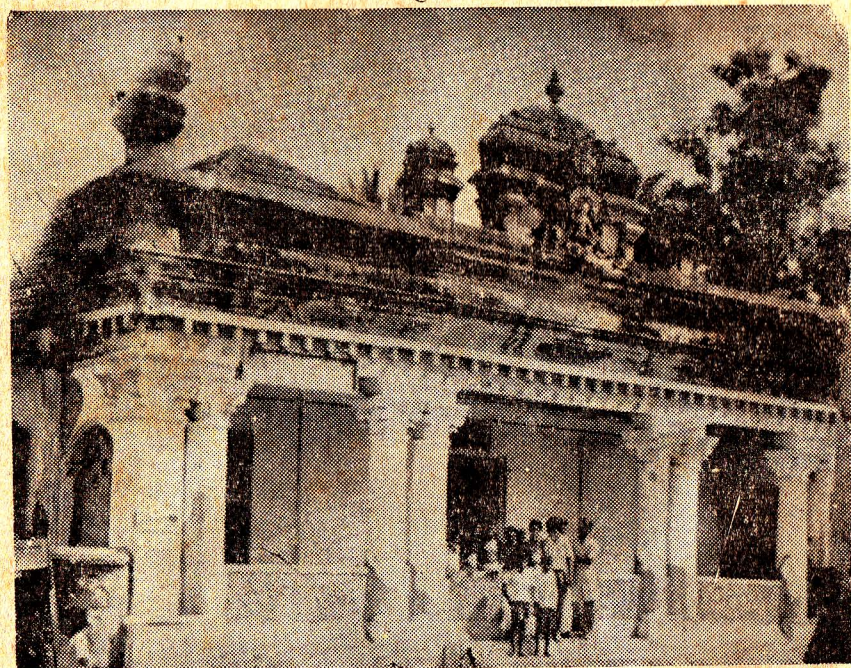


**THE LATE DR. A. MOOTOOTAMBIPILLAI**  
Cyclopaedist, Lexicographer & Scholar  
(1858 — 1917)

*in admiration of his*

Valuable services to the Saiva Religion and Tamil language; and who has been an unfailing source of inspiration to the author.





Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalayam, Vannarponnai.  
Founded by Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar - 1848

# SRI LA SRI JAFFNA HINDU LADIES COLLEGE ARUMUGA NAVALAR

## THE CHAMPION REFORMER OF THE HINDUS

(18 - 12 - 1822 — 19 - 11 - 1879)

### INTRODUCTION.

Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan in one of his speeches in the Legislative Council on the 11th February 1884, referred to Arumuga Navalar as the Champion Reformer of the Hindus.

About eight decades ago Arumuga Navalar bestrode the world of letters like a colossus. His services to Hinduism and Tamil were magnificent. His life has been impeccable. Never before had there been a man like Arumuga Navalar, who had dedicated his entire life for the sake of the Tamil Language, for the Hindu Religion and for a moral life. He was one who neither bowed his head, for the sake of "filthy lucre" nor did he bend his knee to Royalty or Government Officialdom and insolent might.

Arumuga Navalar was a gift to the Tamil world in the early nineteenth century.



From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese (1505-1658) strangled the national religion of the Tamils-Hinduism. They converted the people and made them Catholics. They destroyed magnificent Hindu Temples at Trincomalie, Devundra Sitawaka and elsewhere.

For over a century the Dutch (1658 - 1795) had severely stifled the Saiva community. They had built churches of the Protestant faith, on the sacred soil where once Hindu temples adorned the country. The church at Nallur was built on the site of the ancient Kandaswamy Temple, erected by Sanga Bodhi Bhuwana Bahu. The church at Puttur was built on the site of a Hindu Temple, as an ancient Vishnu image was discovered in its premises not very long ago would show. These two periods were really the dark period for Hinduism.

The English (1795 - 1948) who succeeded the Dutch, did not lend their support to Hinduism, but fostered Christianity. Thus like the octopus, Christianity spread its tentacles far and wide in the island for several centuries.



## CHAPTER I

### The Forebears of Navalar

Arumuga Navalar was the scion of the clan of Pandi Malawan, a Vellala noble, who was brought from the Pandyan country by the King of Jaffna—Singai Arya Chakra Varthy, and settled at Thirunelvely. In this line was a man called Gnanapiragasar. During the Portuguese rule, the Government had promulgated an order to every house-hold to supply a cow for their menu. Just a day before the turn came for Gnanapiragasar to send a cow to the Portuguese he made up his mind to flout this order and left for Chidambaram in India. From thence he proceeded to the “Kauda” country. There he studied Sanscrit, and came to the Thiruvannamalai “Attheenam”. Here he became a “Sannyasi”. He wrote “Sivagnanapotha Virutthi”, “Paushkara Virutthi”, “Siddanta Sihamani”, “Piramane Theepikai” Pirasathe Theepikai” “Angnana Vivesanam”, “Sivayohasaram”, Sivayoharatnam” “Sivahamethi Mahanmiya Sangiraham” in Sanscrit and wrote a Tamil commentary on “Sivagnana Siddhiyar” It was he, who built a tank at Chidambaram, now known as Gnanapiragasam Tank.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, when Arumuga Navalar was born many people were steeped in ignorance of the Tamil language. They did not have the propensity to impart their knowledge even to their children. Those who had “Ola” manuscripts of Valluvar, or Kandapuram, or any other literature borrowed these from the owners to make



copies, but altered the original "Ola" manuscripts. It is said that a *Vidvan* on his deathbed, brought all the notes and commentaries that he had made in "Ola" form, and saw to it that they were burnt before he left his mortal coils.

During Dutch times, there was a Moothathamby who was a Mudaliyar. He had a son called Sodhinathar. His son was Ilankai Kavalar, who later became a Mudaliyar.

There was one Ilankai Kavala Mudaliyar and his son was called Paramananthar. He had two sons, Kanthar and Ilankaiyar. Ilankai Kavala Mudaliyar and Paramananthar were Royal Physicians and rendered medical service to the Dutch Governor and received prizes and certificates. They were Tamil scholars. Kanthar had written several works on medicine. Except during the hours he spent on his profession and medical practice, his time was spent on the cultivation of flower-plants dedicated to Siva. Kanthar had married Sivakamy, the daughter of Vethavanam.

Kanthar had five sons and three daughters. The first son Thiyagar was a Notary; he was also a noted Ayurvedic physician. The second son Sinnathamby was an "Udaiyar". He had an aptitude for music. The third was Poothathamby who died early. The fourth son Paramananthar was a Notary under the British Government. He immersed himself in Tamil Grammar and literature, and the muses had smiled on him. Hence he was known as Paramanthappulavar. He composed many hymns and dramas in Tamil verse.

The fifth Thambu was a Mudaliyar, who trod on the foot-steps of his father. He was a friend of the Government Agent. The last son was Arumugam (later Arumuga Navalar).

Arumuga Navalar was born in Nallur on the 18th December 1822 at a propitious hour. The Saiva world was looking for a Messiah; the Tamil language was eagerly panting for a Saviour.





## CHAPTER 2

### Early Life & Education

At the tender age of three, Arumugam spoke, such words as “Siva” and “Skanta” with facility and love. In the second decade of the nineteenth century, there was a small school at Nallur, which was in-charge of Subramaniapillai. Arumugam studied the “*Vakkundam*”, “*Moodurai*”, “*Nannery*,” and other ethical work; and also the Nighantu. Until Arumugam was eight or nine, his talents were not recognized by anybody. He had such a big head and a slender body, as a child that he earned the sobriquet—“tad pole”.

It would seem that when Arumugam was nine, his father Kanthar was busy composing a drama. This was in June on the Thonimanjanam day. While being engaged in writing this on the “Ola” with the styles Kanthar breathed his last. Arumugam quietly completed the drama commenced by his father. So greatly pleased were the brothers, for young Arumugam was sent to such great teacher as Senathiraja Mudliyar and Sarawanamuttup-pulavar of Nallur.

#### *His Education*

Arumugam as a pupil was quite hard-working. He rose up from bed always at 4 a. m. and after finishing his ablutions he attended to his studies, he expected his meals at noon; and if meals were not ready at that time he would go back to his studies,

and return home only at ten in the night. Only at that time could he partake his meals in a leisurely manner. If his teachers were unable to teach him, Arumugam would seek a quiet spot such as a lonely house, to browse in his studies. Arumugam was not satisfied listening to the “Sutras”, narrated by his teachers. Arumugam’s Tamil education was complete at twelve.

#### *His Career*

Immediately after this Arumugam joined the Methodist English School in Jaffna to study in English at 12. Here he imbibed a Good knowledge of English. The Principal, Revd. Peter Percival, having perceived the acumen, of Arumugam appointed him as a teacher of English in the lower classes, and Tamil in the upper classes. From the age of nineteen till twenty-six, Arumugam was a member of the Tutorial Staff at Percival’s School.

At the age of 20 or 22, Arumugam could repeat the *Thirumuruhattup-paddai* by heart. By the age of twenty-three Arumugam had read all books on Grammar and literature and religious books available in Tamil.

#### *Arumugam the Translator*

Revd. Fr. Peter Percival, appointed Arumugam as his Tamil Pundit at the age of 20. He was entrusted with the task of translating the Bible in 1841. Arumugam took on himself, the onus of reading the



various editions of the Bible, and did a very good job of this.

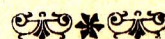
During this time, Arumugam translated the Bible in Jaffna. The Bible was also translated in Madras and a copy of this came to Revd. Percival's hands. Revd. Percival was not sure whether the translation of Arumugam—his Tamil Pundit's Bible or the Bible translated in Madras, would be accepted by his Publication Society. So Revd. Percival not only took the translation done by Arumugam, to Madras, but also took Arumugam along with him there. Those who translated the Bible in Madras argued, that their translation was perfect, and that the translation done by Arumugam in Jaffna was inaccurate. In order to decide on this issue, one Mahalinga Iyer, who was a great *Vidvan* from Madras, was appointed as the adjudicator to decide whose translation was better.

The Madras Vidvan gave his verdict that the translation done in Jaffna by Arumugam was the better one, and also expressed his admiration for the excellence of the Tamil diction prevalent in Jaffna. The Christian Society acclaimed this as the best and published it. This was additional feather to the cap of Arumugam.

Arumugam had a profound knowledge of the Bible. He knew the faults in this work. No body, not even the Padres had mastered the Bible as this learned teacher.

Revd. Percival had a very high regard for this Tamil Pundit—Arumugam. That is why he allowed

Arumugam to wear holy ashes, and also be a Hindu Pastor tolerating even his criticizing Christianity. Revd. Percival said that the Christians employed under him were merely so in name; and respected Arumugam for his high sense of truth. At Madras whenever Revd. Percival saw Arumugam in any meeting or society, he rose and blessed him and gave him a seat. Revd. Percival, putting his hands over his head one day said: "You will one day crack your skull crying for your people". This seemed to be prognostic. Of the relationship of Rev. Percival and Arumugam (later Arumuga Navalar) one may draw a parallel between Manickavasagar the Prime Minister and the Pandyan king.





## CHAPTER 3

## Arumugam—the Scholar

Arumugam had made a deep study of the Saiva-Siddhanta works. He was a master of Grammar and knew all the excellences of Tamil poetry. Whenever he heard any verse, he had the talent of assessing its worth. If there was any limping in the verse, or any fault of form or thought, Arumugam criticised it.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, there were no printed books. Many did not know Sanskrit. Students borrowed the literature books found in 'Olas' and after making alterations in the "Ola" manuscripts, returned them to the owner. Arumugam's cousin Viswanatha Mudaliyar Mailvaganar being an Advocate and being a man of great influence, took him to various places, where the various Purānams were read. Arumugam lectured to audiences on the fundamental truths of Saiva Siddhantism.

Arumugam saw that the torch of Hinduism was burning dimly. He mastered the tenets of Saiva Siddhantism, and also studied the Vedas and Agamas; in their original Sanskrit. Pundit S. Ganapathypillai in his introduction to Arunachala Kavirayer's "Life of Navalar" gives a list of over eighty books quoted by Arumugam in his works.

Arumugam (Navalar) was a very sharp thinker, a ready versifier, a most facile writer, an eloquent speaker and a brilliant controversialist. He was not only

a great man, a genius, but also a good man. His chief characteristic was a deep love for Siva, and a passionate yearning for the Hindu religion.

***The Secret of his Wonderful Knowledge.***

Arumugam was a genius. What was the secret by which he possessed such a wonderful knowledge? He used to frequent the Vannarponnai Vaitheswaran Temple, and there sit in meditation before the Thedchana Murthi (Siva as teacher). Either Arumuga Navalar had the special grace of Thedchana Murthi or Lord Subramaniam. His writings reveal a mastery of several literary, religious and philosophical works. There was hardly any "Ola" book that he had not touched. Not that he did so systematically. Nothing that he touched, did he fail to make it his own.





## CHAPTER 4

### Navalar — the Teacher

Navalar started his public work as a teacher in his twenty third year. He taught in the mornings and in the night “gratis”. Not only did he teach the main tenets of Hinduism, but Tamil literature and other subjects. Amongst the first group of his pupils were Sathasivampillai, Swamynatha Aiyar, Nadaraja Aiyar, Visuvanatha Aiyar, Arumugampillai, Kanthasampillai, Arumuga Chettyar etc.

Of these Sathasivampillai was a bachelor for life, even like his Guru, and followed Navalar wherever he went. He was Navalar’s faithful hench-man; and shared in all his literary-cum spiritual activities. He printed all the books of Arumuga Navalar, and thereby increased the income of the Chidambara Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya. He lived thirty years after Navalar and breathed his last in 1909 at Chidambaram. Nadaraja Aiyar had steeped deep in Sivagnana Siddhiyar, Saiva Siddhantism in Tamil and Sanskrit works such as Paushkaram. He preached Saiva Siddhantism and practical Yoga. Arumugam—pillai joined the “Adeenam” of Thiruvannamalai and became a “Thambiran” (the religious head) and became a great Saiva Siddhanta Scholar. He wrote an excellent commentary on Periya-puranam.

The second group of erudite pupils who were in another class, under Navalar were Vidva Sironmany

S. Ponnampala-pillai (Navalar’s sister’s son) and M. Vaithialingapillai. Of S. Ponnampalapillai one may truly say, that he became another Navalar, at least he was next to Navalar. He was Navalar’s favourite pupil. He taught M. K. Vetpillai (father of Pundits Mahalinga Sivam and V. Thirugnanasambanthar) (my Guru) Pundit V. Kanagasabapathy Aiyar, Sabapathy Navalar, S. Ponnambalapillai and others. M. Vaithialingapillai was for a long time, Head teacher of the Saiva Prakasa Vidyalaya and a pillar of the Yalpana Thamiz Sangam. Even as Navalar, Ponnampalapillai’s service was rendered free.

Senthinatha Iyer, a pupil of Arumuga Navalar was for eight years a teacher of the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya. He spent more time studying under Arumuga Navalar than teaching his pupils. One day when Navalar explained the true significance of the game of dice between Lord Siva and his consort Parvathi in Mt. Kailasa. Senthinatha Aiyar was spell-bound with admiration. Senthinatha Aiyar used this as material in one of his pamphlets.

Tharka Kudarathaluthari V. Thirugnanasambanthapillai, S. Ponnampalapillai, V. Visuvalingapillai and T. Kailasapillai (Navalar’s brother’s son) were Navalar’s later students.

### *How Navalar Prevented Proselytism*

Navalar prevented two of his classmates from being proselytised to Christianity. They were M. Thillainathapillai. and S. Sinnappapillai — who studied



with him at the Wesleyan Central School, when he was Tamil Pundit to Revd. Peter Percival. These two were about to be baptized as Christians, having been induced to do so by the then Padres. Navalar called these two friends and gave them illuminating talks on the great spiritual truths of the Saiva Religion, and exposed the weakness of the Christian Church. After these men listened to Navalar, they gave up their ideas of becoming Christians. Thillainathapillai was later a disciple of Navalar and served on the staff of the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai. Sinnappapillai became an Advocate of the Supreme Court at Colombo but came to Arumuga Navalar to study the truths of the Saiva religion and to lead the life of a good Saivite. Also Sundarampillai and others were prevented from being proselytized by the Christian Missionaries.

### ***What Navalar Taught First***

The first book taught by Navalar to his disciples was Peria-puranam. Navalar knew the exquisite beauties of this poem. Navalar had a profound veneration for Sekkilar, the author of this Puranam, as well as the sixty three Saints whose lives it contains. Navalar had steeped himself in such works as Agastya Bhakta Vilasam, Sivarahasyam, Sekkilar Puranam by Umapathy Sivasariar, Sivanantha lahari, Sauntharya lahari — outstanding Saiva Siddhantic lore.

### ***An Amusing Anecdote in Navalar's House***

Navalar had a tremendous regard for the Periyapuranam; his eldest brother Thiagaraja knew of this

and in order to test his faith told somebody who would convey to Navalar that the "Stories of Periyapuranam were all fictitious" As soon as Navalar heard this, he took a knife and went to cut his brother. His brother smiled at him and went inside his house. Navalar was restrained by others, from punishing his brother. Navalar did not speak to his brother for a fairly long period after this, but when he was about to breathe his last, Navalar took to his bed side holy ashes and holy water from the Ganges. His eldest brother addressed Navalar and said "Come dear brother, forgive me if I have rendered any mistake to you" Arumuga Navalar laid his head on his lap, applied holy ash to his forehead, gave him holy water, sang Devarams and helped his brother to a peaceful and holy death.

### ***Navalar's Brilliance as a Teacher***

Navalar had the brilliant gift of explaining any poems or any matters of knowledge with a depth of scholarship and wonderful clarity. He had a mannerism of saying "Eh" and "Arai" during the course of his teaching. But when Navalar spoke on public platforms, of mannerisms there was none. Whenever he wanted to expatiate about a point in Tamil Grammar, he brought literature to his aid; and whenever he wanted to expatiate on the beauties of Tamil literature, he brought Tamil grammar to his aid.

Nobody ever taught pupils free except Ponnambalampillai (his sister's son) who followed the footsteps



of Navalar. There was nobody who stressed on the value of Religious education as Arumuga Navalar did all his life.

### ***Navalar and his Yearnings***

Navalar had drunk deep at the fountain of Tamil knowledge, which he found to be nectar. Therefore he wanted others too to dip in this nectar of Tamil. He knew about the difficulties of pupils who were impecunious; he also knew the serpentine wiles and deceptions practised by the so called "Gurus" of that period. He also knew the difficulties of collecting "Ola" manuscripts.

Revd. Peter Percival had told Arumugam, his Tamil Pundit not to leave his service, and tempted him with better pay. His one ambition was to foster Hinduism; and in order to foster this, education was an instrument that would promote this end.

To Navalar, education could never be divorced from Religion. Navalar had a deep love for Tamil and the Saiva religion, even as a child. He wanted to be useful to the world. Navalar lived to be the ideal of a "Guru"—the teacher par-excellence. He did not run after Fame. Fame pursued his foot steps.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Navalar, the preacher-par excellence**

Until the advent of Arumuga Navalar, the word "prasangam" did not connote anything very significant. But from Navalar's time—this word is pregnant with a deep meaning. Many men have written learned commentaries and have expounded them. But never before Navalar's time had one come across a great preacher who spoke with such fervid magniloquence.

Navalar was only twenty five years old when he made his maiden oration. But by this age, he had read widely. Navalar had drunk deep in the Saiva Agamas. He had read from the "Ola" manuscripts, many Sanskrit books—the names of which even the best Brahmins never knew.

His first speech was made in the Vasantha Mandapam of Sivan Temple, Vannarponnai. This temple was built by Vaithialingam Chettiar during the times of the Dutch and is perhaps the oldest temple in Jaffna; it is a temple which has extensive endowments of land.

It is said that when this first speech of Navalar was made; there was the pealing of bells, quite unexpectedly. The coconut that was broken, broke into two exact halves. So Navalar's words were like showers to the plants that very badly needed rainfall. Navalar stood erect as he spoke and he was quite a



dignified figure. Navalar had as his lieutenant in preaching an ex - schoolmate of his, Venkadachala Iyer's son Karthigeya Iyer of Nallur who gave sermons wherever Navalar wished him to do so.

Navalar and Karthigeya Iyer preached alternately. One day it was the turn of Karthigeya Iyer; there was a good audience that had congregated. The Iyer came to Navalar and said that his mother was ill, as such he could not deliver the sermon. So Navalar had to take Iyer's turn, at the request of the audience.

### ***Navalar: "I am not prepared"***

Navalar really had not prepared the subject of the discourse, as it was not his turn. So he stood up and began his first sentence "I am not prepared." At that, many laughed at him. But Navalar reiterated what he said and prefaced it by telling the following story. In England an examination was held in Essay writing, and each pupil received a paper indicating the subject on which he should write; but one pupil received a blank paper; so he wrote an article saying that "God procreated the world out of nescience". He continued saying that his "unpreparedness for death" was the theme of his discourse and thus revealed his razor blade mentality. His oration was never so scintillating as on this occasion, when he made this extempore speech. Those who laughed at his speech earlier, sat spell-bound in admiration. Generally speaking as Navalar was a genius his extempore speeches reached a higher standard than his prepared ones. To prepare

his speech generally he took about seven or eight minutes. He would sit in a silent place and refer to certain books and make a note of the context in which the passage occurred.

Navalar was busy, preaching two important matters—one was to establish the Saiva faith firmly amongst the masses; the other to expose the hollowness of the 'foreign' faith. When he was engaged in this dual mission, some approached Revd. Peter Percival and spoke to him thus:- "The Tamil Pundit of yours is doing things among the Saivaites, which were never done by them before our arrival or afterwards. Our object in coming to this land is to spread our religion, and not anything else. It is not proper for you to retain in your services a man who asserts that our religion is bad, and resolves that he will not allow the spreading of Christianity, not merely by words, but also by deeds". Revd. Percival listened to them and called Arumugam (Navalar) his Tamil Pundit and asked him nonchalantly "We hear that while you preach on Fridays in the Sivan Temple, you seem to attack our religion. Why do you do this?" To this Arumugam replied:—"Sir! Is there anything wrong in fulfilling my duties? If that is not so, will you please advise me?" Revd. Percival contemplated on his reply, and perceived the words of truth; to those who attempted to traduce his Pundit he remarked;—"It is not possible to secure the services of such a man as he. Therefore, it would not be becoming to speak further on this subject".



Hitherto it was the Christian Missionaries, who had attempted to proselytize by their preachings. But as Arumuga Navalar set the ball a rolling, Brahmins, Vidvans and people of many grades foregathered and listened to the words that flowed from Navalar's lips. The subject of his discourses included the existence of God, worship of God, love of God, love of religion, Saiva Pooja, Saiva Deeksha, Temple festivals, the purpose of life, the termination of life, abstinence from meat, and abstinence from drinks. Veda Agamas, Right conduct for females, Gratitude, Giving charity, Teaching, befriending those of exemplary good conduct, the Universe, Maya or the Illusion, Ignorance, Non-killing, how to improve the wicked, Prostitution, Drinking, Robbing the treasures in Temples and so forth. His discourses revealed a profundity of knowledge, benefitted both this world and the world to come. They were mellifluous to the ears and easily understandable.



## CHAPTER 6

### (I) Navalar and Modern Tamil Prose

In the history of Tamil Literature, in prose, Navalar is the harbinger and towering figure of an epoch. Navalar had written many works in prose. Nobody had written, as much as Navalar, before him. Sivagnana Munivar's prose is grand, but the topics he dealt with were entirely religious. But Navalar wrote on many topics—secular and ecclesiastical, one century ago.

Of Navalar's original compositions, Periapurana Vacanam is really his 'magnum opus'. There is nothing more mellifluous than this. When he first published this work, he did not write this on paper; he merely dictated the prose, while scanning the verses, which were in 'Ola form'. The compositors composed this, as soon as Navalar dictated the prose.

Arumuga Navalar's diction was superb "Senthamil". He never thought in another language, and wrote in Tamil. He thought in Tamil and wrote in Tamil.

Regarding Periapurana Vacanam, we find, that Navalar used very common natural words one would always come across in the lips of ordinary men and women. The way Navalar used words of Sanskrit origin, is admirable. The Periapurana Vacanam, we



may safely state would be used for the next five hundred years, if not for ten centuries.

Other works of great merit are the “Thiruvilaiyadal Purana Vacanam”. “the Kandapurana Vacanam” and the Readers — First, Second and Fourth all masterpieces. These readers are written in a style suitable for respective groups.

### (II) Navalar, The Pamphleteer

During the time of Navalar the Christian Missionaries in Ceylon and India published many pamphlets in order to spread Christianity. These purported to expose the so called short comings of Hindu religion. Navalar replied to these with great vigour. He armed himself with all the armouries of attack. He used “Sarcasm” and “irony” — words with two meanings very successfully. It was a great task, to meet the arguments of the Christian Missionaries, who were specially favoured by the English Government and also to establish the tenets of the Saiva religion. Navalar abandoned the pedagogic style in his pamphlets. He wielded a facile prose, that could be understood by the common man. That is why Arumuga Navalar holds a most important place in Tamil literature. He was an Addison and Steele combined in one figure—in the context of his pamphlets.

### (III) Navalar's Pamphlets

The names of the Tamil pamphlets of Navalar are as follows:-Saiva Thooshana Pariharam சைவ தூஷண

பரிஹாரம், Suppura Potham சுப்பிர போதம் Vachchira Thandam வச்சிர தண்டம், Krishthumatha Kandanath-Thiraddu; கிறிஸ்துமத கண்டனத் திரட்டு என்னும் தொகுதியில் அடங்கிய, ‘எசுவை நம்பினால் இரகழிப் படையலாமா?’ (can we be redeemed if we believe Jesus), கிறிஸ்தவர் விடைகளின் மறுப்பு (Rejoinder to the replies of the Christians), விவிலிய குற்சிதம், Viviliya Kutsitham, விவிலிய குற்சித கண்டன திக்காரம், Viviliya Kutsitha Kandana Thikkaram சிவநாம விளக்கம், Sivanama Vilakkam, எசு கிறிஸ்து மனிதனே (Jesus is a man), எசுகிறிஸ்துவும் கடவுளா? (Is Jesus God?) விக்கிரகத்தை வணங்கல் முதலியன (Image worship etc.) பைபிள் யாரால் எழுதப் பட்டது? (Who wrote the Bible?) சிவனுந் தேவனு என்னும் தீய நாவுக்கு ஆப்பு (Clipping the tongue of the person who asked Is Siva a Deva?), கிறிஸ்தவர் ஞானோதய ஆபாச விளக்கம், புரொட்டஸ்டாந்த கிறிஸ்துமத கண்டனம். (Criticism of the Protestant religion) கிறிஸ்துமதத் தரியேகத்துவ ஆபாசம் (The doctrine of the Trinity - a fallacy) இந்து ஜெய பேரிகை (Hindu Jeya Perika) வஜ்ஜிராடங்கம், (Vajjira dangam), பைபிலும் உலக சிருஷ்டியின் ஆபாசமும் (The Bible and the fallacy of the origin of the World, பாதிரிகளுக்கோர் சற்புத்தி (Advice to the Padres), கிறிஸ்துமதத்தின் குருட்டு நம்பிக்கை (The blind faith of the Christian religion) பாதிரிமார் பள்ளிக்கூடங்களில் பெண்கள் படிக்கலாமா (Can the females study in the schools of the Missionaries?) ஆரியப் பெண்களுக்குக் கல்வி கற்பிக்கு முறைமை என்பன. (The methods of educating Aryan women.)

### (IV) Navalar the Critic

Navalar did not hesitate to pin point the faults and foibles of the Saiva world just as much as he made his criticisms against the Christian Missionaries.



He printed for circulation two tracts. One was the *Yalpana Samaya Nilai*, and the other the *Nallur Kandaswamy Temple*. In all these pamphlets Navalar kept to this objective—of making himself understood by the common man.

Navalar sows the wiles employed by the Missionaries in his *Yalpana Samaya Nilai*. He says that the pamphlets of the Missionaries were flung in to the wells; they were not actually distributed amongst the people.

Navalar condemned the Brahmin priests, who almost illiterate, who took up to priesthood and were advocated that a School be established to train them. Navalar condemned nautch dancing in temples, displaying of fire-works as well as sacrifices of goats, fowls etc. in his tracts.

Of Navalar as a pamphleteer, we may say that he dipped his pen in acid, and wiped out the evils found in the Society of his time.

Navalar wrote many contributions to the *Udayatharakai*, *Ilankabimani* and *Ilankai Nesan*—Tamil periodicals of his times. All these and the pamphlets were collected and published, under the name of "*Arumuga Navalar Prapanthath - thiraddu*".

### **Navalar the Editor**

Navalar edited a large number of books. He wrote commentaries on *Koyit Puranam*, *Saiva Sumaya Neri*, *Nannool Kandikai*, *Sivatharumottharam* *Muruth-*

*ooranthathi*, and *Thiruch - chenthini roddaha yamaha vanthathi*.

We should admire "*Maha Bharatham*" and "*Sudamani Nikandu*" two publications of Navalar. Virasami Chettiyar's pupil Rajagopalapillai of Madras began printing the *Maha Bharata*, after making a few amendments. But Navalar printed *Maha Bharatham* in accordadance with the original verses of Villiputtur Alvar. That Navalar's work was the correct one is mentioned by Sri Sunthara Sivachariar of Kaddavore in his work called "*Sivathikya Ratnavali*". The Madurai Tamil Sangam, gave its imprimatur to the works of Arumuga Navalar. It is noteworthy that Navalar was the first to bring out an edition of *Thirukkural* the finest flowers that bloomed in the ocean of Tamil literature and the greatest ethical work in Tamil.





## CHAPTER 7

### (IV) Navalar — the Prose Stylist

Navalar was a great stylist, in the art of writing Tamil prose. He paved the way, for many great Tamil writers who trod on his foot-steps. Navalar was the first to weave sentences made up of words of pure easy Tamil. The writers before his time selected words of Sanskrit origin, which were not so explicable. They had inflexions, which were complex. The learned commentators were pedantic, and wrote in a style which was incomprehensible. Hence these were of little use to the ordinary reader. But Navalar's style of Tamil prose was something unique. His usage of punctuation marks, as used in the English language lent clarity to his diction.

Of Navalar's books, the First Saiva Vinavidai and the Second Saiva (Catechism) Vinavidai, were written in a style that young minds could easily understand. It was carefully graded. The First Reader the Third Reader and the Fourth Readers were also carefully graded. The sentences are fairly short and selection of diction admirable.

Let us take for instance, the style of the Bible which Navalar translated. When one reads the Bible, (in Tamil) we do not get the impression that this is a translation. It would seem to us that we are reading an original. The language is simple, the words so eloquently familiar and yet so dignified.

The Periyapurana Soosanam reflects, the style of the learned commentators of yore. It must be kept in mind that about a century ago, the literary trends dictated, that writers should use a large amount of Sanskrit words. Navalar in his Periyapurana Vacanam, did write in a style, where a large amount of Sanskrit words, were introduced into the composition. In his chapter on Thirugnanasambanthar, Navalar uses words of Sanskrit origin, even when he could have used words of pure Tamil origin.

The style of Thiruvilayadat-puranam is quite different from the style adopted in Periyapurana Vacanam. In this book Navalar, uses a style which is easily understood by the common people. The short stories which are interwoven in the main story are written very clearly, in easy language.

During Navalar's period, there were many writers, who wrote Tamil prose in order to stress their religious point of view. But Navalar superseded them all. Navalar in his pamphlets, chose a style, which was crisp and clear; elegant and penetrative.

M. S. Puranalingampillai in his History of Tamil Literature (English) says (page 337) "The one object of Navalar's life was to preserve his mother tongue in its pristine purity and restore the Saiva Siddhanta to its place as one of the oldest religions of the world. His scathing invective and tirade against the several "mutts" as dens of iniquity made the Madathipathi's tremble and think of reforming themselves."



Prof T. P. Meenadchisundarampillai, the present Head of the Tamil Department and Professor of Tamil, Annamalai University says in his 'Ceylon Tamil Poets' about Navalar and his style of Tamil prose as follows: (Translated into English).

"On the one hand there was prose known as High Senthamil, and on the other hand Kochchai-Thamil—an ascent and a descent—(a crest and trough). Navalar levelled these, applied plaster to it; he made it a shining white wall. Yes! In this levelling process, many beautiful paintings on the peaks have disappeared. In his prose style, we cannot discern "prose paintings" as we glimpse the anger of Sivagnana Yogi. In Navalar's prose, it creeps with obedience gently. In Navalar's prose style; there is nothing that betrays any emotion. From the first to the last, there is one style. There is no difference. But, is the world marching on embracing one style? Even if nectar is eaten beyond proportion, it becomes poison. Therefore Navalar's works run in the same style his prose works weary one. But when we come across, the so called modern works that are laden with emotion, we see the difference between Navalar's beautiful prose and that of the moderns, which is a clamour of words and a titivation of drunkenness. If Navalar had not merely been a publisher of poems, but also shone as a poet, just as he did exercise control over his emotions as in Periyapuramam, he could have made his poems resplendent with beauty.

Many were of opinion that there need be no room for emotion in Tamil prose. Prose, freighted with

emotional feelings was introduced by Shakespeare in his later plays. We rejoice at the skill shown by him in his prose. It must be admitted that Arumuga Navalar never enjoyed this emotional joy. But Arumuga Navalar did yeoman service, by ploughing and levelling a rugged old terrain that never saw the plough, and he had to sow the seeds and clear the weeds. Afterwards one could discern the luxurious green foliage, the sweet meal and fascinating feast. When you clear and prepare the soil if we say "food" "food" - what can we profit by it? Therefore Arumuga Navalar was the father of modern Tamil prose, and laid its foundations firm and secure. May Navalar's name live long! May we cherish the prose that Shakespeare wore in his crown and rejoice."

This opinion is replete with deep meaning.





## CHAPTER 8

### Navalar – the Poet

Navalar has not left, any continuous anthology of poems. But he has composed a few individual songs - which clearly show that he had the poetic genius. When there was a general meeting, he put his hands over his head, and asked one of his disciples, to sing an invocation on Vinayakar. His disciple asked Navalar, to sing. So he sang a song beginning with “சீர்பூத்த கருவிநு லுணர்ச்சி தேங்கச்.....

(See appendix)

One day when Navalar was conversing with Karthigeya Upathiyayer, the latter brought a palmyrah leaf and stylus, and asked him to sing two ‘viruth-thams’ on Nallur Kandaswamy temple. Without much ado Navalar sang two songs—one beginning with

- (1) சீர்நொண்ட பரமவா னந்தசிறு சுகசொருப  
செகதீச திருமங்களம்

(See appendix)

and the other as follows:-

- (2) அருணவிக சிதகமல மலரைநிகர் தருவதன  
மாறு மனு தினமும் வாழி.

He translated several songs from Sanskrit into Tamil from the Agamas. He also contributed songs to the *Kathirai Yatthirai Vilakkam*.

Very rare are those poets who declined to write verses, in honour of men. Even those poets, who

sang “Pattu Paddu” Kāmbār, Oddakootthar, including Meenadchisundarampillai wrote in various forms of poetry such as “Attu-padai”, “Kovai” or “Seeduk-kavi”. Those who sing “eulogies”, do so because of some pecuniary consideration. But Navalar was an exception. He never gave a foreward, to anybody. Navalar respected his Guru, his teacher and God in the same breath. So Navalar sang a song on his teacher Saravanamuttupulavar, on his death. Navalar sang another song on the death of his pupil Subramaniyapillai—extolling his virtues. Navalar believed that songs were meant for devotional purposes. He knew that the common man did not appreciate verse. He was aware that in such languages such as English and Sanskrit, there were many prose works. He was sincerely of opinion, that he could scarcely write anything of more value than the Devarams or the Thiruvagasam. Therefore Navalar did not devote much time to poetry.

Navalar, besides being a scholar, was also a man of liberality. So Navalar gave many gifts to Gopala Krishna Aiyar who came to him with songs on Nandanar, as well as God.





## CHAPTER 9

### *Navalar in Tamil Nadu (South India)*

The press that Navalar owned in Jaffina was too small for his requirements. Consequently he went to Madras in 1860, to do his printing work as paper and labour were also cheap. He bought a press, housed it and left it in charge of his disciple Sadasi-vampillai and went to Chidambaram. This press of his was known as *Vidyanupalana Yanthirasalai*.

Chidambaram is a holy city to the Shaivaites and this city was a hundred fold dear to Arumuga Navalar.

### *Navalar's Objectives*

Navalar issued a manifesto in May, in which he adumbrated his objectives. He said that even from his child-hood, his aim was to establish Tamil schools, where the tenets of the Hindu faith could be inculcated. Religious knowledge was very essential he said, and he selected Chidamparam, to be the field of his experiments. His objectives were as follows:

1. To purchase a piece of land in a sacred street at Chidambaram in South India.

2. In this side, a school, a hall for Pooja, a hall for imparting "Shastras" and a Refectory - building (an inn) in three storeys should be built. In addition there should be a flower garden for plucking

flowers for Siva Pooja.

3. In this School, teachers who were both highly educated, and whose moral conduct were unblemished should be appointed to teach the pupils,—Readers, Nigandu, Ethical works of Thiruvallvar, Siva Puranas, Grammar, Arithmetic, Logic, Saiva works of Religion in prose, Geography, Astronomy, Medicine, Astrology, Agriculture, Commerce, Politics, Architecture and so forth and so on.

4. To appoint well trained "Othuvans" [Psalm singer] in order to teach the children, to recite Thevarams and sing Thiruvagasam - the Tamil Sacred Scripture in the proper Style and with clear pronounciation.

5. These "Othuvans" or Hindu Psalm-singers to sing in the temples, and in the choultries and in the land, these are to read the Periapuranam, the Thiruvilaiyadat - puranam, Thiruvathavooradikal - puranam, Koyit - puranam, the Kandapuranam. Upathesa Kandam, Vayu Sankithai [Siva Puranas] Siva tharumotharam and give the commentaries on these.

6. In the evenings, to get these "Othuvans" to sing songs to the devotees of Siva in the inner precincts of the temple and to get them to read some religious matter.

7. To organise festivals on the dates that the following attained Moksha - Thiru Gnana Sambandar, and the rest of the trio Sundarar, Manickar, and Appar to Sekkilar, the author of Periya Puranam



to *Meykandathevar*, the author of *Saiva Siddhanta* and the other two "*Santhana Kuravars*". To celebrate these festivals in this 'madam', so as to propagate the glories of these.

8. To ordain those selected ones, from this School, as well as outside, and get these to study the enlightened *Saiva Siddhanta* scriptures.

9. If the proprietors of the inns "*Madams*" (Madathipathikal), and nobles, gentlemen were to donate a little rice, to this choultry, this would meet the wants of those who have renounced life—the "*Sannyasins*", and other poor people who study here.

10. The students who study in this School, should be tested by a board consisting of the Heads of Mutts "*Vidvans*" and elite of the place.

11. Every year there should be a balance-sheet showing the income and expenditure and presented before the August assembly, which should be read, and printed and distributed to all.

12. Of those who studied in this school, and left for English studies, and secured material jobs, if they desire to pursue their studies at leisure, provision should be made to educate them.

13. Titles and certificates of merit, should be awarded to those who have passed a test conducted by this society, according to the merit of each.

14. By selecting from the group, if there were a few who were desirous to spend their whole life for

the benefit of others, they should be ordained before the inner precincts of the temple at Chidambaram as Saiva preachers; and they should receive salaries in accordance with what they deserve; and they should be sent to the various villages of Thamil Nadu, to preach the religious code to the Saivaites in the temples.

Navalar in issuing his manifesto, planned to carry a vigorous campaign to spread the Saiva religion, in the entire Thamil Nadu. He wished to collect such funds as possible, give it on interest until such time that sufficient capital was collected to build a land. He appealed to the owners of the "*Mutts*", the rich men, the Naddu Kottai Chettyars, and to the Jaffnese who were devoted to Lord Nataraja at *Chidambaram*, to support his objectives.

With the funds collected from the Jaffna people *Navalar* established the Saiva Prakasa Vidyasalai in the month of October (Aippasi 23) 1865 at *Chidambaram*. He was inspired to erect similar Schools at *Mayuram* and *Vedaraniyam*.

### *Navalar's Projects*

He wrote two manifestoes in 1868. There he said he had laboured for the upliftment of the national religion for twenty years. He expressed his anguish, that if there was anybody who had done so, in any other religion, he would have been amply



rewarded for his troubles. Not only people declined to support him but they heaped on him disrespect and put obstacles on his way. He had a deep feeling that those who did so, were obstructing the cause of Tamil and *Saivism*. He wondered why he was given such a shabby treatment by the Hindus. He said that the other religionists, neither did they disrespect him nor did they put a spoke on the wheels of his progress. He thanked the Lord Siva, for refraining him from pursuing a job, which he could have well secured as he had already been acquainted with English— but he had already dedicated himself for the propagation of Tamil and the Saiva religion.

He emphasised that Schools should be established in all the important shrines of Tamil Nadu—the Saiva faith should be fostered. He laid stress on training good Saiva preachers - who would be exemplars of conduct, acumen and healthy manhood. Navalar advocated that a band of youngsters of the correct type, should be given free scholarship-food and clothing - educated in Grammar, Literature, and the Saiva-scriptures to be selected as Lecturers and teachers.

Eighty thousand rupees was required for establishing his project. With seventy thousand Navalar wanted to buy a village with good irrigation facilities; he would be able to put up a school and "Madam" with ten thousand rupees. This school should train preachers of the Saiva faith in order to preach Saivism in the indigenous languages in every temple. He wondered why the Lords of the "Matts" did not do propaganda for Saivism in the temples.

He said that even though one may be a sinner, he would feel very sad to see his religion on the wane. Navalar wanted propaganda for Saivism in every temple.

**Navalar had an ideal of establishing a school for every village, and make every temple, a hive of active Saiva propaganda both in Ceylon and in Tamil Nadu.** This was his plan to foster a broad knowledge of Arts and Sciences and the Saiva religion.

In a manifesto which Navalar issued in 1870 he outlined the functions of the Saiva preachers. They had to do the "Panchadchara Japa", to do Siva Pooja, to worship at the temples, to recite *Devarams* and *Thiruvagasams* and to read the "Siva puranas"; they had to sing *Devarams* with *cymbals*, in every festival, and be the leaders of groups of devotees. They would be appointed as teachers in schools and preachers in the temples. He began a series of lectures, to collect funds to achieve this purpose.

Amongst those who had been negligent about "Siva Deekshai", were some priests of the temple at *Chidambaram*. Navalar pin-pointed their faults, and boldly put these in print in a bulletin—issued by the Saivaprakasa Vidyasali, *Chidambaram*. He said that those who functioned as Priests at *Chidambaram*, had not received the initiation of priesthood (Siva Deekshai). Navalar proved in public, that the original priests were great in their "Agamic" knowledge of Siva; they observed the Saiva tenets, meticulously and those who lived in contemporaneous times lacked many virtues. Navalar's words wounded the feelings of the priests of *Chidambaram*. They were waiting to pay back Navalar in his own coin.



## CHAPTER 10

## A Famous Controversy

## Arudpa or Marudpa?

*Trials at Madras*

The High Priests of *Chidambaram*, were furious with *Arumuga Navalar*; they encouraged the singing of the devotional hymns of *Ramalingampillai* instead of reciting the *Devarams* of the acknowledged Saints (*Thirumurai*).

*Ramalingampillai* (who is now known as *Ramalingaswamy* and mystic poet) of *Karunguli* (a suburb of *Chidambaram*) wrote some verses called them 'Thiru-arudpa' and called himself as "Thiru-arud-prakasar"; in addition he had collected an appendix to his book and called it "Thiuarudpa Vatalaru" Some shallow wits accepted these songs of *Ramalingampillai* as equal to the *Devarams* of *Appar*, *Sundarar* and *Sambandar*; and in some of the temples at *Madras*, *Ramalingampillai*'s songs were recited during the commencement of the festivals—instead of the time honoured *Devarams*.

*Arumuga Navalar* had no animosity with *Ramalingampillai*. (*Ramalingaswamy*) A man of malice *Navalar* never was. *Vidvan Mahalinga Iyer*, *Visakaperumal Aiyar* and *Mahalinga Aiyar*, counted

*Navalar* as their dearest friend. *Navalar* also regarded them highly. But *Ramalingampillai* was utterly wrong in dissuading people from reciting *Devarams*, and singing his own poems. *Navalar* opposed this vehemently. The world is a very wide-place; it seems it has even room for nit-wits whose books abound in errors. *Navalar* never worried himself in order to attack them. *Ramalingampillai* had done nothing to inflame his temper; despite this *Navalar* had to fight an ideological battle. *Navalar* had got up his pamphlet entitled "Poli Arudpa or Marudpa" published by *Thiagesa Mudaliyar* of *Mavandur*.

This controversy, has become History, as one of the most note worthy of its kind. The hymns of *Appar* *Suntharar* and *Sambandar* - called *Devarams* -- are sublime; they elevate and purify the souls of men..... *Arumuga Navalar* maintained that *Ramalingampillai*'s songs cannot be equated with the "Devarams" for purposes of prayer. If *Ramalingampillai* was equated with the Four Saints, people would conclude, that the Saints were as fragile in character as *Ramalingampillai*. It was for this very reason, that *Arumuga Navalar*, spear-headed an attack against *Ramalingampillai*.

When passions were inflamed on both sides in this wise, *Ramalingampillai* and *Arumuga Navalar* came simultaneously to *Chidambaram*. The Hindu priests who were wroth with *Navalar* regarding the matter of *Saiva Scriptures* and *Siva Deekshai* planned



to disgrace Navalar, by getting Ramalingampillai to abuse him. So in the year 1871, in the month of June, a public meeting was held in the 'Perambalam' hall at the Chidambaram Temple of Nadaraja. There all these priests (including Ramalingampillai) heaped abuse on Navalar and determined to clout him. A full account of the abuses against Navalar was published under the title of "Speech at Perampalam" in a pamphlet by Messrs. Si. So. Sanmugapillai, Si. A. Velauthapillai and Si. Ira. Arumugapillai.

A case against Navalar was filed by his traducers, in the Manchak-kuppam Court. Ramalingampillai appearing in this case, denied abusing Navalar. So Navalar, was satisfied that Ramalingampillai had eaten his own words and got the case which brought against him withdrawn. It was on an "Uthara Toarisanam" in the month of June, that Navalar was abused, and it was again on the day of the Markali (Ardra) Thiruvadurai day - that Ramalingampillai denied that he had abused Navalar. There was something mysterious about these incidents.

In the case brought by the "Deekshitar" of Chidambaram against Navalar he thought that he (Navalar) would receive condign punishment. On the day of the enquiry he finished his pooja early, and called his pupil Sadasivampillai, to whom he handed over his "Siva - lingam and told that if he were to be punished, he (Navalar) would end his

life and Sivalingam should be put into the Ganga. His opponents mobilized their forces against him and to a question for which he found too delicate to answer - the answer came along with tears in his eyes. The Magistrate who sat on judgement in this case was greatly impressed by the manner Arumuga Navalar gave evidence and the great ability he showed. In this case, the plaintiffs were fined.

In these cases at Madras an Advocate of Jaffna, Soundranayagampillai showed great mettle.

There was another case, at Manchakkuppam Court in 1867 (in No. 2 Court.)

Vellanthanki Arumugampillai of Sivapuri, a suburb of Chidambaram, was a great admirer of Arumuga Navalar. He misappropriated 40 "Velis" of arable paddy land and enjoyed its produce. This person was in the habit of getting down from his palanquin a quarter of a mile from the house that Navalar lived, walking up to his house and paying him obeisance. Even then Navalar resented Arumugampillai's wrong act of possessing the land, that belonged to the Goddess Sivakamy Ammaiyar (the Devi) and wrote to him sharply to return this to the rightful owner. Arumugampillai did not accede to Navalar's request. Hence Navalar hurled abuses on him and openly declared in court that he had done so and was fined seven rupees. Many asked Arumuga Navalar to appeal against this fine. Later, in respect of the land belonging to the Goddess Sivakamy, Arumuga Navalar was made the heir of



the Sivapuri Mutt centre. Vaithilingampillai declared himself as a pauper, and made him give the lands and the income derived from them to the Goddess. At that time, the Advocate who argued this case in the Manchakkuppam Court was Sri T. Chellappapillai who became later the Chief Justice of Travancore. Even to this day these lands and the Mutt centre belonged to the Goddess Sivakamy. In this case the plaintiff was called a Pauper Vaithilingampillai.



## CHAPTER 11

### Navalar in Thamilaagam (South India)

*The Pros and Cons of the "Arudpa Marudya"  
Controversy*

Suddhanantha Bharatiyar in his admirable biography on Arumuga Navalar (Tamil) says about the Arudpa Marudpa controversy as follows.

"Let us weigh the facts of each of these parties impartially. Ramalinga Swamy's influence in Chidambaram temple was considerable. That was because of his mellifluous talk and his devotedness to Lord Nadaraja and because of his gracious heart. In those days people were not aware of the beauties of the "Arudpa" of Ramalingaswamy. Today the people appreciate his devotional poems. Navalar repudiated the "Arudpa" of Ramalingaswamy. Ramalingaswamy's disciples with the aid of Ramalingaswamy (their master) met at the hall of Kanagasabai in June 1868 and abused Navalar. They interpreted this name in many new ways. A pamphlet entitled the lecture at Perampalam was issued; in that many baseless attacks were made against Navalar. Would the lion Navalar remain calm? At Manchak-Kuppam Court, the case was heard. The Theedchatharkal (priests of the temple) brought many witnesses and



fought this case stubbornly. The Vallalar (Rama lingaswamy) stood up in the dock. He declared that he never abused Navalar."

"Navalar, on the day of this case finished his Siva Pooja, gave the "lingam" to Sathasivampillai and said "If I am punished I will give up this life; please leave this "Udayar" in the stream. Soundranayagampillai of Jaffna, appeared for Navalar. His opponents questioned him arrogantly. Navalar thought of Siva and replied truly, his eyes brimming in tears. No danger would befall those who utter the name of Siva." Navalar emerged victorious. The Priests (of Chidambaram) were fined fifty rupees. The Vallalar was exonerated. The noble manner of Navalar melted the heart of the judge. From this date, those who upheld "Sivatheekshai" were jubilant. The Saiva path of life flourished. In every city, this "Arudpa-Marudpa" controversy became the burning topic of the hour.

"In every great man's life, there will be many things we like, and a few which we may not like, if we go on looking for faults we cannot have any ties of relationship. We should appreciate the good points, in a man's life. Today the "Arudpa" is chanted in all the parts of Thamilagam. Once many people found fault with them. Vallalar received no regular education, he sang guided by his inner impulses. Velayuda Mudaliyar, the poet, classified his poems into six cantos, and corrected them and published them. It was he who gave the title "Arudpa"

to it and published it as the work of "Arud — prakasa Vallalar." Vallalar questioned this title. The details are found in a book entitled "Arud - sudar Vallar". Navalar was a great man. He was the friend of Malavai Mahalinga Iyer, Visakap-perumalayar, C. W. Thamothersampillai, Meenadchisundarampillai and Thiagaraja Chettyar."

"On an occasion I happened to go through the manuscripts of Vallalar at Vadaloore. I saw many letters and essays of the battle of words between the two. But not one manuscript there was in the hands of Vallalar. It appeared that he seemed to have been a nonpartisan and he kept to himself."

### ***The Contentions of Navalar's "Poli-Arudpa"***

(1) Navalar contended that the Devarams, the Thiruvagasam, the Thiruvaisippa and the Periapuranam were the "sacred mantras" and they alone should be sung in the Temples.

(2) Ramalingam Pillai claimed to be a master of knowledge, although he never had any schooling. But how was it that his poems were full of mistakes in spelling. Gnanasambanthar wrote Devarams, inspired by God's grace, still we find no flaw in words or matter. Ramalingampillai has made such common mistakes as "Kelka" instead of "Kedka" and written "Sotpanam", instead of "Soppnam."

(3) Ramalingam Pillai sang that he lighted a lamp filled with water. He sang that the Lord



Nadaraja, came to him and gave him something in his hand. He embraced the Lord, and obtained special grace. There are two hundred songs composed by him. Could he work "miracles" before everybody?

(4) Ramalingampillai said that Siva taught him the science of alchemy and that he planned to build a town called "Parwathy puram" and hall "Kana-gasabai" where he would bring Siva to dance in that hall. He promised the "Theedchidar" two lakhs, from the money that would accrue to him from Alchemy. If he had any real powers, Navalar asked, why should Ramalingaswamy's disciples go about the streets of Madras, collecting an anna or two? Ramalingampillai had neither the power to resurrect the dead, or any powers of Alchemy.

(5) Ramalingampillai it was claimed, made a pill, by which he could "fly". It was said that two of his pupils who swallowed these pills, flew as high as a coconut tree, and within two "nalikais" (a few minutes) flew to Madras. Would he do that in public (asked Navalar).

(6) Ramalingampillai said that his wife was dead, and that he knew of it. His wife went about with a "Parathesi". He had to flee from Madras, owing to this incident.

There are many who misinterpret the term "immortality"—as appertaining to the body. There are super souls, who realize "Thou art that", to live

in realization of that fact. It is really the life perennial.

Ramalinga Swamy contended that there was a "Paranava Theham" and a "Nadha Sariram". He is hailed as a mystic poet, who spoke of a universal light and the universality of Religions.

“பொங்கு பல சமயமெனும் நதிகளெல்லாம்  
புகுந்து கலங்கி நிறை வாய் பொங்கி ஓங்கும்  
கங்குகரை காணுத கடலே!”

*In his approach to God Ramalingaswamy may be compared to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.*

Ramalingaswamy established in 1865, a "Samarasa Veda Sanmarka Sangam." He established a "Satthia Dharmach-Salai" in 1867.

He disappeared, in the form of a light on 30-1-1874.

"Let us guard and cherish the sanctity of the Devarams etc. as expounded by Arumuga Navalar. But let us also digest the piety of the "Arudpas".

"After the disappearance of Vallalar, Navalar lived for a few years. Some say that Vallalar died in a room, as he was unable to bring back to life a dead person. Some say that his body was brought secretly and buried in the Gnanasabai. But whatever may be the myths that have come to us, his poems "the Arudpa", will preserve for ever the name of Ramalinga Swamy; in the same way that which helps to make Navalar immortal is his works and



the flame of Saivism kindled by him. After their demise, their disciples, waged many wars of words, in Thamilagam, there were also fights and cases. But now we do not see any of these sights. The "Arudpa" has been beautifully printed and bound and all read this collection of poems. Vallalar's Anthology of verses and his appeals touch the inner chords of our hearts. Let us not think of the hole in the bread, but eat the bread. This controversy arose, in order to establish the glory of both. Let us praise the Saints who sang the Devarams and the Thiruvagam and make the soul of Navalar jubilant.

(See Suddhanantha Bharathi's "Peruman Navalar")



## CHAPTER 12

### The title of "Navalar"

Mr. S. Sivapadasundaram in his brochure entitled "Arumuga Navalar" says:. (Page 2)

"While in India, Navalar visited several sacred shrines and delivered religious lectures everywhere. When he was at Kumbakonam, the head of the Thiruvavaduturai Adhinam invited him to his Matam for the purpose of honouring him. The head of this Matam had all along been regarded as the spiritual head of the Saiva World. He received Navalar with great, regard and love. At his request Navalar delivered a lecture, and the head of the Matam, in order to honour him or rather to honour it, gave him the title of Navalar. He stayed there a few days, spending his time in reading rare Agamic works, not available anywhere else. Though he accepted the title, he would not accept anything tangible."

The Christian Missionaries used both the media, the Press and the Platform to spread their religion. Navalar wanted to use both these media, for the sake of propagating the Saiva faith. Navalar set forth to Madras in July 1849 at the age of 27. He had to go through Vetharaniyam. When he reached this city the Saivaites greeted him with the beating of drums, and "nathasuvaram" and waited eagerly for his lectures. His fame had preceded before him. Devarams and Thiruvagam were sung. Navalar



made an eloquent speech on “Siva Agamas”

The Tamil Nadu, awoke from its slumber, and opened its eyes. From that time onwards, there was a flowering of Tamil Renaissance. Navalar was received with the highest respect in Sivagankai, Ramnad, Ootumalai and Eddiyapuram. It was the age of great Tamil poets—Maha Vaithianatha Iyer, Sinna Vaithya, Peria Vaithya, Kavi Kunjari, Gopalakrishna Bharathiyar, Kanam Krishna Iyer, Thiagaraj Iyer, Sledaippuli Richu Vaiyar, Theyva Sihamanipulavar and Vedanayagampillai who were the stars that shone in the literary firmament at that time. To crown all, there was Maha Vidvan Meenadchisundarampillai who was a king of poets and sang bright verses in “Senthamil”. At Ramnad, Muttu Ramalinga Sethupathy, Paskara Sethupathy and Ponnusamy Thevar, patronised men of Tamil learning.

Thiruvavaduthurai Atheenam was a centre of Saivism and Tamil culture. It was like a mother land to the poets. The Head of this Mutt (Pandarach - Channathigal) was Ambalavana Thesikar. He was a great poet; withal he was a master of Prose, Verse and Drama in Tamil. Next to him in power Subramania Thesikar. He had that greatness, and goodness of recognizing merit in others. It was he, who came across Meenadchisunderampillai, and having perceived his deep scholarship, conferred on him the title of “Vidvan”. Thereafter he was patronised by the Thiruvavaduthurai Atheenam.

Arumugam (as he was known then) was invited to Thiruvavaduthurai Atheenam by the head of the Mutt centre. At this centre many asked questions from him in grammar, literature and the Saiva Siddhanta Sastras. His replies, which were based on many works which he had read and also on his wit and intelligence greatly impressed his hearers.

The head of this Mutt (Pandarach - Sannathigal) requested Navalar to make a speech. On this occasion Navalar spoke on certain aspects of Saiva Siddhanta. His speech was characterised with beauty of diction (Senthamil), grammatically unblemished, logical, and one which could touch the inner chords of piety of even the non-plus—a rare achievement. The learned men in this centre of learning were so astonished at the performance of this young man from Lanka, that they bestowed on him the title of “Navalar” (See Kailasapillai’s “Arumuga Navalar” Pages 30 & 31).

“The title of Navalar sat easily on the shoulders of Arumuga Navalar. Although there are several Navalars, yet we think of Arumuga Navalar, when we refer to Navalar. There is only one Sun and so one Navalar. (Suddhanantha Bharathi’s “Navalar Peruman” Pages 71 - 72)

It was the month of June 1858. Navalar came from Jaffna to the city of Vetharaniyam. After having worshipped at the Temple; he listened rapturously to the melodious Devarams and Thiruvagasams which were sung there. Navalar emphasized that



Devarams and Thiruvagasams should be a “must” in this temple. He worshipped Lord Thiagaraja at Thiru-varur. The Devaram that began with “Thillai val anthanar tham adiyarkkum adiyen” melted his heart. From here he came to Thiruvavaduturai Mutt. The Head of this Mutt (Pandarachchannathigal) openly welcomed him; he partook his meals along with him, sitting side by side. The Thambirans, and the Hymnists, all sat spell-bound hearing the words of Arumuga Navalar. Navalar lectured on several themes pertaining to Hinduism.

After Navalar finished his lectures, he examined certain “ola” manuscripts in the Mutt centre. He was compiling certain “olas” for the sake of publishing them as books. Navalar wanted four “ola” manuscripts, Pandarachchannathigal joyfully placed them before Navalar, but kept one back as if he was going to peruse it. Navalar worshipped Pandarachchannathigal got holy ashes from him, and took leave of him. Sannathigal got up and gave the one book which was with him to Navalar and smiled. The Head of the Mutt, never rose from his seat, to respect anybody; but had to resort to this ruse, in order to pay homage to Navalar. Navalar knew this, and raising both his hands uttered “Namasivaya” and took all the four “ola” manuscripts to Dharmapuram.

### ***Navalar at Dharmapuram***

The city of Dharmapuram which always welcomed the great learned men, warmly welcomed

Navalar. Pandarachchannathigal, the head of the Mutt, having made Navalar to sit by his side, had meals along with him, and conversed with him regarding Shastras. Navalar discoursed with him about the greatness of Periapuranam and the character of the disciples. When Navalar expounded the meaning of “ஐந்து பேரறிவுங் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பருங் கரணங்கள் நான்குஞ் சிந்தையேயாக”, all were spell bound in admiration. The next day Navalar lectured on “Suranvathaip - padalam” in the Kantha Puranam. He perused the “ola” manuscripts, in this centre of learning, and took down notes of what he wanted after obtaining permission from the head, and went to Seerkali.

### ***Navalar at Seerkali***

When Navalar set foot at Seerkali, he remembered it was hallowed by Aludaipillai who had partaken the milk (of Gnana) from the Divine mother; he worshipped Lord Thoniappar, tears brimming from his eyes; he listened to the Hymns of Sambandar. Then he came to Chidambaram.

### ***Navalar at Chidambaram***

In the presence of Lord Siva, Navalar was inspired; to him dawned the bright idea of establishing a big institute of learning in the heart of the Saiva World in Chidambaram, — a centre of learning that would diffuse the knowledge of Tamil, Saivism and many arts. He contacted many great men, in order to collect money necessary to put up such an institution.



## CHAPTER 13

### Navalar and Ponnusamy Thevar of Ramnad

When Navalar was in Madras, he was held in high esteem by the learned there. Navalar stayed in Thangasalai Street, in the premises where the Vidyanupalana—Yanthirasalai is housed. He started printing the “Ola” manuscripts, which he had collected so carefully at Madras. A gentleman met Navalar; he was a great lover of Tamil; he was tall and fat; he spoke Tamil very clearly and well; he was a great scholar of Tamil. He was extremely familiar with both Thirukkural and Thiru-vasakam. He was Ponnusamy Thevar the “Minister” of Muttulinga Sethupathy of Ramnad. He was a munificent man, gave in abundance to one and all; Pandiuhurai Thevar and he re-established the Madura Tamil Sangam—Ramasampillai the friend of Thevar was a disciple of Navalar. He requested Navalar to publish, the Thiruk Kovaiyar, the Thirukkural with the notes, Sethupuranam, Tharukka-Sankirakam, Annapadiyam—after scrutinising the manuscripts of these with great attention. He promised to bear all the printing expenses. Navalar agreed, and started printing the Thirukkovaivar. This was published together with the commentary by Nachchinarkkiniyar. Thirukkural was printed with the commentary by Parimelalakar. Meenadchisundarampillai and his disciple Thiagaraja Chettiyar, the

Tamil Vidvan of the Kumbakonam College, wrote Prefatory Notes to Navalar’s publication. Naval-ar’s work was praised by Thirva vadu thurai Atheena Vidvan Thandavaraya Swamigal, Sivasangara Pandithar, Sodasavathanam Suppurayah Chettiar and others.

Navalar’s editions of Thiruk-kural and Thiruk-kovaiyar are still the perfectly unblemished editions. Navalar then published the Thiruvagasam—the classic work that speaks so eloquently of the Grace of God.

Navalar used to spend many hours in the night, comparing his work with several “Ola” manuscripts of the same texts. In the day, Navalar wrote and straight away gave the manuscripts to the press. Very often he dictated his manuscripts, the prose to his compositors punctuating them meticulously observing commas, colons, semi-colons and full stops, inverted commas and question marks. Both the Periapurana Vacanam and the Kandapurana Vacanam were dictated, while Navalar was perusing the verses. These works are gems of Tamil prose; when he started talking out would flow words that were useful to the whole of humanity; propaganda for Saivism, some service of Siva, some criticism of anything non Saiva way of life, and general good. He wrote copiously; he was a prolific writer, writing several useful works and publishing Saiva literature. The great men only can understand the great; the deep can call forth unto the deep. So Navalar



was appreciated by the Great Minds of that age.

At Mylapore, there was Sinnappaddam Arumuga Thesikar, who belonged to the Thiruvannamalai Atheenam; He sent his "Othuvars" and invited Navalar and paid homage to him by presenting him personally the Holy beads he wore. He paid eloquent tributes to Navalar's character and Saiva scholarship. Such was the great esteem that Thamilagam had for Navalar.

Having entrusted the work of publication to Sadasivampillai at Madras Navalar worshipped Thirutthani Lord Murugan, and Saint Kannappar at Thiruk-Kalatthi, He also paid visits to Canjeeputram, Thiruviraddanam. Thiruppathirippuliyur and came to Thiruvavaduthurai. A warm welcome awaited him here. Subramania Thesikar, was the head of this Mutt - centre of learning. The Thesikar requested him to join the Mutt, as a spiritual head. Had Navalar assented to this proposal, he would have risen to be the "Grand Head" of this Mutt. But Navalar could not be confined within the four walls of the Mutt. Navalar, who possessed great enthusiasm, and had a great mission in life. He wanted to establish Saiva schools everywhere, he wanted to train Saiva preachers of religion. He wanted to spread the fragrance of the Saiva faith. Therefore Navalar declined the offer of Pandarachchannathgial most politely, although the head of this Mutt was willing to assist Navalar in his great ideals. Navalar remarked that he should have unfettered freedom

to realize his ideals. Then Navalar took leave of the head of this Mutt.

Navalar wended his way to Thirunaraikkaronam. He had a rousing reception there. Navalar spoke on "Saiva Samaya Vilakkam" Navalar then left for Ramnad.





## CHAPTER 14

### Ramnad Honours Navalar

*(Ponnusamy Thevar and Navalar)*

The "Thiruvavadu Mutt" in the city of Ramnad, whose head was Visuvalingam had several Thambirans, who had had once been students of Navalar; they welcomed Navalar warmly. This was a godsent opportunity for the head Thambiran, to have all the intricate points, regarding the Periapuranam, and certain works on Grammar cleared by Navalar.

Ramnad was, so to say, a paradise for Tamil poets. Very few who came to this city, failed to see Ponnusamy Thevar - who was magnanimous in his gifts to the poets. Hence, Thevar was hurt in mind, that Navalar had not paid a visit to him. So he sent Vidvan Vembattoor to Navalar.

Suddhananta Bharati in his inimitable work on Navalar gives us an excellent word-picture (in Tamil) of the interview between Vidvan Vembattoor and Arumuga Navalar.

Vidvan Vembattoor:- Although you have come to the Royalty of Ramnad it is a pity that you have not seen our Thevar?

Arumuga Navalar:- I do not wish to do so.

Vidvan Vembattoor:- Is it right to say so? Is it an ordinary place? Every Vidvan who comes to

Ramnad pays a visit to Thevar. It is not nice for you to depart from Ramnad without visiting Thevar. It is a just honour.

Arumuga Navalar: I never do things which conflicts with my heart.

Vidvan Vembattoor;- Do you not wish to see Thevar? Am I to convey to him this?

Arumuga Navalar; You may do so.

Vidvan Vembattoor conveyed to Thevar Navalar's wish. Thevar was pained and he sent the Vidvan thrice to invite him. The third time, the Vidvan intimidated Navalar.

Vidvan Vembattoor;- Sir! You must keep in mind that Thevar is a Dictator here; he can do any thing that he wishes. You cannot cross his boundary, wounding his heart like this. Come on Sir, otherwise you will have to face bitter odds.

Arumuga Navalar;- Sir! I am not a bit frightened by your threats or Thevar's greatness. I do not crave after any rich man's favour. It is Siva's grace alone that matters and in that I know I am rich. I will not quail before riches. The atrocities perpetrated by Thevar and the sufferings of the people are known widely. So begone.

About this incident, many versions were given at the Court of Ramnad. One Ramasamypillai had been a student of Navalar at Madras. (of Kanchipuram and Periapuranam) and he was also a



very good friend of Thevar. Of the others, Navalar had been a teacher of Vanrondai Chettyar Nama-sivaya Thambiran and others. Many Vidvans including the erudite Visakapperumalaiyar, esteemed Navalar for his erudition. But some were obsessed with jealousy, and carried tales to Thevar and caused a split - a dissension of opinions. Ramasamypillai's love for Navalar was spoilt by tale carriers. Navalar's rectitude, acuteness, and love of independence appeared in an erroneous light to them. Some spoke in furtive whispers, about Navalar that he was one who published books by begging money from others. Hence, Navalar did not get any help from Thevar. Navalar chose not to see Thevar, because he knew the metamorphosis, that had taken place in Thevar's heart.

The poets who approached Thevar, did so with cringing servility. Navalar never 'kow-towed' to any one; he never raised aloft both his hands to honour any man; this attitude was only to Lord Siva. He was quite a rich gentleman; why supplicate any one for help,

The Vidvan addressing Thevar said - Sir, Navalar has infringed your dignity; he has dishonoured you, you should exercise your authority and make him to bow to your wish.

Thevar;- It will be dangerous to antagonise him. He is a scholar who has also a knowledge of English. The officials and other nobles of Madras hold Navalar in high esteem. By being inimical to Navalar,

evil will befall us. Navalar is one who has much influence in the spiritual circles (Atthenams). The whole world knows that he is the only one, who could expatiate in a scientific manner on Saiva Siddhanta Religion or on any other topic under the sun. He never depends on me for my gifts or waits for testimonials, as other Vidvans do. Navalar's friendship is absolutely necessary. So we will extend the hand of cordiality and request him to see us. Then Thevar resorted to a trick. He connived with some Vaishnavaites to write a letter to Navalar, the substance of which was;-

"O Navalar ! you are preaching the excellence of Saivaism; we refute; we say that our Vaishnavism is superior; Vishnu is the one omnipotent". Let us have a discussion in the court of Thevar, about this theme. You can establish your claims there.

Navalar scrutinised this letter; read between the lines; picked up the many errors that were found in that and dismissed the Vaishnavites by saying;- "You who cannot write a correct letter, how can you have the capability to conduct a debate before an august assembly?

After this turn of events Ponnusawamy Thevar's pride left him. He had become humble. He sent a letter in verse to Navalar. In this letter Thevar apologised for all his faults and requested Navalar to see him. The Vidvan who brought this letter was now a picture of humility. Navalar was moved by this letter. He felt that it was unbecoming of him



to refrain from seeing Thevar, who had reiterated his desire to see him. But Navalar before complying with Thevar's request, laid down some conditions for his visit. The conditions were as follows;- Navalar would see Thevar, independently. While doing so, Navalar would not take off the garment that covered the upper part of his body. He would not remove his footwear and he would come with his full retinue. Neither would he accept any gifts from Thevar; nor would he get up, when Thevar got up, Navalar inquired from Thevar, whether he was willing to accept these conditions and Thevar was quite pleased to do so.

When Navalar went to see Thevar, he received a warm welcome. Thevar gave him a special seat of honour; exchanged views with him and requested Navalar to preach about Saivism - its greatness and grandeur, Navalar spoke on “சைவ சமயமே சமயம்” to the Vaishnavaites. Navalar gave suitable replies to them. His talk was a luminous one. He expounded to them about the great aspects of the Divinity of Siva, who had no ties of birth or rebirth; the Peerless Eternity, the Universal source of compassion etc.

Thevar offered to Navalar two silk raiments, the borders of which were woven with threads of gold. Such gifts as other poets got. Navalar said that he could never do service to Saivism, by the acceptance of gifts. But Thevar maintained that these were symbols of love and put those garments on Navalar's shoulders. Ponnusamy Thevar expressed

his wish, that Navalar should dedicate himself to the task of publishing ancient works of Tamil and promised him all support. Navalar gave him a booklet of the “Chidambara Vidyalyaya”, bade farewell to Thevar and went to the Mutt. The next day, after worshipping at “the Utthara Kosa Mankai” temple, Navalar left for Madurai.





## CHAPTER 15

### Navalar at Madurai

Navalar was welcomed at Madurai, with great rejoicings, by the learned Pundits, Othuvans and Tambirans. They took him to the Thirugnana-sambantha Mutt, where he was received by the Pandara Sannathigal the head of this Mutt. Navalar sojourned here for some days and worshipped at the temple of Meenadchi Sundaresar. The Pandara Sannathigal induced Navalar, to lecture on the History of the Madurai Shrine, the greatness of Lord Sockalingam, and his divine activities, the greatness of Saiva Siddhanta etc. in the inner hall of the Meenadchi Amman Temple.

Navalar's lectures were enjoyed by a large concourse of devotees. At the end of the lecture, the authorities of the temple and the high priests, decking themselves with head attire, and taking the garland of flowers which adorned the Goddess, presented it to Navalar along with sacred ashes and blessed him. Later Navalar was taken to the Mutt to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Every one at Madurai, praised Navalar's speeches and acclaimed with one voice that they never had heard such speeches before. They said that these speeches were outpourings of nectar! It was the stream of Siva's Eternal bliss! For some years Navalar's eloquence was not forgotten at Madurai.

Navalar delivered some more speeches at Thirugnanasambandar mutt, at the request of Pandara Sannathikal. The devotees were spell-bond with joy. The Head of this Mutt was so deeply impressed by Navalar's speech, that he took off his valuable ear-rings and fixed them on Navalar's ears. The immediate assistant chief of the Mutt, presented Navalar with his valuable "Rudraksha" beads and honoured him. They had now an opportunity of getting all their doubts—knotty points in grammar and literature—cleared by him.

Navalar visited the shrines of Thiruvadakam and Thirupooanam. He also went to Thriupparrankunram, where he prayed at the Shrine of Lord Muruga. After a sojourn with Pandara Sannathikal and after worshipping the Lord at Thiruputtur, he came to Kunrakkudi.

That was under the Thiruvannamalai Atheenam. Here he was welcomed by the head of this Mutt. Here he gave several discourses on Saiva Siddhanta, and the gains attained by those who follow the path of Saiva Dharma. These lectures conquered the heart of the Head of these Atheenam, who overwhelmed Navalar with such honours as never was bestowed to any before him. He was taken in procession on a palanquin accompanied by musicians. This triumphant procession was in typical Saiva tradition. Everywhere the words "Hara Hara Mahatheva" and "Navalar Valha" rent the air. It signified that the age of Gnana-



Sambandar had dawned and that the Tamils had come to know their "Fifth Kuravar!"

The next day Navalar left for Thirup-perunturai—which was hallowed by Saint Manickavasagar who had seen Lord Siva, as "Guru". There he 'stayed at the Thiruvavaduthurai Mutt and worshipped at the temple. Here Ramaswamypillai and Vanrondai Chettyar cleared all the knotty points in Nannool (Grammar) and the Thiruvilaiyadat-Puranam. Then Navalar bade farewell after worshipping the Lord and went to Pudukottai. Here Navalar was welcomed by Thondaiman (the king) his Ministers, and his friends. Magnates (Chettiars) came and saw Navalar. Here Navalar received ample help, in his religious mission.

During that time there was the 'Kumbabishegam' at Nedunkudi. Chettiars invited Navalar to Nedunkudi. On the way Navalar gave a discourse on Siva Dharma, at Harimalam, and there was an animated discourse on the evils of eating flesh. After listening to Navalar, many gave up eating flesh, and vowed to be vegetarians. At the Nedunkudi temple inauguration ceremony. Navalar preached a lengthy sermon. Navalar was accorded with great honours and he returned to Pudukottai. From there Navalar visited Thirichchirappalli, Thiruvanaikaval, Tanjore, Thiruvaiyaru and other shrines and returned to Kumbakonam.

## CHAPTER 16

### At Thiruvavaduthurai with Meenadchisundarampillai

Navalar worshipped Siva at Kumbakonam with deep serenity. He went to Swamy malai and worshipped Lord Muruga, singing the verses of Thirumuruhattuppadai. He paid a visit to the Siva shrine at Thirunagasuram, and spent his time in the contemplation of Siva. During these days Thiagaraja Chettyar came in contact with Navalar and esteemed him for his erudition.

Thus the news of Navalar's sojourn at Kumbakonam reached Thiruvavaduthurai Mutt; and Sri la Sri Subramania Thesikar, sent Maha Vidvan Meenadchi Sundarampillai and some Othuvars to invite Navalar to the Mutt. The Mahavidvan greatly revered Navalar, just as Appar venerated Appoorthy. Now that Thiagaraja Chettyar also joined this group need we describe this meeting? The whole day was spent in discussing Lord Siva and Tamil. Being devotees of Lord Siva, they were sticklers at immaculate observance of the religion; they performed Siva Puja daily, after bathing in the Cauvery.

It was a time when the atmosphere was dewy; the dew made bathers' bodies chilly; the water was very cold. Meenadchisundarampillai, turned to Navalar :— and said பனிக்காலம் கொடுத்து (Pannikalam Kodithu). Navalar said; பனிக்காலம் நன்று.



(Pannikalam Nanru) Thiagaraja Chettyar and some others were there. They said "What Mr. Pillai says is correct, this dewy season is bitter; it will cause cold". Another said "This dewy season is good; it will make the body good and temper the warmth." This triggered off a discussion, and some held that Navalar was right, while others were of opinion that Mr. Pillai was right. Navalar observed: "Why all this useless discussion; I am on the side of Mr. Pillai; I really emphasized what he said." Others asked Navalar how it could be. Navalar said "Mr. Pillai observed பனிக்காலம் கொடிது (Panikkalam Kodiyathu) I said:—பனிக்கு ஆலம் நன்று, பனியை விட விஷம் நல்லது அது அவ்வளவு கொடிது என்றேல் (Poison is better than this cold because it is so very cold.)

There was another gem of conversation. Everybody returned after a bath and applied sacred ashes. A Veera-Vaishnava (scholar) called the attention of Navalar; on the street there was excreta, covered by ashes. "Just see the appearance of your Siva"—Navalar retorted at once. "This is preserved for the sake of your Lord who had once been metamorphosed into a pig; which likes this specially." The face of the person who jibed at Navalar was a study. He was petrified.

Meenadchisundarampillai and Navalar were great friends. Navalar admired the songs of Meenadchisundarampillai. Meenadchisundarampillai admired Navalar for his devotion to Lord Siva, for his moral rectitude, for his colossal knowledge, for the command of his diction and depth of his

thought. Navalar admired Meenadchisundarampillai for his legacy of poesy. Navalar's prose style, his service for Saivism, his essays and criticisms, afforded great delight to Meenadchisundarampillai.

He told everybody, that if one wrote prose such as Navalar did, Tamil would progress rapidly. It is praiseworthy that the peerless poet of the Tamil World (Meenadchisundarampillai) and the king of prose Navalar had a mutual admiration and love for each other.

Navalar accompanied the Maha Vidvan to Thiruvavaduthurai and sojourned there. At that time the second in command of the Mutt, Namasivaya Thambiran was a student of Navalar. The Thambirans and Othuvars also learnt much from Navalar. The intimate exchange of ideas between Navalar and the Maha Vidvan, was a "heavenly treat"—a bliss!

There were discourses on Saivism, commentaries and researches on literature; Navalar got down all the "Ola" manuscripts, and took down notes. He prepared the necessary manuscripts for the Press sent them to Madras, corrected the proof sheets which had been sent to him from Madras and returned them there. It was a never-ending job, a continual work.

It was during these days that Navalar heard the songs of Vaidyanatha Iyer. One day Gopala Krishna Bharathiyar saw Navalar, and said that he had sung a few songs, by the Grace of Lord Nadarajah. He



sang the history of "Nanda the Saint." Bharatiyar continued singing being encouraged to do so by Navalar's words "These songs are replete with devotion to Lord Siva, it is heavenly bliss to hear these songs" Navalar praised Bharathiyar and rewarded him amply.

It was during these days that Navalar came in contact with Vethanayagampillai and discoursed with him. There was none who did not praise Navalar's moral behaviour and his great eloquence. After bidding farewell to the Head of the Mutt of Thiruvavaduthurai, Navalar went to Pullirukkam Veloor, worshipped Lord Siva there, and left for Seerkali. That shrine was the birth place of Saint Gnana Sambandar; it was here that this Saint drank the milk from the Divine Mother. As soon as he reached Seerkali, he raised both his hands aloft and exclaimed! "Praise be Lord Gnana Sambandar." After finishing his morning ablutions, Navalar went to Thoniappar Sannidhi. The Songs of Sambandar rent the air; the air reverberated with the words "Hara Hara Mahadeva." At that time the Abhisegha ceremonies took place for Lord Thoniappar and Periyamayagiammai. Navalar immersing himself in the thoughts of Lord Siva, sang Thevarams and Thiruvasagam and worshipped Siva. He went back to Thiruvavaduthurai. There flocked Othuvans, and Thambirans and other devotees of Siva. Here Navalar gave them a talk on the glories of Saivism and left for Chidambaram.

## CHAPTER 17

### Navalar at Madras

Although Navalar delivered several lectures at Madras (roughly nine decades ago), there was no "God win" such as Swami Vivekananda had later to record his lectures. Fortunately we have the text of two of his speeches.

Navalar's lectures drew multitudes. He spoke at his residence at Madras every Friday. What were the effects that these produced? The speeches transformed the mental environment of the whole of "Sennaipaddinam" and made it into a "Saiva—Citadel." Many came forward to resuscitate the Hindu temples—sung in Thevarams—then found as ruins in the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu. If there was a "Saiva Action," Navalar was the leader.

At Pettinayakan Peddai, in Madras, at Mudaliyar Subramaniapillai's house a Society for the welfare of the Hindus was inaugurated under the name of "Thiruth-thondai Nadduppathy Punniya Sabhai" which in brief may be styled as "Thirupani Sangam." Navalar was the President.

We give here a resume of his speeches,—the first of which he delivered on the day of inauguration. The second lecture was held at Pachchiyappa's College.

Navalar's speeches were made with great



religious fervour and he impressed the people, about the greatness of Saivism.

He maintained that a Hindu should follow what is said in the Agamas. A man should spend one third of his wealth on himself and two thirds on his religion. Once wealth was earmarked for a holy purpose then that should be given without reservation. If anybody failed to spend on charity the portion allotted for it would result in him being tormented by lurking fear. Charity, Navalar held was not for an individual alone, but for all associated with him.

Navalar held that, no famine or pestilence would stalk the land nor ill-health reign nor injustice would prevail and there would be seasonal rainfall if "puja" is performed daily in the temples according to what had been stipulated in the Hindu Scriptures.

Navalar impressed that the ruined temples should be renovated and arrangements should be made to conduct daily pooja in these temples. It was not possible for one to do this, or even a few to do this—but every Hindu should unite to achieve this noble purpose. If there is no unity, this aim cannot be fulfilled. It is a rare thing for Hindus, to meet together to achieve an objective; and it is rare to accomplish this in a united framework observed Navalar. Thus either in the materialistic, field or in the spiritual field, the Hindus do not attain lofty heights. We become the objects of derision by

foreigners—foreigners in speech and foreigners in religion. The brothers in a family unite in order to relieve or redress the grievances in a father's household. In such a manner, the Hindus should unite and remove all shortcomings of the temples of Siva and do all the help necessary for the maintenance of Saiva Dharma, argued Navalar.

Navalar desired that Hindus should not allow themselves to be urged by feelings of enmity and jealousy and should work hard with purity of mind body and speech and contribute their mite to see that Hindu Dharma flourishes and thus we would become the recipients of the blessings of Siva - an ocean of graciousness.

Navalar expounded that virtues of the four paths of Hindu religion - Sanyasi, Kriyai, Yoga and Gnanam. Although Siva was omnipresent yet his grace will be specially manifested in the Siva Lingam and also his devotees, just as ghee is present in curd; in other places, it will not be manifested, just as milk in ghee. Therefore Navalar maintained that Hindus should worship the Lingam and the Sangam—the devotees (Siva thondar.)

Siva would manifest himself, in accordance with the aspirations of the devotees—just like the fire that flashes when two sticks are rubbed, and the milk that flows when the udder of the cow is drawn.

Navalar contended that although the Vedas have been uttered by Lord Siva, yet Lord Siva, preferred the poems sung by his true devotees, the four cardinal saints, through the Thevarams and Thiru-



vasagam; and the temples that are sung in the Devarams are very holy indeed.

In the speech at Pachaiyappar's College, Navalar gives us the essence of Hinduism. He says that Eternal Bliss, should be sought by everybody. He stressed that one should attain "Siva Gnanam" - the wisdom of Siva. He exhorted the Hindus to read the Saiva Siddhanta Sciences or to get them read to listen to them, to think of what they read, and to have a clarified frame of mind. He says that the two fundamental things are *to establish Hindu Schools, and to spread the glories of Saivism*. There is nothing higher than these.



## CHAPTER 18

### Navalar—the Social Reformer

Navalar had the indomitable courage to criticise the evils of the corrupt bureaucracy of his times.

In the year 1878, a great famine stalked the land. The Government had established dispensaries to give free medicine and distribute food. But there were no proper officials to attend to this work. The Government Agent Mr. Twynam did not pay heed to the representations of the people. The people therefore appealed to Arumuga Navalar who convened a public meeting at the Saiva-prakasa Vidyalaya and deplored the high handed policy of the Government. News trickled in that hundreds of people were dying of hunger and dysentery. The Governor paid a visit to Jaffna. Navalar jotted all the short comings of the Government and sent up a long memorandum in English to the Governor Mr. James Longden.

In his memorandum, Navalar exposed the social evils of Jaffna, praised the previous regimes of the Government Agents, Mr. Dyke and Mr. Russel, and mentioned that Mr. Twynam (a) paid a deaf ear to their requests. (b) never gave interviews to those who sought permission (c) had certain favourites as counsellors and was therefore partial in the rendering of justice (d) never advertised vacancies whenever there were vacancies for a village headman (e) listened to the recommendations of his flatterers and sycophants. Several such instances were quoted namely how Mr. Twynam had appointed a man of



Mannar as Maniagar of Jaffna and how often the Maniagar left that place and went to Mannar, leaving his cousin to manage affairs and how the post of Maniagar of the islands round Jaffna, (twenty of them in number) had not been filled for two years.

Navalar brought to lime-light how there was bribery and corruption and nepotism and how those who were fit were not given their dues. The Government Agent treated his officials as mere puppets. Those who were the relations or the sycophants of the Government Agent, had a whale of a time; they held the plums of office every where. He cut down trees and fences and expropriated lands for the use of the crown and paid no compensation at all to the owners. Even the sums allotted for one item were spent on some other items.

At a time of famine like that, exorbitant taxes were levied on the people. No paddy even for sowing was available. So many lands lay fallow. Even when there was rain, no lands could be sowed without seeds for sowing. Formerly if there was an excess of water in the fields, that could be deviated to the sea, by cutting canals. Mr. Twynam paid a deaf ear to their appeal. The plants lay submerged under water. Famine and dysentery mowed down the population in hundreds.



## CHAPTER 19

### Navalar's Agitation against the Administration

Mr. Twynam, the Government Agent became the target of Navalar's criticism. A Commission at the request of Navalar investigated into the shortcomings of the administration in the North. But Mr. Twynam's sub-ordinates saved him. Consequently the charges of bribery and corruption were not upheld by the Commission. The Examiner had supported the point of view of the people. Whereas the Morning Star (English edition) attacked Navalar, and supported the Government. Navalar however ventilated the grievances of the people by his articles in the "*Ilankai Nesan*" and "*Uthaya Bhanu*", and in his pamphlets.

Mr. P. Cumaraswamy, Member of the Legislative Council, being dissatisfied with the Commissioner's findings raised a question in the Legislative Council.

But Navalar continued his agitation. He got a band of eminent leaders—the Chief Justice of Thiruvananthapuram, Mr. Chellappahpillai, Advocate Nagalingampillai, Mr. Ponnambalam Ramathan and Cumaraswamy Mudaliyar to send a petition to the Secretary of State for Colonies in London calling for a probe.



Mr. Twynam tried every means to break the spirit of Navalar. In that he failed miserably and found that there was truth in Navalar's protest. He realised that Navalar was a Hampden fighting for the rights of the common man.

### **Navalar—the Politician**

Navalar was a keen politician too. If he had chosen politics as his vocation, he would have become a great political leader such as Tilak or Chidambarampillai. He conducted a paper "*The Udaya Bhanu*" to redress grievances of the people, to reform the social evils that were prevalent at that time and to safeguard the Tamil language, the Hindu religion, and the common weal. Will not somebody start a paper with the name "*Udaya Bhanu*"—a name which inspired Navalar.

Navalar advocated simple frugal living. He sought to organise Saving Funds. As a result of his efforts people benefited later. His ideas crystallized and yielded harvest a hundred fold.

Sir Muttucumaraswamy that eminent Tamil representative of the Legislative Council (1862–1879) had died, two candidates vied with each other for his place. One was Sir Muttucumaraswamy's nephew Mr. Ponnambalam Ramanathan. He was an Advocate of the Supreme Court. The other was Mr. Britto, a Christian. Navalar presented a memorandum to the Governor Mr. James Longden stating that Ramanathan was a man of illumination, a versatile scholar, a popular philanthropist who knew the

needs of the people and who had sympathy, virtue, honesty and love for the common weal. His family was well-known and he came from a very good stock. His grand-father Mr. A. Cumaraswamy Pillai had rendered yeoman service to the Tamils, until his death in 1836.

Navalar went from village to village, speaking in support of Ramanathan. His enemies all supported Britto. Here is an extract from a report of Navalar's speeches.

"A public meeting was got up by Navalar, in support of Ramanathan at the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai on 22-5-1879. Pundit Carol Visvananthapillai was elected chairman. Navalar spoke in support of Ramanathan in lucid and eloquent Tamil. The Travancoore Magistrate lent his support to Navalar." (This was found in the "*Ilankai Nesan*" of 28-5-1879).

Ramanathan came victorious in the election. Ramanathan followed the work of Navalar. Ramanathan College is a monument to the efforts of Ramanathan.





## CHAPTER 20

### Navalar's Concept of Education

It would be interesting to find out what Navalar's concepts were on education. He says definitely in his pamphlet (Page 40 Life of Navalar's-T. Kailasapillai.)

"Therefore, we should establish schools all over Tamil Nadu, and teach there religious works." He quotes "What the sages and kings desire can be realised through gold". There is no salvation for the poor. The pupils should study books on materialism or science ("laukika noolhal") that will enable them to make more wealth; and also give them a religious education.

Again Navalar says (ibid Page 42) such teachers should be appointed, who are of good morals and education and teachers, who will teach Literature and Grammar and books on Ethics such as "Kural" Puranas, Number, Logic, Geography, Astronomy, Commerce, Politics, Sculpture etc.

It is crystal clear that Navalar had in his mind an education that was a mixture of literary, scientific and technical education — an education that would enable the students to fit them to the society or needs of the times.

A century ago, Navalar had a picture in his mind of a polyglot society of farmers, astrologers, businessmen, sculptors, geologists and geographers, logicians, grammarians and literary pundits — who

would all have religion as their back-ground. He says: "Even those who study English and other professions should be taught any subject they want to study during their leisure." (Page 44, Life of Navalar-T. Kailasapillai). But the training that was imparted during the nineteenth century and also the twentieth century made men and women work as quill-drivers, typists and collar-workers and did not fit them for the complex needs of a modern Society.

Navalar had no prejudice against studying the Sinhalese language. He considered Tamil and Sinhalese as national languages. He envisaged the studying of English for professional purposes.

"The solution to unemployment is a broad-based education - whereby men and women can become scientific Farmers. Commerce has not been fully exploited by the Tamils. Artists and sculptors are needed for the country; they cannot be produced in a few months by a Tutorial Institute."

If we want to make a "car" or erect a "temple" we have to import technicians from India or other Countries. There are not enough schools for the teaching of fine Arts in Ceylon. Those who have learnt the fine arts of music and dancing are still languishing in their homes for want of patronage.

Today Science has progressed by leaps and bounds. Therefore we should give a vocational bias to education. Navalar had at the back of his mind a technical-cum-religious education. We are living in competitive times. Navalar never advocated that children should be divorced from politics or a techni-



cal education. He certainly liked students to know Civics and Political Science. He knew the value of 'capital' which can only be obtained by saving. Therefore he advocated that whatever education that would improve the economy of the country should be adopted.

Navalar started a Saiva English School in 1872 as can be seen from a study of the Navalar, Trust deeds.

The school at Kandarmadam was a branch of the Vannarponnai School.

Navalar's life was a glorious record of self-abnegation. It was a case of service untill he died. Navalar wanted Tamil classical books to be published without an "iota" of error. He wanted Hindu preachers, and priests to be given a thorough religious education. He wanted the singing of Thiruvagasam, Thevarams and other Thirumurais in every temple.

Navalar's prose works have to be reprinted so that the modern generation could steep themselves in his concepts. We should certainly give our boys highly "technical education", but this should not be divorced from religious education. Our education should be linked to the modern needs of our present life.



## CHAPTER 21

### Navalar at Jaffna

1870—1879

Those who ponder over the biographies on Navalar, will never doubt that his services to Eeclam, his mother-land was as great to Hinduism, as Anagarika Dharmapala's to Buddhism. The Buddhist world celebrated the Dharmapala centenary celebration. The Government declared that occasion as a holiday on 17-9-1964.

The return of Navalar in January 1870 to Jaffna his mother-land, and the royal welcome that he received there may be compared to the welcome received by Swami Vivekananda in Colombo in 1897 when he returned after the Parliament of religious held at Chicago in 1893 where he had made an indelible mark on the spiritual leaders of many religions.

It is best to summarise the activities of Navalar in Jaffna (1870 to 1879). His Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya at Vannarponnai, became the centre of Hindu religious activity. He galvanized the Hindu public to observe the tenets of his religion by delivering weekly lectures on every Friday in his school, and elsewhere.

Navalar wrote the tract called "Yalpana Samaya Nilai". This is a national history, which Navalar himself desired to translate into English and place it in the hands of the public. This is a candid ex-



position of the methods employed by the Christian Missionaries, in converting the so called heathens to Christianity. It reveals the Janus-headed life of the so-called Christians of that generation—who secretly went to the Hindu Brahmin priests to observe certain Hindu ceremonies. This tract has not been translated into English as yet. It opened the eyes of the Hindu public. The Hindus observed the Guru Poojas of their Saints. In the temples, there was singing of Devarams. Othuvans or Singers of Hindu hymns from Thiruvavaduthurai were invited to take charge of this duty. There was a Hindu atmosphere, in which men breathed and lived.

### ***Navalar and the Kandaswamy Temple***

This temple was built by one “Bhuvaneka Bahu” The Yalpana Vaipava Malai avers that this person was the Bramin Minister, Neelakandan, who came from the Pandyan country to serve Jaya Singha Aryan. This was the tenth century. According to this source it was Bhuvanekabahu who built Nallur the City and the Kandaswamy temple.

In accordance with modern historians, Nallur Kandaswamy Temple was built by Senpahap Perumal, Thirisangabodhi Bhuvaneka Bahu the adopted son of Parakrama Bahu VI—the King of Kotte in the 15th century A. D. This temple was the pride of Jaffna, but it was destroyed by the Portuguese, when they captured Jaffna in the 17th century.

Nallur Kandaswamy temple was in the site of the present Christian Church near “Sangili Thoppu”,

now known also as “Chettiar Thottam” and belongs to the Sivan Temple at Vannarponnai.

The present Kandaswamy Temple was built by Ragunatha Mappana Mudaliyar in 1749 according to some authorities. One of the descendants of Krishna Iyar the late Sri N. V. Kathikeyakkurukkal of Nallur told me that this was founded by Krishna Iyar of Nallur in 1793. It was a small cot, where a silver Vel, was worshipped by this brahmin, who was no doubt its first priest. Krishna Iyar's son Suppiar was given his appointment as a Priest by Lord North in his own hand writing and he was given also a sword which document and sword belong as family heir-looms. Sri Kailasanatha Kurukkal, who is at present the Lecturer in Sanskrit at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya is the son of Sri Karthikeya kurukkal alias Thambyah Kurukkal of Nallur.

In 1807 Don Juan Ragunatha Mappana Mudaliyar was the shroff in the Jaffna Kachcheri and he built this temple with public aid. This temple is now managed by a descendant of Ragunatha Mappana Mudaliyar.—Shanmuga Mappana Mudaliyar's brother Kumara Mappana Mudaliyar. It was due to Navalar's persistent propaganda, that the authorities were asked to show their accounts to the courts and the temple was declared a public temple. This was the result of a case, Ragunatha Mappana Mudaliyar and descendants vs. Krishna Iyar and his descendants. The Court declared that Ragunatha Mappana Mudaliyar's family could continue to be the trustees of this temple, but nevertheless it was declared a public temple on June 10th, 1929.



Navalar said that in the Holy of Holies, there should be a statue of Lord Subramania. At present there is a "Vel" or lance. Navalar pointed out that there should be spires to this temple. He wished that this temple be built with granite.

Navalar preached, against the slaughter of goats at the Nallur Kandaswamy temple which was done a day before the Car Festival. He was against animal sacrifices.

In 1876 Navalar summoned a Public meeting at the Sivan temple, Vannarponnai, to discuss the affairs of the Nallur Kandaswamy temple.

No sacrifice of animals is permitted in the Nallur Kandaswamy temple now. This temple has become holy ground to the Tamils of Ceylon. But the wishes of Navalar, in respect of the spires and the building in granite remains yet to be fulfilled.

Navalar seems to have been the spearhead of a social service movement in Jaffna, fighting against cholera, and the callousness of Government under the Government Agent Mr. Twynam. Mr. Twynam finally recognized the intrinsic worth of Navalar.

Navalar was a dynamo of educational activity.

He organised Hindu Schools at Vannarponnai, Kandarmadam, Puloly and Kopay and took on himself the herculean tasks of managing private schools, without the aid of Government. The Government really gave cold shoulder to Navalar—because it was an alien Government.

## ***Navalar and Thiruk-Ketheswaram***

It was Navalar who first agitated that the Government should return Thiruk-Ketheswaram to the Hindus. He expressed his desire that this ancient temple should be resuscitated. But it was after Navalar's death that this land came into the hands of the Hindus. Twynam, the Government Agent decided to give this to the Hindus. Had this land been given during the life time of Navalar, the temple would have been restored long ago. The efforts of the Thiruk-Ketheswaram Restoration Society were inspired by Navalar's prophetic vision.





## CHAPTER 22

### Navalar and Freedom of the Press

It would be interesting to picture what views Arumuga Navalar had on the burning question of the hour—Freedom of the Press or control. Arumuga Navalar as well as Anagarika Dharmapala would have fought tooth and nail against any curb of the Press.

Navalar in those days enjoyed a free press. He never hesitated to reply to the innumerable Christian tracts that ridiculed the tenets of Hinduism. He exposed the Govt. which supported the Protestants;—he made the public to understand that the money earmarked for education, was channelled for missionary activities.

Navalar contended that people should write to the government and ask for better roads. Navalar criticised not only the Government, but also the Brahmin Priests who performed the ceremonies in the temples, contrary to the Agamas and Shastras. He criticised wherever necessary the authorities of temples; he criticised even his own relatives. His anger was just.

Navalar protected those who besought his umbrage. He forgave readily those who sought pardon for their faults.

Fearlessness and manliness—Navalar always had in abundant measure. These he manifested in

learned assemblies; as well at home. He was most calm, in the presence of his enemies. Navalar had the gift of ready wit, and his answers went home; and could not be rebutted.

Navalar was the first among the Hindus, to establish a Press and publish tracts, articles, newspaper and books.

### *Navalar & Dyke the Govt. Agent*

When Navalar established his Press, it was the law of the land, that permission should be obtained priorly from the Government Agent. Navalar went to Dyke, with a duly filled in application. Dyke received this and without saying that he approved this or not, he showed by gesture to Navalar to go. In the afternoon Dyke had written a letter to him and sent in the afternoon, where he stated that Navalar could establish the Press immediately and need not wait for permission from the Head of Government from Colombo; and that he would get permission for him from the Head Office.

Another day Dyke the G. A. saw Navalar and asked from him “Where is Aratchie Thambu’s house?” He showed that by sign the house in the same way that Dyke the G. A. did the previous day.

Dyke the Government Agent and Navalar ate the same kind of “Samba rice”. Dyke tried to purchase this rice from shops. Navalar alone was in possession of two Samba rice bags. Dyke the Govt.



Agent sent a man to Navalar, with money asking for a bushel of rice. Navalar sent him a bag of rice and did not accept any money for the same. It was in vain that the Govt. Agent tried to give him the amount due on this bag of rice.

There is a story that the Government servants of the Kachcheri, were asked to attend Navalar's funeral by the then G. A.

During this period (1829—1869) when Dyke was the Government Agent of the Northern Province, there were three missions, the American Mission, the Wesleyan Mission and the Church Mission, which had established many schools, and temples and spread Christianity. There were many preachers to do the work of proselytization.

It was Navalar who fought against missionary activity. If Navalar had not done this, Hinduism would never have thrived in Jaffna. Need we say that Navalar believed in the Freedom of the Press?



## CHAPTER 23

### Last Days of Navalar

It seems something extraordinary, that great men have an uncanny insight into their future deaths. The year 1879, was a fatal one for Arumuga Navalar. He was 57 years old.

He celebrated the festival of St. Thirugnanasambandar, in the month of June (Vaikasi). He delivered an admirable speech at the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, at Vannarponnai. He explained very clearly the great wonders performed by Gnana Sambandar, and in the end thus spoke Navalar: —

“I have laboured for the past thirty two years, in preaching Hinduism during which period I have incurred the displeasure of many Hindus and non Hindus as well. The Padres seem to opine, that Hinduism will decline after me. Therefore I ask you, select a Hindu preacher. There will be many learned and good men who will come to serve in this field, but there will be none, like me who will come to serve, disinterestedly”. These were prophetic words. How can we ever see one like him?

It was the month of November, 18th 1879 Navalar had burning fever he lay in bed, he took no bath. But he did not forget Siva Pooja. He was doing “Japa” with Rudra beads, when the Saiva Achariya of Vedaraniyam was doing Siva Pooja. The next day it was the same and so was the next. He bade his



followers to recite Devarams and Thiruvasagam. Sacred water from Chidambaram, Kasi (Benares), Madurai and Thiruchendur had been brought. He took the "theertha". He was ill, in bed for a few days. On 5-12-1879 Navalar's soul went back to the feet of Lord Nadarajah of Chidambaram. The Hindu World was engulfed with sorrow.

The next day was a Saturday. His body was anointed with oil and bathed, a veshti was tied to his waist and also a shawl. His forehead, chest etc. were besmeared with holy ashes. Rudraksha beads were placed in his hands. The Vedaranya Kurukkal, performed the rites and rituals according to the Agamas. Devarams were recited in Navalar's house at Vannarponnai, which is now known as "Navalar Kottam", and also on the way. His body was placed on sandalwood and burnt. If Navalar had lived for a few years more!

"O! Navalar thou shouldst be living at this year, for Ceylon is like a fen without thee!" We may say of Navalar—transmuting the words of Wordsworth.

"Cut is the branch that would have grown full and straight

and brunt in Apollo's laurel bough"

For Navalar was only 57 still in the height of his powers when he expired. Let us pray that Navalar should be reborn!

"If Navalar had not been born where would have been Tamils? where would have been scriptures?

where would be the Puranas and where would have been the art of public speaking". Thus spake C. W. Thamotharampillai a great scholar.

Navalar was a walking encyclopaedia of Tamil learning and Saiva Scriptures. Kamban and Kalimegha had shown the greatness of Tamil, but nobody did as Navalar showed the greatness of Saivism. Navalar was regarded as the fifth of the Saints—the first four being Sambandar, Manickar, Thirunavukarasar and Sundarar.





## CHAPTER 24

### What happened after Navalar's Death

What happened after Navalar's death, has not been dealt with by any biographer of Navalar so far.

T. Kailasapillai's biography of Arumuga Navalar, says in page 94 as follows: "As his illness became worse (1879) Navalar's pupils and relatives, approached Navalar and asked him what should be done. He said: "call Kailasapillai". These were his last words".

The deeds left by Navalar the founder and Manager of the Saiva Prakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai gives us a clear insight into his mind. In a deed drawn on 29-7-1871 before K. Viswanathan, Notary Public, and in a second deed drawn on 17-2-1872 before K. Sinnakuddy, Notary Public, and in a third deed drawn on 6-6-1874 before S. Kanthappasegarar, Notary Public, Arumuga Navalar had clearly stated that the Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai at Vannarponnai (originally established in 1848 and all the properties belonging to it, should be managed by a body of his pupils and their generation, (Deed No. 10261).

In accordance with Navalar's wish as expressed in the deeds referred to above, N. K. Sathasivampillai, one of his pupils, performed the dual function of Manager of the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya at Chidam-

baram, as well as the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya at Vannarponnai. The deeds drawn in 1876 and in 1880 (Nos. 1608, 1678, 1683) clearly state that Sathasivampillai was the person who was in charge of the above Vidyalayas. But Sathasivampillai before he expired wrote his last will on 20-10-1910. In that he left the entire management of the above, in the hands of Thampu Kailasapillai, subject to the following conditions.

1. The Board of trustees of the Vidyalaya, should consist of members who belong to the generation of the disciples of Arumuga Navalar. They should be well-educated Vellalas, who practised the Saiva Religion devotedly.

2. Such successors should conform strictly to the rules of conduct, as laid down by him both in writing and upheld by him. They are responsible for the management of this school, and other schools attached to this, as well as other benevolent trusts of his.

3. Every year the children should be tested and prizes should be awarded in the month of Thai (January) in public.

4. The authorities of this school should give priority to Tamil in their scheme of studies, and it should be the medium of instruction.

5. This school should impart a real knowledge of Saivism and inculcate a true Saiva culture and faith.



6. The Board of Management or Managing Authority,—if funds permit—should award soolarships to intelligent Saivaites and give them free food, free clothing and free education.

7. In the first Will of the Navalar School at Vannarponnai, Navalar said that the plan of this school ought to be to foster the Tamil language and protect the Hindu religion.

8. Hence the authorities should appoint Hindu preachers, to propagate the Hindu faith, if there is an income.

9. The school authorities should conduct the anniversary celebrations of the saints of Hinduism, Thirugnanasabandar, Thirunavukkarasar, Manicka-Vasagar, Sundarar and Arumuga Navalar.

10. The temple poojas and festivals should be conducted in the orthodox manner as laid down in the Saiva Shastras, Siva Agamas etc. — from the income of the temple.

11. Any income that remains after the festivals are celebrated, should be invested in buying land for this Vidyalaya.

12. The authorities should not alienate or encumber any property of the school by means of a mortgage, “Otti” etc. In case if a land is given for lease it should not be for more than a period of three years.

13. The “authorities” (of this school) should go before the Nallur Kailasanatha Kovil Sannathy every month and declare before the Holy of Holies, that they will not touch any of the properties of the Vidyalaya. This they should do calling to witness, the five Elements and the Eight minor deities of the eight directions (Thikku palakar). They should declare “If I misuse any of the above, may God punish me” and take an oath.

14. A balance sheet should be drawn up, stating income and expenditure and published every year, in the month of Thai (Jan 14th—Feb. 13th).

15. If such account is not shown & ten teachers of the school or ten Hindu preachers if jointly ask or Government asks that this should be done, the accounts should be submitted to the public.

16. The person who succeeds to the management in accordance with Schedule should conform to the wishes of Navalar. If any one dies suddenly the person in charge of the Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai, Chidadambaram will have to appoint a successor in accordance with the stipulations as laid by Navalar. If he does not do so (Saiva) Tamil Pundits and Saiva Gurus should get together and appoint one as desired in Schedule (I)

17. This Vidyalaya at Vannarponnai and the Saivaprakasa Vidyalyaya at Chidambaram both belong to Arumuga Navalar, therefore both these must be considered as parts of one establishment. If funds



are required for this school the authority of this school has the power to get the funds of this school and give it to the other and vice versa.

18. The management, if they so desire, can have Rs. 20/- from the Vidyalaya funds and Rs. 5/- from the temple funds to be used by them, viz. an amount not more than Rs. 25/-

19. If the Manager appoints somebody as a trustee, he has the power to remove him from that position, in his life time.

K. Veeravagu.

4-3-52

This is a true translation of a copy of the deed No. 10261

Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai, Vannarponnai which was established by Arumuga Navalar in 1848, after his death in 1879 was entrusted to the care of Mr. N. K. Sathasivampillai who was Trustee of this School as well as the Chidambara Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai. After him Mr. Thampu Kailasapillai was the trustee. During his time, Mudaliyar G. Subramaniam of Puloly was appointed Manager. But this management was removed in 1935. It was during the trusteeship of Mr. Thampu Kailasapillai that the Jaffna Tamil Sangam was established in 1898, with Mr. T. Kailasapillai as its first President and the head master Mr. M. Vaithialingam as its Secretary. This Sangam conducted examination for the Pundit and Bala Pundit classes. Among the examiners in this

Board were Sri A. Cumaraswamy Pulavar of Chun-nakam and Sri A. Mootootambipillai of Navalar Kottam, Jaffna and Sri T. Kailasapillai.

Later Mr. T. Kailasapillai handed over the management of Navalar School and its properties to his son-in-law Mr. Muttiah Somasundaram of Velanai. It had eleven boutiques, a house adjoining the school and a piece of land at Nallur. When he expired the management fell in the hands of Mrs. Selvam Somasundaram. She handed over the management to Mr. V. Muttucumar, M. A., another son-in-law of Mr. T. Kailasapillai. The heir to this trust was V. Sathiyavakeesvarar.

In 1960 the Government undertook the management of the Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya at Vannarponnai.

At that time, the Assistant Director of Education was Mr. S. U. Somasegaram, M A. Not only he thwarted the then management from closing the Navalar School, but also established a Board of Trustees, in order to carry on the Navalar School and its appurtenances, in accordance with the conditions as laid by Arumuga Navalar in his deed No. 10261.

The members of the Board of trustees recommended by Mr. S. U. Somasegaram were as follows:— The Assistant Director (at that time) Mr. S. U. Somasegaram, Vidvan E. Thirunavukkarasu (Head teacher), Siva Sri S. Kumaraswamykkurukkal, Pundithamani S. Kanapathypillai and Mr. S. Ponnuswamy. Now



this Board has as its President Mr. S. Thanigasalam the Present Assistant Director of Education.

Higher classes in Sanskrit and Thirumurai classes have been started for Pundit, Bala Pundit and Pravesa Pundit examinations and are being conducted free of charge. In 1963, all candidates who sat for the Entrance examination of Yalpana Arya Thiravida Bhasha Sangam were successful.

Higher classes in Sanskrit for Brahmins are conducted in the Navalar School, during Saturdays, Sundays and during holidays, free of charge. There are 40 students who attend these classes which are conducted by Viyakarana Sironmani, T. K. Seetharama Sastrikal and Pundit S. Panchadsara Sarma of Kopay.

Purana Padanam and Thirumurai classes, are conducted by Pundit V. M. Ratneswara Iyer, Sri K. V. Athmanaba Sarma, Saivapulavar V. Kandasamy, Mr. S. Seevaratnam and Mr. A. Sivasubramaniam. The Thiruvathavooradikal Puranam classes are now being conducted. Periyapuranam classes would be started next.

Thirumurai Sangeetha classes have been conducted by Miss K. Parwatha Kalyani, from 1960. Students have won several awards and been honoured.

It must be noted that Navalar wanted to foster both Tamil and Sanskrit. Kasi Vasi Senthinathaiyar a student of Navalar, Sri Nadarjaiyar of Inuvil, Sri Sivasangara Pandithar and his son Sivapragasa Pan-

dithar and a Cumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam were directing this School at various stages of its progress.

### ***Saiva Vidya Dharma***

The Saiva Vidya Dharma action movement started by Navalar, at Kopay, Inuvil (Ampikaipakar Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai), Kondavil, Velanai, Moolai Pt. Pedro, Columbuturai and Kandarmadam Saivaprakasa Vidyasalas sprouted and flourished. The Jaffna Hindu College which was founded in 1890, owed its inspiration to the Anglo-Vernacular School started by Arumuga Navalar in 1872. So were the Hindu Organ and Inthusathanam started in 1889.

Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan started the Ramanathan College in 1913. Parameshwara College in 1917 to foster Saiva Culture. The Saiva Training College was founded in 1928 to train Hindu teachers. The Saiva Paripalana Sabhai was established seventy seven years ago in 1888 for the maintenance and propagation of Hinduism. There were several schools run by the Saivaparipalana Sabhai. Let us not forget that the Oracle who inspired all these Hindu movements was Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar.





## CHAPTER 25

### Navalar's Personality

Navalar had an imposing personality and his presence added lustre to any audience. He was a man who never bent before insolent might. He had a dynamic will power. His superb position as a religious teacher, who practiced what he preached compelled respect wherever he went.

Navalar had a big head, a big body penetrative eyes and was of middle stature. Adorned with Rudra beads on his head and neck and the application of holy ash, he presented a saintly appearance.

Navalar loved religion above anything else. He sacrificed the lucrative post of a Tamil Pundit under Rev. Percival in order to save his religion. When he was interrogated by his brother as to why he had resigned his post as a teacher, he made him understand that he would not depend on him henceforth for his wants. Afterwards he settled at Vannarponnai and carried on his life as a preacher and educationist. The house he stayed at Vannarponnai, was on the site of the house known as "Navalar Kottam", at Navalar Road. The "Navalar Press" adjacent to this house was named after Navalar.

Navalar campaigned for sweeping changes in the Nallur Kandaswamy temple administration. He insisted that animal sacrifices and nautch-girl dancing should be stopped. At that time, the management did pay heed to Navalar's advocacy. Navalar attacked the management vehemently, in a pamphlet entitled "Nallur Kandaswamy Temple"

Navalar was a man of remarkable courage who could face any situation calmly. When attempts were made by his enemies both at Chidambaram and Jaffna to take away his life he faced the ruffians fearlessly. The ruffians looked at him and recognising the holy ash and Rudra beads and his pious personality beat a hasty retreat after full repentance. A similar incident took place at Ramnad when Ponnu-samy Thevar threatened Navalar for not honouring him by a visit. Navalar did not yield to his threats, but in turn Navalar threatened to report to the British Government against Thevar. In fact Thevar apologised and invited Navalar on his own terms to his palace and entertained him with warmth. Very few would have escaped Thevar's domination, in the circumstances.

In those days as well as at present, the Pandara Sannathis of the ancient Mutts of Thiruvavaduthurai, Dharmapuram, Thirup-pananthal, Suriyanar Kovil, Thiruvannamalai etc. exercised supreme religious suzerainty in the Hindu world. They were great religious preceptors and they were regarded as uncrowned heads of the Saivaite order. When Navalar visited Thiruvavaduthurai, he was feted as one of them, during his stay in the Mutt.



Navalar was a man of great principles, and scrupulously observed them. Once an aristocrat offered him ten thousand rupees, as a donation to the Chidambarm Saiva prakasa Vidyalayam, if Navalar would initiate the alphabet to his son born of his concubine (a dancing girl). But Navalar stoutly refused to accept this offer, as it was an unbecoming thing to do.

Navalar was so orthodox a Hindu, that he refused to receive holy ashes from Brahmins who had not received Siva Deeksha. Navalar was also a patron of scholars. He gave gifts to Gopala Krishna Iyar and others.

Navalar had a prodigious memory. He could readily quote passages from various books on literature and scriptures to illustrate the uses of a particular word. He was a master mind. He was well versed in Sanskrit too. His powers of writing English may be seen from his correspondence with the missionaries. (See appendix for a specimen).

While he was giving evidence in the District Court, in the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple case, Navalar spoke in high Tamil. The Interpreter was at a loss to find suitable words in English to translate Navalar's evidence so Navalar helped the Interpreter by giving suitable words. The Magistrate who presided on that occasion requested Navalar to give evidence in English. Navalar did not do so, as he wanted to speak in Tamil. When Navalar came into the witness box the Magistrate was so much struck by the saintly

appearance of Navalar that he ordered seating facility for the witness.

Navalar was a man with deep social instincts. His heart went out in sympathy with the sufferings of others. There are many instances which show his sympathetic heart.

On seeing a house on fire by the side of the school, he ran up to the spot courageously and helped the inmates to extinguish it, though very few people in the neighbourhood cared to help them, inspite of people's warning, Navalar attended a cholera stricken pupil of his and soothed him.

Navalar loved his pupils very dearly. When one of his loving pupils Ragavapillai Subramaniapillai fell sick, he attended on him in his sick-bed regularly. When Subramaniapillai died Navalar was so much overwhelmed with sorrow that he sang an elegy—which clearly revealed a deep pathos.

This and the elegy Navalar wrote on the death of his teacher Saravanamuttu Pulavar are the two rare instances when he wrote poems praising human beings. It was Navalar's principle that only God's praise should be sung.

Once when there was famine and flood in the country, Navalar found that Government did not come forward with relief. Navalar held public meetings and carried on a very intense agitation for help.



Navalar waged war with those who insulted the Vedas, the Sivagamas, the Sivan-adiyars (devotees of Siva) and the Guru Ninthakar (those who insulted the Guru) and those who failed to maintain the tradition of Senthamil.

He had written numerous articles in the columns of the Ilankai Nesan, a Tamil weekly of his times, criticising the failings and short comings of those who deviated from the right principles of Saivism. It must be remembered that Navalar's arguments were un-rebuttable.

It is difficult to assess the many sided facets of Navalar's personality. It is rarely that such epoch-making people are born in any country. Eela Thamilakam can be proud of the fact that such a person was born to serve the whole of the Tamil world.



## CHAPTER 26

### Navalar and his Contemporaries

#### *Sri-La-Sri Sankara Pandithar*

**(1821 - 1870)**

One of the foremost contemporaries of Navalar was Sivasankara Pandithar of Neerveli who was one year younger than Navalar and died nine years earlier.

In the sphere of Saiva Siddhantism, Navalar and Sivasankara Pandithar were two stalwarts who buckled their armour to fight against the mighty Christian Missionaries. As Sivasankara Pandithar was a great Sanskrit scholar well versed in the Saiva Agamas, Navalar invited him to deliver a series of lectures on the philosophy of Saiva Siddhantism at his Saiva-prakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai. He wrote a book called "Krishtu Matha Kandanam",— an attack against Christianity. Sivasankara Pandithar was of immense help to Navalar in writing the "Periyapurana Soosanam" which was very much appreciated by Navalar.

#### *Sivasambu Pulavar*

**(1829 - 1910)**

Sivasambu Pulavar of Udupidy was another contemporary of Navalar. Both Navalar and Sivasambu Pulavar studied under Saravanamuttu Pulavar



of Nallur. Sivasambu Pulavar attended the lectures of Navalar and gave a summary of the lecture at the end of every meeting.

Once there was a heavy rain at Puloly and Sivasambu Pulavar summarised Navalar's lecture in a few poems. Navalar was so much impressed by this performance that he got up and conferred on him the title of "Pulavar" — (கம்பனுக்கு பின்னொரு சம்பன் அல்லவா?) saying are you not Samban after Kamban?

The esteem in which Sivasambu Pulavar held Navalar may be seen in the following stanza, which he wrote when Navalar died.

ஆரூரனில்லை புகலியர்  
கோனில்லை அப்பனில்லை  
சீருரு மாணிக்க வாசக  
னில்லைத் திசை யளந்த  
பேருரு மாறுமுக நாவல  
னில்லைப் பின்னிங் கியார்  
நீருரு வேணியன் மார்க்  
கத்தைப் போதிக்கும்  
நீர்மையரே.

### **Murugesa Pandithar** (1830 - 1900)

Of the scholars who were contemporaries of Navalar, it was Murugesa Pandithar, a poet of Chunnakam, known as "Ilakkanak-koddar" who had the courage to challenge the correctness of certain terms in Navalar's publications.

Navalar heard about this and inquired about Murugesa Pandithar. But Navalar did not counter-attack the Pandithar. During this time there was a meeting at Kopay. Murugesa Pandithar was appointed to welcome Navalar. The Pandithar eulogised Navalar for his unique services to the Saiva religion and the Tamil language. Navalar at the end of the speech praised Murugesa Pandithar for the depth of his Tamil learning. Both became great friends, so much so that Navalar got the services of Murugesa Pandithar for his propaganda against the foreign Missionaries. When, Murugesa Pandithar heard about Navalar's death, he was stricken with grief and sang the following stanza which reveals great pathos.

ஆரிருந்தென் ஆர்சிறந்  
தென் ஆறுமுகநாவலன் போல்  
ஆரிருந்து போதிப்பார்  
ஐயையோ—வாரணிந்து  
தேக்குமதிச் செஞ்சுடலத்  
தேவுருவு கொண்டாலும்  
வாக்கவனைப் போல வரா.

### **Rao Bahadur C. W. Thamotharampillai** (1832—1901)

Rao Bahadur C. W. Thamotharampillai of Sirupiddy was a great admirer and a contemporary of Navalar. Navalar had a high regard for the invaluable services rendered by Thamotharampillai for the advancement of Tamil by publishing many classical works, such as Tholhap-



piam, which were then in Ola form and for establishing a Saiva School at Elalai for advancement of Tamil Classical studies.

At the request of Thamotharampillai, Navalar visited that School and examined the students. Navalar was impressed by the excellent progress of the pupils of the Vidyafaya run by Thamotharampillai

Thamotharampillai wrote the following stanza, on hearing of the death of Navalar.

“நல்லை நக ராறுமுக  
நாவலர் பிறந்திலரேற்  
சொல்லு தமிழெங்கே  
சுருதியெங்கே—யெல்லவரு  
மேத்து புரா னாகமங்க  
ளெங் கேபிர சங்க மெங்கே  
யாத்த னறிவெங்கே யறை.

It reveals the very great esteem Thamotharampillai had for Navalar. Both were co-workers in the field of publishing rare-works imprisoned in old leaves. Navalar published Thiruk-kural, and Thamotharampillai some Sangam works.

### **Sir Muttucomaraswamy**

Navalar was held in the highest regard by Sir Muttucomaraswamy, the first Ceylonese to be knighted by Queen Victoria. He was the father of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, the greatest Art Critic

of international fame—the author of several outstanding works. Sir Muttucomaraswamy was the Tamil Representative in the Legislative Council, 1864. In the course of his speech on “Ecclesiastical subsidies in Ceylon” on the 9th October 1876, Sir Muttucomaraswamy referred to Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar in the following terms.

“It is the Hindu of Hindus Arumuga Navalar in the North. He is one of those orientals who can measure swords with even such a giant as my Hon’ble friend (the then Queen’s Advocate the Hon’ble Mr. R. Cayely) in an argumentative way. His whole life has been spent in preaching and writing against Christianity and he has a following which cannot be despised.”

### **Daniel Carol Vyramuttu Visvanathapillai**

Daniel Carol Vyramuttu Visvanathapillai of Suthumali, was a contemporary of Navalar. He was a product of the Batticatta Seminary, the University College set up by the American Missionaries at Vaddukoddai. He was the first of the two graduates who passed the B. A. of the Madras University when it was held for the first time in 1858. The other was his student C. W. Thamotharampillai.

He was the first to produce an Algebra in Tamil. He became a Christian, having been trained by the Missionaries. He helped in editing the “Morning Star”—one of the earliest papers to be started in



Jaffna. He attacked the worship of Subramaniam in a pamphlet. Navalar replied with his Subra Potham.

Later Visvanathapillai became repentent and conterized his tongue at Chidambaram for having velified Siva. Both became friends. Once when Navalar was unable to preside at a political meeting in support of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, he requested Carol Visvanathapillai to deputise for him.

This is an instance where Navalar's erstwhile opponent became repentent after his contact with Navalar.



## CHAPTER 27

### Navalar and his Christian Contemporaries

It would be interesting to note, what the Christian Missionaries thought of Navalar.

#### *Rev. Percival*

We pointed out earliar the connections which Navalar had with Rev. Percival. Navalar was employed by Rev. Percival to be his teacher and translator of the Bible. Navalar's translation of the Bible was taken to Madras, and shown to the Pundits there. This was adjudicated as the best translation. The Bible is one of the best works in the world, and Navalar's translation into Tamil is invaluable. Rev. Percival indeed had a high estimation of Navalar.

Rev. Percival was the Principal of the Wesleyan Central School, Jaffna; there is a Percival Hall, at Chapel Street, Jaffna, which perpetuates his memory.

Every Christian should be grateful to Navalar, for having given such an excellent translation of the Bible, nay every student of the Tamil Bible be he Christine or not.

#### *Rev. Walton*

Rev. Walton wrote to Arumuga Navalar on 21-1-1856 regarding the authorship of the pamphlet



“Saiva Thooshana Parikaram.”

Here is an extract from the article “Hindu Pastors” found in the supplement to T. Kailasapillay’s biography of Navalar (Pages 116-177.) “They were not satisfied with essaying to train the young; they must endeavour to amuse and confirm the adult. Saivaite preachers and stewards appeared and formed and worked a circuit somewhat on the Methodist model. In connection with the reading and recitation of passages from their sacred books a lecture or sermon was delivered every Friday evening in a spacious shed on the holy ground with the high wall round the temple of Siva at Vannarponnai; and appointments though not of such frequent occurrence were also kept at the important villages of Chunnakam and Manipay.

“The principal orators, both of whom had been day pupils in our Jaffna School were Arumugavar the first and most frequent, and the presiding genius through all the movement, and a friend of his named Carthigayer. The former of the Vellalar or agriculturist caste, good looking, intelligent, studious, reserved, of grave demeanour and blameless life, not better acquainted with the Hindu Shastras than with the Christian Scriptures, had been for a long period, day after day, the worthy companion and valued assistant of the gifted and plodding Mr. Percival in preparing and editing treatises and hymns in Tamil, and translating the Prayer-book and the Holy Bible. Carthigasayer, a round oily Brahmin, physically

## CHAPTER 28

### Navalar and his Disciples

Like all other great scholars, Navalar also had a band of disciples who had the torch of learning following him. In his deed he decreed that the management of his two Vidyalayas were to pass to his disciples.

Amongst the first batch of his pupils, we find the name of Sathasivampillai, Swaminathaiyar, Nadarajaaiyar, Visuvanathaaiyar, Arumugampillai and Arumugam Chettiar.

#### 1. *Sathasivampillai*

According to Navalar’s deed No. 10261 *Sathasivampillai* of Nallur, the bachelor disciple of Navalar—was the first to become the Manager of the Sairavaprakasa Vidyalaya at Chidambaram and Vannarponnai and he kept up the noble ideals for thirty years after Navalar (1879-1910). He passed away in October 1910 at Chidambaram.

#### 2. *Nadaraja Aiyer* (1844-1905)

*Nadaraja Ayar* of Inuvil was another disciple of Navalar who had studied Saiva Siddhanta works in Tamil and Sanskrit such as “Sivagnana Siddhiyar”.



He was a preacher of Saiva Siddhanta at Madurai and Chidambaram. He praised Yoga Medicine and Astrology. He died in December 1903

### 3. *Arumugampillai*

*Arumugampillai* joined the Annamalai Atheenam as a Thambiran, learned the Saiva Siddhanta deeply and wrote a commentary on the Periyapuranam.

### 4. *Vidva Siromani S. Ponnampalapillai*

*V. Ponnampalapillai* was a very great scholar (only second to Navalar) who expounded the Shastras, Puranas and classics very clearly. He was Navalar's brother's son and his pupil. He taught *Mana Kana Vetpillai* the father of Pundit Thirugnanasambandar of Jaffna Hindu College (my Tamil teacher), Pundit V. Kanagasabapathy Iyar of Nallur, Sabapathy Navalar, Atheena Vidwan of Thiruvavadu thurai and Pundit S. Ponnambalapillai of Chavakachcheri. He taught his students free as Navalar did. He wrote commentaries on Bharatam and Mayura Giri Puranam.

### 5. *M. Vaithialingampillai*

One of the disciples of Navalar *M. Vaithialingampillai*, was Head Teacher of the Saiva prakasa Vidyasalai. Besides, he was Secretary of the Jaffna Tamil Sangam which was inaugurated in 1898 at the Navalar Saiva prakasa Vidyasalai.

### 6. *Kasi Vasi Senthinatha Iyer* (1848-1924)

Kasi Vasi Senthinatha Iyer was the author of many valuable works on Saiva Siddhanta and one of the most distinguished amongst Navalar's disciples. He was a teacher of the Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai at Vannarponnai for seven years (1872-1878). Untill the very end of Iyer's life he carried on the torch of Hinduism lit by Navalar in India. His "Elegy on Navalar" reveals the great esteem in which he had held Navalar.

### 7. *A. Cumaraswamy Pulavar* (1855-1922)

A. Cumaraswamy pulavar of Chunnakam was 24 years old died. As a student he contacted Navalar and cleared many doubtful points in Tamil literature. Navalar encouraged Cumaraswamy pillai who was the grandson of the great Tamil poet Muttukumara-Kavirayar. Very often the young poet showed his verses to Navalar who praised him. These facts may be gleaned from a stanza of the elegy composed by Cumaraswamy Pulavar on Navalar.

Cumaraswamy pulavar wrote on the death of Navalar;—

“என் கடிதம் என் கவிதை  
யார்க்கும் இனிதென்று  
நன்குறவே பாராட்டும்  
நாவலனார் — எங்கேயோ



கங்கைமுடிச் சங்கரன்  
பொற்சூசாமலர்ச்  
செஞ்சரண விட்டு,  
இங்கு வரவுங் கருத்தோ  
என”

### 8. *A Mootootambipillai* (1858-1917)

A. Mootootambipillai of Manipay was 21 when Navalar died. When Mootootambipillai returned from India in 1893, he wanted to settle down in the town of Jaffna. When he was informed that the house where Navalar lived at Vannarponnai was to be sold; he seized this opportunity and bought it. With the idea of commemorating the memory of Arumuga Navalar, he named the house “Navalar Kottam.” Adjacent to the house Mootootambipillai trod on the foot prints of Navalar. His main idea was to bring out Tamil publications, to serve the Tamil young students. He wrote a series of Tamil Readers (1—8) which contained scientific facts and select classical literature in easy elegant modern Tamil. He edited the *Abhidhana Kosam*—the first Tamil Encyclopaedia in Tamil in 1902.

Following the footsteps of Navalar Mootootambipillai devoted his time, in enriching Tamil prose. He wrote the *Bharata Churukkam*, which has been prescribed as a Text book for the G. C. E. Ordinary (1965-1967). In his “Jaffna History” and “Thenmoli Vataiaru” and the “*Abhidhana Kosam*” Mootootambipillai pays magniloquent tributes to Navalar.

By compiling the English-English-Tamil Dictionary Mootootambipillai has really fulfilled Navalar’s dream of such a work.

## CHAPTER 29

### Navalar’s Legacy

If we trace the history of Saiva Siddhantism, we come across certain outstanding personalities, Thirumular is reputed to have lived over three thousand years ago. Later we have the four *Samaya Kuravars* Thirugnanasambandhar, Thirunavukkarasar, Sundaramoorthy Nayanar and Manickavasagar—who lived during the first decade of the Christian century.

Later we have the Santhana Sariyars, such spiritual savants like Meyhanda Thevar, Arunandi Sivasariyar, Mairagnana Sambanda Sivasariyar, Namasivaya Thesikar, Thayumana Swamikal, Paddanattu - Swamikal, Sivagnana Munivar, Masilamani Thesikar, Gnanapirakasa Munivar and Kumarakurupar Swamikal. These were great exponents of Saiva Siddhantism. Navalar was the beacon light of his age. He was a giant in the metaphysical sense.

When the cultural and spiritual life of the Tamils was at its lowest ebb, due to the impact of Western domination of Portugal (1505-1658) of Holland (1658-1795) and England from 1795..... a great giant like Navalar 1822-1879 arose to fight against the evils of foreign culture and foreign religion and to restore the people to their former glory. But for Navalar the glory of the Tamil culture and language would have been in twilight.



### Navalar's Publications

Navalar's seventy publications together with the deals he cherished high may be considered his legacy.

He published the following books from Vidyanupalana Yanthirasalai at Jaffna:—

1. Soodamany Nigandu
2. Sundara Lahari Urai
3. First Reader Tamil
4. Second „ „
5. Fourth „ „
6. Periyapurana Vasanam
7. Nanool Viruthi Urai
8. Thirumurugatupadai with Urai
9. Sivalaya Tarisana Vithi
10. Saiva Thooshana Pariharam
11. Suppira Botham

The publications published at Vidyanupalana Yanthirasalai, Madras were:— Kandapuramam, Sethupuranam, Tholhappiyam, Sollathiharam, Koyit Puranam, Saiva Vinavidai (1st and 2nd parts) Thiruvalluvar-Parimelalar urai, Sivagnana Bodha Sitturai, Geography of Ceylon, Periyapurana Vacanam, Thiruvillaiyadat Purana Vacanam, Sidambara Manmiyam, Kanthapurana Vacanam, Sithambara Mamanik-Kovai.

### Navalar's Ideals

What were Navalar's ideals? They may be broadly summed up under two heads :— (i) the spread of Senthamil (ii) the revival of Saiva Siddhantism. It was in order to achieve the first that he established two Presses one at Vannarponnai and the other at Madras and he established two schools one at Chidambaram, the other at Vannarponnai. His two great aims were to restore the shrines of Keerimalai and Thirukketheswaram as centres for the spread of Saiva Siddhanta. It would be dear to Navalar's heart if an "Attheenam," were to be established at Thirukketheswaram or Jaffna. But it should not be spear-headed by any one Hindu Association. It should be the united work of all the associations of every part of Ceylon that work for the spiritual uplift of the Hindus. It is one of those desired objectives that have to be accomplished immediately by the Hindus of today. The Saiva Paripalana Sabhai should bestir itself on such a move.

In order to achieve his ideals Navalar had to wage a life-long war against the various Christian Missionaries who established themselves in Manipay, Uduvil, Vaddukoddai, Tellipali and Udupiddy and spread their faith.

By his indomitable courage and superb knowledge of Tamil, Sanskrit and English, Navalar was able to fight successfully against the Missionary activities. If there is a sharp decline in proselytism in North Ceylon it was entirely due to the noble work of Arumuga Navalar. But for Navalar, eastern culture and religion would have disappeared from Tamalakam and Eelathamilakam.



## CHAPTER 30

### What we should do to keep Navalar's memory alive

Many suggestions have been mooted as to how Navalar's memory should be kept alive, in the press as well as on platforms. Let us present the following suggestions which we opine is the opinion of a cross-section of every possible class of Hindus:—

1. All Navalar's works should be published in a uniform edition and made available to all. This work should be undertaken by Hindu Cultural Associations.

2. Navalar's letters and personal belongings should be kept in a museum in his birth-place at Nallur. This should be made a national trust and managed by the Navalar Board of Trustees.

3. Navalar's "Guru Pooja" should be conducted in every city, nay in every village of Tamilakam, and Eelath-thamilakam, in fact wherever Hinduism flourishes.

4. Navalar's statue should be erected before the Jaffna Library.

5. Navalar's stamps should be printed and released by the Government of Ceylon, just as Anagarika Dharmapala stamps were released.

6. Prizes and Scholarships should be made available in Ceylon, Madras and Annamalai Universities, in the name of Navalar donated by individuals and/or Associations.

7. A Navalar (Hindu) Cultural University should be established in Jaffna, with Ramanathan College and Hindu Colleges utilised as the main centres of this University. The Government should help this objective.

8. Memorial halls should be established in Navalar's name in Jaffna, Chidambaram, Colombo and Madras by the public. There is a "Navalar Hall" at Colombo and a Navalar Mandapam at Vannarponnai which may be a nucleus.

9. Navalar's centenary should be celebrated in a fitting manner in 1979. Navalar's name should always be remembered as not only a leader of our religion and language, but also as a national hero.

10. The work of restoring Thirukketheswaram will be a good gesture to Navalar's wishes.

The best tribute to Navalar is to adopt simple living and high thinking as principles in life. It is not building sky scrapers, or gathering material wealth that count in life. It is high principles and building character that really count. Under the impact of the three Western Cultures, our people have gone astray from the noble path followed by our ancestors.

We should live up to the ideals of Navalar. Service to the community unselfish love development of our Tamil language and a spiritual outlook should be our aims in life. The bacteria of materialism should be killed by the anti-biotic of a spiritual renaissance of the Hindu religion which is round the corner.



APPENDIX

மணி கொண்ட கடல்புடைகொ ளிந்நாட்டி லுன்சமய  
வர்த்தன மிலாமை நோக்கி  
மகிமைபெறு நின்புகழ் விளக்குவான் கருதியிம்  
மைப் பொருட் பேரெழு ழித்தே  
கணி கொண்ட வித்தியா சாலைதா பித்திவ்வுர்க்  
கயவர் செயு மிடர்கள் கண்டுங்  
கல்லூரி யதை நடாத் தப்பொருட் டுணைசெய்க்  
கருதுவோ ரின்மை கண்டும்  
அணி கொண்ட சாலைய தொழிப்பினஃ துணையிகழு  
மந்நிய மதத்தர் சாலை  
யாமென நினைந்தெனஞ் சற்பகற் றுயருந்  
லறிந்து மொரு சிறிது மருளாத்  
திணி கொண்ட நெஞ்சவினி நின்முன் யானுயிர்விடுத  
றிண்ணை யறியா ததோ  
சிறியேன தன்பிலர்ச் சனைகொளழ கியதிருச்  
சிறுமம்பலத் தெந்தையே.

யாழ்ப்பாணத்திலே வண்ணார்பண்ணையில் 1848ல் சைவப் பிரகாச வித்தியாசாலையைத் தாபிக்க ஆர்வம் கொண்டு—அது கைகூடாதாயின் “உயிர் விடுதல் திண்ணம்” எனச் சபதமிட்டுப் பாடியது. (An Individual Song) See Chapter 8. Navalar the Poet (30-31)



APPENDICES

Some Poems of Navalar

விநாயக வணக்கம்

சீர்பூத்த கருவிநூ லுணர்ச்சி தேங்கச்  
சிவம்பூத்த திகமாக மங்க ளோங்கப்  
பார்பூத்த புறச்சமய விருள்க ணீங்கப்  
பரம்பூத்த சைவநிலை பாரோர் தாங்கப்  
பேர்பூத்த சிவானந்தத் தினிது தூங்கப்  
பிறைபூத்த சடைமௌலிப் பிரானார் தந்த  
வார்பூத்த வறிவிச்சை தொழிலென் றேரூதம்  
மதம்பூத்த விநாயகன்ருள் வணங்கி வாழ்வாம்.

நல்லூர் சுப்பிரமணியக்கடவுள் மீது விருத்தம்

சீர்கொண்ட பரமவா னந்தசிற் சுகசொருப  
செகதீச திருமங்களம்  
தெய்வசர வணபவசண் முகவற்கு முன்வந்த  
திகழீச திருமங்களம்  
பேர்கொண்ட சதுர்மறையின் முதலிலகு பிரணவப்  
பிரகாச திருமங்களம்  
பிறைநுதலொ டயில்விழிகொள் வலவை யெனுமரிவையிற்  
பெருநேச திருமங்களம்  
ஊர்கொண்ட பரிதிமணி யெனவிலகு முதரமதி  
லொவிர்தேச திருமங்களம்  
ஒருவெண்ணெய் நல்லையமர் மெய்கண்ட தேசிகற்  
குபதேச திருமங்களம்  
கார்கொண்ட கரடதட கயமுகவ வங்குசக்  
காராச திருமங்களம்  
கருணேச நல்லையங் கைலாச புரிவாச  
கவினேறு கணராசனே.



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION  
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RAMAKRISHNA ROAD,  
COLOMBO—6. (Ceylon)

9th June, 1965.

The renowned Tamil scholar Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar, who set a trail of reforms in the Hindu community of Ceylon and South India was one of the many social, religious and intellectual reformers who appeared in the firmament of the East during the last century to combat against the forces of materialism. This great scholar was the gift of Yalpanam to the Hindu Dharma, and throughout his life was the champion of independence of thought and action, in consonance with the best Saiva traditions of the Tamils.

He had imbibed the best from the Western culture as testified by his well known translation of the Bible into Tamil and served at the same time the cause of Tamil and Hindu Culture, by publishing readable Tamil readers, graded books on religious topics for children and by setting up schools and Devaram classes with the primary purpose to foster religious education. His erudite work on the Lives of the Sixty three Saints—the Periyapuranam—is a testimony to his mature learning and love of lasting values. He upheld the ideals of selfless service and worship in the temples exemplified by the Saiva Saints, and used his mighty powers of oratory and the sway of his pen to implant these fine ideals in the lives of the younger generation.

Lives of great men should remind our young to emulate their example and in bringing out a biography of an illustrious son of Sri Lanka, Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy has done signal service and I strongly recommend that this book finds a place in all public schools and university libraries. Wherever Tamil is cherished Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar's name will be remembered with pride and affection.

**Swamy Prematmananda,**  
Vice-President,  
Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch)

---

Saiva Mangayar Kalagam,  
Rudra Mawatte,  
Wellawatte,  
Colombo,  
19-6-65.

It is no wonder that Mr. V. Muthucumaraswamy, B. A., a teacher of character and a grand nephew of A. Mootoothambipillai, the Lexicographer and illustrious student of Arumuga Navalar, should have found deep satisfaction in spending long hours in presenting to the world a readable and informative biography of a noble son of Sri Lanka.

We are indeed thrilled to learn that it was Arumuga Navalar the student of Principal Percival and translator of the Bible who kept the standard of Siva flying aloft when Christian Missionaries were going all out to establish their faith. That we still



continue to live as Hindus, that we still continue to find guidance and inspiration in the Kural and the Puranas, is in no small measure due to the crusading zeal of Navalar, the thinker and writer par excellence.

Navalar put to good use his amazing powers of speech and the flawless books and articles that issued from his press at Chidambaram and Jaffna were admirable reading matter to the people on both sides of the Palk Strait.

Arumuga Navalar was not merely a religious reformer. He was an educationist of vision and liberal views, a fervent champion of the people and a humanitarian of deep sensibility.

We are indeed grateful to Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy, who incidentally started his educational career, at the Navalar School founded by Navalar himself and at the Jaffna Hindu College inspired by Navalar's ideals and who for several years has been the live wire of the Colombo North Hindu Paripalana Sangam, for his lucid and illuminating biography of Arumuga Navalar, a National hero of Ceylon.

**NAHAMMAL KASIPILLAI, B. A.**

Principal, Saiva Mangayar Kalagam, Colombo.  
and

President, Colombo Teachers' Association,  
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