

SAINT RAMALINGAM

(HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS AS EXPERIENCED FROM THE INNER DIVINE LIGHT)

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FOREWORD

When movement of people from one place to another was slow, each country and climatic area developed its own tradition and each worshipped the Lord according to its own light. While Hinduism allowed greater freedom for people in the concept of God, Judaism and Christianity conceived the Lord as the Father and Buddhism and Jainism did not give a form to the Lord; Islam conceived of the Lord as the only one. There have been wars between different religions and wars within the same religion like Saivaites and Vaishnavaites in Hinduism, Catholics and Protestants in Christianity; Buddhism has Mahayana and Hinayana; Jainism has Digambara and Svethambara; Islam has the Sunny and Shia.

While the worship of Shiva was earlier conceived as worship of Jyoti and so propagated by Manickavasagar, later people worshipped different forms of the Lord. Now in the modern era of science, people have easy access by telephone, radio, TV and internet and knowledge has expanded. To-day world brotherhood is being thought of and it is essential to find a place when all religions and their sects can meet and discuss about the Lord as well as the problem of the humanity.

In the 19th century in South India and Tamilnad arose a St.Ramalingar who propagated the worship of Jyoti i.e.,the inner light in each human being and living being. There are about 1000 Sanmarga Sangams in Tamilnad and oher bordering States viz., Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, where people worship Light; our vegetarins have adopted non-killing of life as their path.

At vadalur, near Neiveli was built Satya Gnana Sabai in 1872 and St.Ramalingar attained Siddhi in 1874 at Mettukuppam where the worship of Jyoti is done day night. This tradition has created three great saints Swami Saravanananda at Dindigul, Vedathri Maharishi at Pollachi and Swami Satchidananda at Buckingham, USA, who have been guided bu St.Ramalingar in the propagation of the new path.

Swami Satchidananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh has built a temple called LOTUS (Light of Truth Universal Shrine) where Jyoti is worshipped and all religions are provided altars for worship. Vedathri Maharishi has developed an International Centre at Aliyar, Pollachi where a temple of Consciousness has been built.

Swami Saravanananda has built a Dayavu Alayam near Dindigul and has published commentaries of St.Ramalingar's poems, especially the Agaval which is a long poem of 1596 lines. Swami has taken out as best of St.Ramalingar, Grace i.e., Dayavu and has propagated it. He has now prepared a small booklet on the life and message of St.Ramalingar who conceived that Man was not born to die but can live eternally. I am sure this book of Swami Saravanananda will prove very useful for people world over to learn about the new way which can unite all humanity.

Madras University has published a book on Arutperum Jyoti and Deathless Body by Sri Tulasiram of Aurobindo Ashram in 1980.

Annamalai University has published a commentary by Avvai Duraiswamy Pillai for all the 6000 poems of St.Ramalingar; Ooran Adigal has published the life of Swami and Balakrishna Pillai has published 6 parts of Thiru Arutpa while earlier Velayuda Mudaliar, a disciple of St.Ramalingar, published 5 parts of Thiru Arutpa. Path way to God Trod by Ramalingar has been written by G.V.Pillai and published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

The world is indebted to Swami Saravanananda for his able and concise book on St.Ramalingar which brings out the various aspects of his life and message in a clear and simple language. It is my prayer that Swami Saravanananda should bring out more books on this new movement which will help to unify the world as also help all religions to meet under the auspices of Sanmarga Sangam to evolve a code for Brotherhood of man and worship of the Lord as jyoti which concept is generally acceptable to all.

Coimbatore
20.4.98

N.MAHALINGAM.

MYSTERIOUS DIVINE LIGHT

The nature is abound with vacant space, which has no limits. Though it seemed void, the whole universe and its activities are coming out to final revelation and realisation in human being only, when he is in the full fledged form. From this one can understand that the so called vacant space was not at all void as conceived hitherto, but ever existing filled up with a mysterious Divine Light.

The inner power took its growth gradually, while with the aid of the outer light, different forms grew rapidly. In the first instance, material, physical and intellectual forms sprang up in some living beings, Consequent to the mental power; the spiritual soul knowledge led the path to understand the mystic Divinity.

On the growth and development of soul knowledge, the mankind is gifted with so Manu scientific ideas and miraculous yogic powers, which made their followers to keep their heads with high esteem. The so called masters used to do count-less miracles such as reviving the dead and live a long life, say even thousands of years and at last merged in oneness of God.

Till now, it was considered that merger in Divinity is the real goal of the soul, and once they got merged, the outer body can be shed away. In other words, their conception was that this body is only a catalytic agent and thus can be thrown away in the long run. This notion is not at all correct.

The Supreme God is always one, existing singly and there is no duality in him. In fact it is really a non-dualistic one. But for gaining experience in the practical side, all things are appearing in double state. This is not at all real but only an illusion. After gaining some experience during the short time it existed, the outer form Disappears. Again it takes another form and appears on the earth, causing birth and death as a routine that also in rotation. That is why it is called an illusion.

Without fully understanding this fact, the mankind in a deluded life and birth circle was passing away. The real command of the Lord is not so. So also our true demand is also not to merge in Him. Since we are all ever in oneness of Him, we have to live for ever in the divine plane.

This Eternal life is now understood by a compassionate soul-Saint Ramalingam, who has realised the Truth in full and got in practical experience and has propagated the same to the mankind at large. He lived and is living the philosophy of service he taught. For this he has established three institutions, Dharmasalai, Sathia Gnana sabai and Siddhi Valagam at and near Vadalore.

At Dharmasalai, everybody is fed with alike whether he is poor or rich, as food forms the main part for the sustenance of the body. The significance of Sathya Gnana Sabai is that everyone should perceive the Supreme Effulgence “Arutperunjyothi” spotted in between the eyebrows and get at the experience of the Grace Light and live for ever. This was

dedicated for universal worship irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Having gained experience in both these, one has to live from the soul-abode, which has been depicted as Siddhivalakam, where the Saint attained “Three Dega Siddhi”.

The small book which is now published is the outcome of the real essence of the above facts in a condensed form. As other books it is not one to be read and kept aside, The facts contained therein have to be digested and nourished therein have to be digested and nourished in the daily life. Unless this is done, the prophecy of the Saint that “the Lord gives me the diction for singing Him” will become jeopardised. The intricacies and the real meaning of “DAEIOU” have to be implemented sincerely in one’s life.

There is a universal concept that the Divine Light is existing everywhere in its full fledged form. But its exposure is realisable only in the perfect soul of the Compassionate man. When one stands praying before the Light, deprived of his ego and completely surrendered form, its non-dualistic attribute begins to fill up his entire body, and his life nourished with that. In due course, the entire body and his life nourished with that. In due course, the entire body gets transformed into that mystic Light form. This body attains Deathlessness.

This Light Divine Body becomes the emancipated form of Man and this is termed as “DAEIOU” here. This word represents both God and the Eternal Man in a singular form. This “DAEIOU” Man alone will be living eternally in Blissful life.

On 4.4.98, Dr.N.Mahalingam met me and had the opportunity of perusing the manuscript form of the above book. After perusal, he was much impressed with the contents and exclaimed that the book should be brought to day-light as early as possible. Accordingly the book was brought in a typed form and a copy was sent to him. In spite of his thick engagements, he has been able to retype the copy, so as to handover the same to the printer for printing and returned it along with a foreword to be incorporated and a covering letter with a note as follows:

Ēôç ðā-óðōðç^a ð÷āð¼ð-î âîóç «îfèçèè ð¼èçèè«øùç.

His munificence in this regard is highly appreciable. I indeed feel that at the time of his 76th birthday, the publication of this book coincides, symbolising the number (7+6=13) which even number denotes the 13 syllables in the unique mantra “Arutperunjyoti Thanipperunkarunai” (6+7=13) of the saint Ramalingam.

I am also thankful to the printer Solai printers of Sivakasi, who has readily responded to my request, risen up to the occasion and printed the book in a handsome manner in a very short time.

With this I conclude this preface with an earnest prayer to the Lord Almighty that all the people of the world observe this “Daeiou” life and long live in peace and Bliss.

Dindigul
25.4.98.

SARAVANANANDA

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CHAPTER I

DAWN

Whenever virtue fails and evil prevails in the world, the Almighty incarnates in some human form or other and disappears after setting right the things.

There is ample testimony to the above occurrence in Hindu Philosophy and other religions.

On the other hand, we have come across several wise, learned and saintly souls, who have helped the man kind to be relieved of their miseries and misconception and reach the Godhead.

But owing to their own unworthiness, some stopped here and some ceased there.

Their followers who held esteem about their preceptor (Guru) have also led man kind to an uncertainty.

This is all due to their misconception that they are only bodily beings and to attain Godhead, one has to shed this outer body.

But the Truth is different.

God is Eternal and His presence is perceived in every atom of the universe.

The physical body is the outcome of the five elements, viz., ether, air, fire, water and the earth.

God's prevalence is much felt and realised only through this physical bodily life.

Human beings are endowed with a reasoning mind, whereas it is not so with other creatures, as they are not equipped with that sense.

With this reasoning mind, he can differentiate the good and bad and thus lead a better life.

It is thus evident that only from human body, one can realise the real form of god and consequently live a blessed life for ever.

This principle though appears simple, yet the man kind has not attained the maturity to live for ever overcoming the mortality.

The main reason is that he has not chosen the right path and also there was no one to guide him in this context.

Till now the man was viewing the Lord from the level of the physical body, and believed that he has been separated from God.

His expectation was that in the long run he would merge with the God and his aim will be solved then.

Almost all the religions are based only on this dualistic idea that man and God are separate entities.

Without the true knowledge of our Soul, God and the Component parts (the body and the universe), we were thinking and wandering so far in the wilderness of ignorance.

Thus all our past life was thought to be totally miserable.

Now we have come to know that the true life of Bliss is to come from the innermost.

The world may find it to be a new theory, but it is not so. Under the name of religion, the society was steeped into religious conflicts, sectarian battles and casteism. This has made it uneasy to realise the truth.

The following pages will acquaint us with a noble soul, who in the midst of so many difficulties, has been able to become immortal, thereby establishing the will of the Almighty that mankind alone can realise the God-Head and live in Eternity with a Blessed life.

The world is under the presumption that fate is the vital force acting and nothing can surpass it.

This deep rooted belief is thus falsified now in as much as it can be turned down and makes it to help him in achieving the Goal of immortality.

CHAPTER 2

BIRTH

During the nineteenth century, a new phenomenon has been brought to the world.

Marudur is a small village about 15kms, south west of Neiveli, which is very well known to the world as an area containing a vast sphere of lignite and this is located in Tamilnad of South India.

There lived a couple Ramiah Pillai and Chinnammayyar, who were much devoted to the God and having much faith in Saiva siddhanta.

One day, when Ramiah Pillai was away from home, a saffron- clad saint came to their house.

The guest was treated courteously and fed with good dishes.

Having been pleased immensely with the courteous treatment given to him, the saint at the time of his departure blessed her with some sacred ash (vibudhi) and uttered the following words.

“You will beget a son, who will be able to deliver the art of deathlessness, which will be a boon to the entire world”. So saying the saint disappeared.

Though it has been acknowledged by all as a remarkable event, the intricacy lying therein has to be understood only from a higher plane.

Creation has been classified into five divisions.

Of these, the world is aware of only first two sections. i.e., to say that a combination of the male and female substances make the way for the formation of an embryo, which gradually grows into a child and brings up in the world to gain more experiences, for which it has been brought up here.

Contrary to this, the “Sambupaksha Shrishti” is a different one, where the embryo comes into existence, the very moment the utterance comes from the mouth of a holy saint and it is a rare phenomenon in the world.

Days passed in and at the end of the gestation period, the lady gave birth to a male child on the fifth day of October 1823.

Blessed by the Divine Grace, the beloved parents showered their love and affection on the darling child and brought him up with great care.

The Child was also named ‘Ramalingam’.

Usually human beings are called after the names of God especially in Tamilnad in India. The common belief that is prevailing in the society is that once they call on this name, they are induced to remember the God often.

Though this may be true to some extent, it is not quite correct, since the name once assigned to him will not last after his expiry.

But the Indweller is always there without any beginning or end. So the name by which he is called will remain for ever without a blank.

The human being is the outer form of God and as such in whatever name he is called, it will reflect the invincible form of the Indweller only and not physical body as construed now.

We shall proceed further with the history of the child as it is the theme taken up by us for elucidation.

In Hinduism, it is a tradition to take a new born child to the temple and offer prayers before the Deity to bequeath the Child with His Blessings.

On this basis, when the child was five months old, the parents took him to Chidambaram temple to offer their grateful prayers.

As usual the priest lit the camphor and offered it to the Lord at the Sanctum Sanctorum.

No sooner the vision appeared, the child laughed loudly and gazed for a few seconds.

A few words about this vision will get its significance.

The material world is thinking that the child has laughed due to his ecstasy.

Is it a real laugh the child had? The answer is No. Then what does it suggest? One has to understand that the effulgence of the inner Light of Grace (Arut Jothi) has been realised by the child as soon as the outer light came to his visibility.

This pleasant experience has been expressed in some of the poems edited by the saint subsequently. Some of the excerpts are given below.

“No sooner the Light was perceived, happiness prevailed on me”

“The sweet nectar was tasted by me as soon as the Great Grand Light (Arutperunjothi) became visible”

It is quite natural that the Inner Light is Omniscient, and anyone having a mastery over it can enjoy happiness with a Blissful state.

CHAPTER 3

CHILDHOOD

From the experience they had in the temple at Chidambaram, all the family members were jubilant as they had a God's gift. But this did not last long.

A sudden gloom took over the family. It was only a month after their return from Chidambaram, Ramaiah Pillai breathed his last.

Instead of enjoying the pleasant words and the embracing hands of the father, the child was destined to lose his dear father.

The gruesome sight can only be compared to a mariner, marooned in mid sea on a dark midnight.

The mother was so much heart-broken and under swollen grief since she was not able to know what to do, as there was no bread winner to the family.

This worried her much as finally then, she decided to leave Marudur once for all and settle at Chinnakavanam, a village in Chengalpattu district, as it was her mother's place, where she thought she could lead the family with the guidance of her relatives.

With the above intention, one fine morning she left the village with all her five children.

Years rolled down. The elder brother grew and he showed some interest in looking after the family, and as Chennai was considered to be place, where he can have a better career, the family was shifted to Chennai.

The house at Marudur, where 'Ramalingam' was born is treated as a place of worship subsequently, and at the time of Thai Pooam, people used to gather there to offer their grateful prayers.

Mr.Veera Shunmuganar, Chennai, a philanthropist and an ardent devotee of the saint took efforts and renovated the place, so as to be visited by the public.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION AND BOYHOOD

At Chennai, the elder brother Sabapathi studied the Tamil literature under the able guidance of a great scholar.

His hard work and industrious mind enabled him to give religious discourses in Tamil at the request of some rich people. Besides he used to conduct classes to elementary school boys on patio of houses.

With the income received from the above sources, he looked after the needs of the family to some extent and thus led a peaceful life.

Ramalingam was five years old then.

The elder brother, taking the opportunity of being a teacher, started to teach his young brother the elementary principle underlying the Tamil literature.

Finding the boy not evincing any interest in the initial stage, Sabapathy thought that he would fulfill his desire in course of time.

Even then, the boy did not take any interest; instead he used to go to KandaKottam, a temple located in George Town, Chennai and used to absorb himself with divine prayers.

Thinking that the boy was not amenable in the presence of his brother, the latter thought that the young boy could improve under the guidance of a third person and thus entrusted the responsibility of teaching him to his own preceptor, under whom he took his studies.

With proficiency in Tamil literature, the latter tried his best to impart the boy with his elite and put the former in the right path.

There also Ramalingam evinced little interest, but used to go to the temple, recite songs in praise of presiding deity, Lord Muruga and enter into deep meditation.

Hearing the news that the boy was singing in a melodious voice, the preceptor went through some of the poems sung by the disciple and was fully amazed to find them heart-warming and bhakthi rendering ones.

He felt that such pieces could not be sung even by well trained poets and concluded that it was a rare gift the God has showered on this little boy.

So saying, he also gave up his tuition, exclaiming that the young boy was placed in a far better position than himself.

The efforts taken by one and all to impart him the school teaching thus proved futile.

Sabapathy, the elder brother who was the head of the family become much worried about his brother's career wanted to turn the boy under threats.

By this, the young was not given food and clothing and ultimately driven out of his home.

Even such drastic action taken by Sabapathy did not yield any desired result.

Instead, this made the young boy to become firm in getting fully absorbed and devote his time in performing worship and offering prayers to the Almighty from his inner mind.

Days passed. His sister-in-law who was much affectionate towards the plight of the young boy was much worried since she looked after the needs the boy without the knowledge of her husband.

One day she pleaded before the boy to be attentive to his studies as her husband wanted, so as to avoid all the difficulties so far experienced and thus turn a new leaf to the betterment of the family as a whole.

The affectionate and motherly advice of the lady had the desired effect and at last Ramalingam consented to take up his studies in right earnest as desired by his brother and requested her to set apart a room in the house for this purpose.

The young lady conveyed the news to her husband and after a hard pursuit, Sabapathy gave his approval.

On an auspicious day a room in the upstairs was provided to the boy to carry on his studies without any disturbance.

The study preferred by the young boy was a different one to that construed by the world.

Hence a deadlock also prevailed here. Instead of collecting books on literature and concentrating on the same, the boy collected the things for performing pooja, lit a lamp and placed a mirror in front of it within the room.

Sitting before it, concentrated on a certain spot in the mirror where the brilliance of the lamp fell and used to be lost in deep meditation.

As providence would have it, Ramalingam beheld the glorious vision of Lord Muruga, shedding his Grace and Divinity, and this engulfed the entire space therein.

His mortal frame was filled with divine ecstasy, and the joy overpowered him, which made him to sing ethereal songs in praise of the Lord.

By the Divine Grace so obtained Ramalingam was blessed with the knowledge of all arts and skills and gifted with the ability and talent to perform miracles and Siddhis (wondrous deeds).

Without the knowledge of the little boy, the sister-in-law used to witness the occurrence with awe and unspeakable amazement.

Now we shall try to annotate the type of study that Ramalingam had from the experience gained at the soul level.

It has been acknowledged by all that God is one and existing eternally in and out of everything in the whole universe of boundless space.

But the Inner Truth of God's existence is beyond one's conception, because it is working from the innermost with the spirit of all powerful Omnigrace.

This Divine attribute of God is due to come out from each soul-atom for its Eternal Godly life of endless Bliss.

This is what we see in the case of the saint Ramalingam. This unimaginable form is within. It is Changeless and not destructible. This is termed as the soul beings.

To gain experience and live a Blessed life, all the outer forms come to play but disappear after some time.

Ramalingam gained his experience only from the inner soul.

Even from his childhood, that soul atom is his abode and thus he concentrated on it more deeply.

This made him to realise that the inner soul is his real preceptor and so he did not evince much interest towards the teachings of the worldly scholars.

His firm belief that the so called scholars are gifted only with a fraction of the grace of the Almighty, any tuition given under their leadership cannot make them to reap the benefit to the full extent. In other words the beneficiaries can only be termed as infants.

Without knowing the real aim of the saint Ramalingam, outsiders became rather vexed with his behaviors and tried to bring him down according to their wish.

The Omnigracious God did not let him down as he knows fully well about the needs of the young boy and the time when the soul be equipped with the same.

At the time of need, the Almighty embraced the child and thus the latter was gifted with so much power, which could not be obtained by anybody else.

The above happening has confirmed to the world that Ramalingam did not go to any school and had no preceptor (Guru) from the outer world.

According to him, education means the art of obtaining deathlessness and lives for ever.

Even now we see that there is an universal awareness that literacy should form the main theme and illiteracy should be wiped out at the earliest.

Unless mankind is awakened to follow the teachings of the saint to the fullest extent, peace cannot be attained in the internal arena of political, cultural and social affairs.

The world is heading towards the growing madness for wealth, pleasure and power by the people and this will invite war and calamity and the impending danger of total destruction will become inevitable.

In the above circumstances, this chapter will be an eye-opener to the entire world. We shall peep into the next chapter now.

CHAPTER 5

ACHIEVEMENTS MADE DURING THE EARLY YEARS

This chapter will deal with some illustrations, which sowed seed in spreading out the fame of Ramalingam.

With the eloquence he had in Tamil literature, his elder brother Sabapathy used to give lectures in the houses of some rich people on their request. For this he used to receive some remuneration from them and this added solace for his family.

Thus Sabapathy entered into a contract with a rich man at Chennai to give a series of lectures on Periapuranam.

This went on smoothly for some days. Due to his ill luck, one day he was laid down with high fever and thus he could not keep up his programme.

He was rather puzzled not knowing what to do. At the same time, he did not want to disappoint the organiser and the audience.

As his wife knew the talents of the young boy as the same was not revealed to others so far, she pleaded her husband to send his brother to the place and fulfill the engagement.

The brother was totally ignorant of his younger brother's capacity, he refused to accept her request in the first instance, but as there was no other alternative, at last he agreed to send him on his behalf.

He called on the boy and asked him to read out one or two stanzas before the audience and apologize before the organiser for his elder brother's inability to keep up the engagement.

Even at the place of sermon, where Ramalingam ventured to inform the news of his brother's inability, the organiser was much disappointed.

By the time, the hall was fully packed. To avoid any flutter from audience, and as there was none to continue the lecture, with much reluctance the organiser asked the boy to say something.

As usual when the boy sat before the audience and began his discourse, everybody looked upon the boy as to what he would do at this young age since the subject matter was of a high nature to be handled only by elite persons.

The first word "Ulagelam" beginning in Periapuranam was taken up for annotation, words gushed through his mouth as that of water flowing in a river after torrential rain.

Pin drop silence prevailed in the assembly and everybody was surprised to see the extraordinary eloquence the boy had even at this young age. There was a consensus among all that he is a God sent.

It was midnight, yet he had hardly finished explaining just two lines from the very first stanza itself.

The explanation for each word came in torrent and thus the time constraint was not at all felt by any of them.

There was a considered opinion among all that the discourse should be continued by the boy himself and it was agreed by the organiser also and the information was conveyed to his brother Sabapathy at once.

Sabapathy was very much perturbed to hear the news that there was a mass appeal for continuing the lectures by Ramalingam himself.

His Conscience pricked him and questioned himself as to how a boy who has not stepped into a school could give such astounding lectures. However he allowed Ramalingam to continue the lectures.

To verify the truth, Sabapathy himself went to the scene stood in a corner of the hall without the knowledge of others as well as his brother and heard the lectures.

He first thought that it was a dream. But his second thought brought him to conclude that it was a fact and not a dream. The lecturer was none else than his younger brother Ramalingam.

After returning home he narrated the incident to his beloved wife, as she used to plead more about the young boy.

Both averred that Ramalingam was not a mere boy but a representative of God fully vested with His Divine Grace.

Ramalingam returned home after finishing his discourse then.

Having much regret and feeling sorry for all his discourteous behavior shown towards Ramalingam, Sabapathy embraced him with dutiful affection and requested him to pardon for all the trouble he had given in the past days.

Ramalingam stood easy as if he was not aware of difficulties as posed by his brother, but kept quiet and was praising the Almighty inwardly as he was sailing along with the current with His Grace.

Thus the first scene of the long drama ended well in spite of the odds, it had to encounter.

This news spread like wild fire to all places in the vicinity and people began to surround him to have a glimpse of the young boy and hear the divine voice emanating from his lips.

It was like those bees, attracted by the sweet fragrance of the lovely flowers, encircling the latter.

Eminent scholars and religious heads became his students and disciples.

Velayudha Mudaliar of Thozhuvur, who was the head of Tamil literature in the Presidency college, Chennai was the first to step in.

Several others also followed suit and they used to address him as ‘Ramalinga adigalar’.

It became his daily practice to go to Thiruvottiyur, which is situated about 8 km from Chennai and offer worship to the God enshrined there. Added to this he used to get printed several songs in praise of the Lord, and these were compiled in one volume and presented to the people by his disciples subsequently.

Apart from the discourses and singing of songs towards the Almighty, he used to clear the doubts of those who came to see him with the sole intention that only deep meditation can bequeath them with the correct answer.

From Chennai he undertook pilgrimage to holy shrines in the southern part of Chennai and everywhere he went he used to offer his prayers to the Deity enshrined there by way of songs. The poems swelled in thousands and all have been compiled in two volumes and presented to the world at a later stage.

At last he settled in a village Karunguli, which is now about 10kms, from Neiveli. He continued there for about 9 years.

‘Thiru Arutpa’ is a composition of thousands of poems, a small number in the prose form, the letters written by Adigalar to his disciples as a reply to their letters and prayers made before the Almighty in prose form have all been printed in two volumes and made available to the public.

The second volume is the most important one in as much as all the experiences gained by the saint at a later stage have been brought out in detail only in this volume. Of the poems, the ‘Wreath of description of Grace’ (Arul vilakkamalai) and the ‘Wreath of Experience’ (Anubava Malai) each containing 100 poems are considered to be the vital part of the book ‘Thiru Arutpa’.

We can know something about these poems in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 6

MIRACLES

When the self is in communion with a higher power, nature automatically obeys the will of man.

The command over nature is called a miracle as comprehended by the materialist.

But the miracles done by the materialists are those experienced by them from the existing mortal body.

In respect of the saints and yogis, due to meditation, they attain certain powers (siddhis), which the public feel delightful and thus they used to consider them as super human beings and pay respect.

This fanaticism has penetrated deep in the world and is now heading towards utter chaos.

It is entirely a different one with the Adigalar.

Strictly speaking he never wished to do it nor tempted to do so. He did not cherish any selfish wish therein.

On the other hand, he did not use for any selfish design the enormous powers he acquired and attained through the Lord's Grace.

This is clearly disclosed by him in one of the poem, his intercession to the Lord to give him the power and strength to serve all in their sufferings. In another place, he has strictly warned against doing miracles and instructed others not to have any faith on miracle-doers.

Though these earnest prayers were accepted by the Lord, yet his whole aim was directed towards the Inner Light, as it was the origin for all such achievements.

His experience of the Lord in the form of effulgent Light enabled him to become "an embodiment of compassion"

He also says that he does not feign to have attained these powers out of an instinct for self-praise, but acquired them only out of true devotion to the Lord.

In short, it can be said that he had no attraction for the worldly happenings.

His ultimate wish was only to hallow the name of the Lord through service to all souls.

Further his sincere wish was that the entire humanity should get rid of all sorts of violence and follows the path of love to live a Blessed life.

Hence when he was empowered to perform anything he liked, he construed it to be the command of the Grace Light only.

The following pages will depict some of his wonder workings and unless they are studied in the light of the above observation the real truth underlying therein could not be elicited.

1. Simultaneous appearance in two places

The 'Hall of True Wisdom' built up at Vadalur was nearing completion. To hoist the flag, a long pole was needed. For this purpose, Adigalar instructed the contractor to go to Chennai and purchase one to suit the purpose. With due obedience the latter went to Chennai but returned stating that the traders demanded exorbitant price and thus he could not act of his own accord to finalise the issue.

On hearing the same, the saint asked him to go there again and said that he would follow. Accordingly the contractor reached the timber walking over the pole required. The trader also gave his consent to get a very moderate price for it. As soon as the purchase was over, the saint bid the contractor to send it to Vadalur and left the place.

The very next day, the contractor arrived at Mettukuppam the place where the saint was dwelling in his last days and found the saint giving his discourses to his disciples. The former published the news of purchase of the post at Chennai in the presence of the saint. All were surprised to see that the saint was all along giving his sermon to the gathering the whole of the previous day at Mettukuppam itself. This made them to conclude that the saint was really a super man who had been vested with super natural powers.

2. about alchemy (Rasa Vadham)

The supernal power the saint attained brought him fame not only in India but also abroad. One day a foreigner approached Adigalar and wanted to know Alchemy. Our Adigalar gave a fine discourse on the subject and the foreigner had a patient hearing. Even though he was satisfied with the saint's approach on the subject theoretically, he wanted to see it done practically.

In the first instance, the saint hesitated to comply with his request, but felt that it is will of the Almighty to demonstrate it in public, and asked foreigner who was wearing a copper ring on one of his fingers to remove it and throw it upwards. This was done and when it turned towards the floor, the saint touched the piece with his finger. Alas to the surprise of the foreigner, he found the ring was transformed in to pure gold. He was dumb-stricken and extolled as to how a mere touch would transform a base metal into gold, then what will be the extra ordinary feat of the saint.

The saint told him at large, that such things are common to those who have renounced their worldly pleasures and endure a complete surrender to the Feet of the Lord and thus come up to a higher level.

3. Body Dismembered

One day about noon, the saint went out of Dharmasala and did not turn up for a long time. One of his disciples grew impatient of the absence of the saint and went out in search of him. It was a gruesome sight. He found the saint's body dismembered and lying scattered near a bush in a remote locality. The disciple grew panicky turned his way to his original place and lamented before others explaining the scene. Everybody was at a loss without knowing what to do.

In the meanwhile, the saint appeared before them and strictly warned them not to disturb him anymore in the future. After such warning, he also told them that it is the will of the Almighty to do so. He is above all and could demonstrate anything and anywhere and the same should not be treated as a miracle.

4. Proficiency in several languages

This part deals with a phenomenon to show that the saint had a mastery over several languages of the world against the general belief that he was proficient in Tamil only.

One Pinagapani Mudaliar was working as the supervisor in the Telegraph office at Pondicherry. He had mastered 7 languages. He used to make sarcastic observations about the saint, viz., his disciples are lazy people used to take food and spend the time leisurely. His ego tic mind drove him into madness and thus he ventured to meet the saint and prove his ability.

As usual, the saint was delivering his lectures and in the midst, he told the assembly that one will appear there soon to deliver his own teachings to enlighten them more. In the first instance, they could not understand the meaning of the announcement. Mudaliar came to the stadium soon and was sitting in a corner listening to his discourses.

In the midst of the assembly there was a boy aged four. The saint called him and questioned as to the number of languages in which he was proficient. He replied that he knew six languages. Then the saint called Mudaliar and asked him to question the boy in any language he desired. Though the boy ventured to do so, the latter could not utter any word.

He became frightened and admitted his folly. Prostrating before the saint in the midst of all he pleaded for his arrogant remarks. This was a turning point for him and in the subsequent days, he became an ardent devotee of the saint.

5. Feeding a large number of people with a handful of food.

There was an instance when the inmates of Dharmasala were preparing to take rest after exhausting the food prepared for the day. All of a sudden about hindered persons entered the house stating that they were hungry and had to be fed. The hosts were bewildered as to what to do as it was midnight. And there was no hope of preparing and serving food in a short time to all, they approached the saint and narrated the occurrence.

He coolly replied that he would look after their plight, and asked them to provide plantain leaves to feed them. He himself took the handful food left in the kitchen and began to serve. All were fed sumptuously and to the astonishment of the inmates, it was found that quantity of the food left in the kitchen remained the same as it was before feeding the huge gathering.

This solitary instance will prove that those who have taken refuge in the holy feet of the Lord, will not be let down at any cost and their needs will be provided instantly.

6. Water poured in a lamp kept it burning for the whole night

In the village, Karunguzhi where the saint had his residence in the house of one Venkata Reddiar, one of his devotees, the saint used to go for writing poems, throughout day and night.

One day the inmates of Reddiar's family had gone out to a nearby village to attend a function and did not return in the night also. There was no oil in the lamp burning in his room. A vessel had been left by his side, and the saint who was much absorbed in writing the poems, without verifying the contents of the vessel, simply poured it in the lamp and it burnt the whole night.

The next day all the family members returned home and found the vessel containing the water empty. Instead, the lamp was found filled with water and it was burning. Quite astonished to see the miraculous deed, they used to worship the saint as God with due reverences for his godliness.

In one of the poems written by him subsequently, the saint refers to the incident as not a miraculous deed, but treats it as an occurrence for exhibiting the real truth. We shall try to learn about the same in the paragraph coming hereunder. Generally a lamp is kept burning with the aid of oil. When it is exhausted, the lamp flickers and ceases to burn. So also for the existence of the human body, food is the main criteria. Without food the body cannot stand. But in the above case, the lamp is kept burning with the aid of mere water. If that be the case, one can infer that the human body also can survive with the water alone. The saint personifies the lamp as the body of the human being and the water as compassion. Thus he proved that he was an embodiment of compassion and did not discard it at any time. His love for humanity at large and the other living creatures was so intense that he always used to extend his help to the needy. In course of time, this

compassion filled the entire body was transformed into a pure one (Suddha dega) and finally immortalised and began to live there for ever with eternal bliss.

Subsequent pages will throw more light about this subject and so we shall proceed further.

The house where the saint lived in Karunguzhi was a tiled one and Thiru Uran Adigal of Vadalur took possession of the same subsequently and has since constructed a building with modern structures to have a new look, thereby attracting a large number of people to visit this place at the time of festival.

7. Remaining at one end and viewing things at the other end with distinct vision

An incident relating to his life history in connection with the construction of the Hall of True Wisdom (Sathya Gnana Sabha) at Vadalur reveals the possession of such power by the saint.

It is said that after giving instructions for the construction of the building at vadalur, he was retiring at Siddhivalagam, a room in the village Mettukuppam, just 3kms away from vadalur. The construction was nearing completion, but he did not turn up. When his followers went to Siddhivalagam to convey the news of completion to the saint, he pointed out certain omissions in the constructions of the building and urged them to carry out the same. Finding the observations of the saint to be true, they were duly carried out.

From this it has to be construed that though the saint was at Siddhivalagam, yet he was capable of seeing things happening at Vadalur. Such attainments are very rare but the saint possessed all such powers.

8. Appearance in a judicial court

The bickering in the minds of meant drive them to courts even though the issue involved therein will be of a trivial nature. The saint was also not spared in such circumstances. His fame remained unchallenged. One of the contemporaries filed a suit against the saint just to bring disreputation to his name. Such an incident occurred during the life time of the saint and it is narrated below.

One Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna is remarkable among those who contributed much to Tamil prose literature. He did memorable work in spreading saivism and Saivite literature among the public. He became so much jealous towards the saint he questioned the literature in 'Arutpa' (gift of the Divine Bliss)- the renderings of the latter complied and published by his disciples. According to Arumuga Navalar, it should be termed as 'Marutpa' meaning that the renderings were made out only by a materialist, and not as 'Arutpa' the name with which it was published. The said Navalar thus filed a suit against the saint in the court of the District munsif at Manjakuppam praying for a decree for the withdrawal of the name 'Arutpa' by the defendant.

The case was taken on file by the court and it ordered the issue of notice to the defendant. On the date of hearing Navalar was present in the court before time. Soon the Munsif resumed his chair and called on the defendant by name. No sooner his name was called on, the saint entered the hall. The plaintiff stood in reverence and greeted him with folded hands. His followers who had assembled there also followed suit. The Munsif himself got up from the chair and paid reverence to the saint but it is said that it happened so without his own knowledge. A divine atmosphere then prevailed in the court hall, after hearing the heated arguments from both sides, the Court delivered the judgment.

In the course of the judgment, the court held that 'Arutpa' is a valuable treasure to the world in Tamil literature and its outcome is entirely based on Divine inspiration. The Plaintiff, who was questioned about the respect he paid to the saint, said that the defendant is a wise and noble should possessing extraordinary powers as a gift from the Almighty. This is the reason that made him to give reverence to the saint. The court also held that in as much as that on his own admission that the saint is a wise cultured soul, it cannot be argued that his renderings were of a worldly nature. In these circumstances fully respecting the wishes of the saint the court decreed the case in favour of the defendant.

It is to be seen that this district Munsif who was elevated to the position of a judge to the Chennai High Court, is none else than Justice Muthusami Iyer whose judgments are of a sane nature and as a memorial to him, a statue has been erected and seen in the High Court Buildings, Chennai.

Countless were the miracles performed by the saint the pages will not be enough in this small book to bring out all his miracles. It is enough to know that he is an embodiment of all powers. With this we shall proceed to the next.

CHAPTER 7

DHARMA SALAI

CONSTRUCTION OF A HOUSE TO FEED THE POOR

The main theme of the mission of the saint is to dedicate himself for a selfless service to the human beings at large. This Chapter deals with the same.

It is this higher aspect of every religion to which the saint gives prominence.

He holds compassion as the basis of higher spiritual experiences. According to him, he who loves best serves best.

The saint emphatically declares that love for God will develop in the human minds only and not in other creatures.

When man develops compassion towards his fellow beings, he is saint to prepare the ground for Divine Grace.

Without Divine Grace, abiding love for God is not possible. The saint has used the term 'Jeevakarunyam' to denote profound compassion.

It is said giving importance to this subject, he has dealt with the subject in seven parts but at present only three of them are available.

Compassion is the fundamental trait of the character of the saint. This factor is apparent from his poetic appeals to the Almighty.

There are two aspects for the compassionate service.

They are:

1. Doing good to fellow beings,

When they suffer from hunger,

Thirst, disease, ignorance, poverty and fear;

2. Refraining from killing and taking flesh.

As regards the first, he puts more stress on relieving hungry from hunger.

If one pursues the virtue of relieving one from hunger, it is the supreme help. The other kinds of help can be easily rendered by anybody else, as they are supplementary and sustain the life for some more time.

The saint insists that one should give help to all souls with his earned money and through his own physical labor.

When this is not possible, he should at least pray for them.

He insists on family men of low income to be prudent enough in spending money for feeding their own family as well as others who may happen to approach them for food. He thus advocates prudence and thrift.

He not only dissuades the rich from spending money unscrupulously on a grand style during their family ceremonies like marriages and other rituals. He persuades them to feed the needy instead.

His suggestion is that anybody can do this according to his capacity.

He deplores that rich people when they are jubilant and move pompously in high spirits at grand dinners and ostentatious music, and dance performances, normally do not relish the sight of a poor, hungry, meek human creature waiting anxiously nearby for a mouthful of food.

It is a practical experience gained by the saint himself as revealed in one of his poems.

He equally deplores and condemns the act of the pious people in ignoring the poor and destitute.

The so called great men can do so many wonders like transforming a male into a female, but all such acts done by them without compassion are mere tricks to hoodwink the public and they cannot be termed as 'Gnani'.

He himself sets an example for the selfless service. Indeed it was his motto. In one of his poems, it is said that he realised God only through this compassionate service and the consequent experience of Grace-Light.

We shall now deal with the other aspects of the compassionate service preached and practiced by the saint.

It is the act of Non-killing and not taking flesh.

He condemns chiefly the sacrifice of life performed in the name of gods of various types and names.

This sort of killing under the garb of religion is an age-old practice.

Every village deity was said to be appeased by the sacrifice of poor cattle and poultry.

This has spread all over the country. People used to eat what they killed in the name sacrifice under the misconception that it is a gift received from the God.

In modern society this evil practice has grown by leaps and bounds.

People have been advised to take flesh for health reasons as if they are associated with strength and vadalur.

The saint took cudgel against' this practice and that of killing. Even from his boyhood, he wished the people to wean away from the act of killing and flesh eating.

For this he formulated the unique path which he called as "Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sangam" meaning the path of virtue to establish non-killing and as an unique one to be accepted by all religions.

It will suffice to say here that he was against even hunting of wild beasts.

As regards flesh eating, he is very harsh against flesh eaters.

According to his theory, flesh eating involves killing the innocent. He describes fleshy food as an inducement for the developments of lower tendencies.

In giving reason for his description, he says that the mind of the flesh eaters cannot at all sense the inner self, and consequently the realisation of God's Eternity will be quite impossible.

With copious reasons, the saint has advocated his complete faith in vegetarianism, as the right path to realise the Reality.

Nowadays, more westerners, who were addicted to taking non-vegetarian food, are slowly turning towards vegetarianism.

Perhaps the prophecy of the saint has come true in as much as programmes are being arranged annually by several organisations in the line of teachings of the saint to achieve the goal.

Numerous scientists have now come to the conclusion that vegetarian food is more conducive to health, and it nourishes the body with much strength.

It is hoped in the interest of all, the present world will reap the best of the consequences.

Now let us turn to the promotion of universal love and brotherhood.

There is now universal awareness that the entire world should be knit in to a single Brotherhood of nations and live as one family unit.

A strong notion is prevailing in the society that sufferings are inflicted on them according to their past actions and relieving them from their sufferings is against the will of God.

In this connection, the contention of the saint is that all people, whether good or bad, kind or cruel, male or female irrespective of any creed or caste, or any nation have the right to live and they should be allowed to live.

Everybody is equal before God-the creator, and hence such discrimination is not at all required.

The saint posing a similar question, answers that people have not realised that all are brothers and that when one individual inflicts suffering upon another by any means, he really hurting his brothers.

They can be aware of this only if they are made to perceive it even beyond the physical level and to feel their kindness towards other individuals. This perception is called 'Soul perception'

But in many cases, it is veiled by ignorance.

All souls are akin to one another as brothers, because their manifestation as living being is effected by the Godhead.

The saint terms as the equal right of souls to love 'Anmaneya Urimai'.

Though the saint belonged to the period, which witnessed political stir all over India, he did not think of associating himself with it.

Instead, in one of his poems he comes with a direct attack on the existing Government about the performance of showing no sympathy towards poor people, and he wishes to have a Government of sympathetic, good natured people.

It is evident from his earlier prose work, 'Manumurai Kanda Vasagam', that from his boyhood, the saint was endowed with high sense of compassion.

It was his inner urge to propagate it among the people.

This book was written in the prose form on the request of one of his teachers for the use of children as it was thought fit to install the sense of compassion in the tender minds of small children.

Here it is clearly seen that the saint has written it for propagating the humanitarian outlook indirectly.

In this context, we can see now how some people come forward to spend some money stating that it is meant for the uplift of the poor.

Though it may be considered as their voluntary contribution to give some help to the poor, it cannot be termed as a contribution made with their whole-heartedness, as envisaged by the saint. But he viewed that it was done by them only to gain some reputation from the public, such an act cannot be taken as one falling under compassion explained by the saint.

The deep compassion rooted through inner devotion only will gain significance.

After due consideration of all the above facts, the saint wanted to establish a free house in order that everyone should live on the earth without hunger.

Knowing the cherished desire of the saint, his disciples came forward to act accordingly.

A site was chosen by him at Vadalur and when the villagers came to know of this, they donated about 80 kanis of land for this purpose, free of cost.

The construction of the building as planned by the saint was also started in right earnest and completed soon.

One fine morning at 6 a.m., the day being Thursday, the 11th of vaikasi in the Tamil year Prabava, the inauguration ceremony took place in the presence of the saint. This corresponds to the year 1867 in English.

The saint himself took pains of lighting the oven and renders it as a festive occasion.

Thousands of people were fed continuously without a lull for three days.

According to the instructions of the saint, the oven that was lit up then was kept burning without any interruption.

So far none had felt the shortage of food grains in this institution as the public were donating spontaneously.

On poosam day in the month of Thai of the Tamil year, thousands of people gather there and used to feed the poor and the rich according to their capacity to fulfill the dream of the saint enunciated then.

It will not be out of place to mention here, the significance of the day of which the institution was inaugurated.

The time, day, date and the year denote that Grace (Arul) has dawned on the earth to mitigate and also to wipe out the sufferings of the public and to live with Eternal Bliss.

With this we shall turn to the next.

CHAPTER 8

SATHYA GNANA SABAI

CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF TRUE WISDOM

In the previous chapter, we dealt with the subject “Jeeva Karunyam” to some extent and now we deal with the other viz., “meditation”.

After the inauguration of Sathya Dharmasalai at Vadalur, the saint used to live in the hermitage called “Siddhivalagam” in the village Mettukuppam. There he used to give sermons which led him to be regarded as a spiritual guide and teacher.

It is said that his admirers and disciples and even Govt. officials had changed their residence and gone to live where they could remain constantly near him.

During this time, all the poems composed in his early days were compiled in five parts by his early days were compiled in five parts by his disciple Velayudha Mudaliar. The same was printed and published in a single volume. Instead of noting the editor’s name as “Chidambaram Ramalingam” which the saint used to put as his signature in all the letters and other poems he had written, the compiler noted it as “Thiru Arutprakasa Vallalar”.

This volume was produced before the saint for his perusal, thinking that the compiler would get the appreciation of the saint for the work done.

The situation changed otherwise. Instead of giving tributes to the work done, the saint questioned the disciple as to why the name of the editor was changed, with whose permission it was printed and to explain the significance of the new name.

Without knowing what to do, the disciple stood before the saint with shivering body and with folded hands.

Seeing his plight, the saint came to his rescue and offered the explanation as below.

It is the Almighty who in the form of supreme Effulgence is bountiful in nature. Since He termed as all giver, the name goes to the Lord himself and none else. The disciple after hearing the explanation given by the saint, left the place with a peaceful mind and narrated the incident to his fellowmen.

From this time onwards, the saint was called by that name, “Thiru Arutprakasa Vallalar”, as desired by his disciples.

The saint’s statements are well exemplified by his own experience.

He attained the experience of the Lord’s Grace and earnestly wished that his fellow -men all over the world should also get similar experience.

The universal path realised and lived by him has been propagated through the poems compiled by him.

For this reason his poems are styled as “Arutpa” (the song of grace.)

It is literally meant that the poems are sung with the aid of Grace only. This is certainly correct, since this is the divine law that without Grace not a single atom can move.

The special feature is that Arutpa has been sung not only with God’s Grace but it enables the readers to experience and make them live eternally under this Grace Light. This is the peculiar nature of “Thiru Arutpa” and it makes one to be absorbed in ecstasy.

The next significant aspect of the universal religion is the worship of light.

The saint experienced the realities of the Lord and the Light within the light, within the Light, as seen from the poems.

These three aspects of Light are to be distinguished.

The first is the God Light. It is known as the guiding Light.

The second is the livening light guided by the first.

The third is the light, which can be realised through the soul atom only.

This light is spotted in between the eyebrows and in due course it appears to the saint as an effulgent entity called “Anma Prakasam”.

He noted this as the “Hall of true wisdom” (Sathya Gnana Sabai”).

Only in this hall of wisdom, he perceived the Supreme Effulgence “Arutperunjothi”.

His sincere wish is that people living in every nook and corner of the world should realise this importance and get the experience of the Grace Light he got and live for ever with immortality.

To symbolize this, he built a specially designed Hall of Wisdom through his followers at Vadalur for universal Worship. This hall was named by him as “Sathya Ganan Sabai”.

It is a lotus like building and stands in an octagonal shape providing windows and doors through which one can see the light kept in an altar with five steps leading to the altar from all the four sides. Seven colorful curtains have been hung before the light and unless they are removed, one cannot perceive the light there. There is an outer wall and the entire thing has been fenced with iron chains in duplicate.

The above symbolization can be explained as below.

Generally people are living a sensuous physical life in this world. In order to transcend to the higher life of Divinity, a person must pass on the gross and subtle bodily stages and take shelter in the soul-abode are embodied stage. The above three stages are embodied in the symbolic Temple at vadalur. The practical experience of this Temple is realisable only at the head level.

The first stage of living gross body of eight spans is represented by the octagonal structure of the Temple surrounded by iron chain fencing. The human body measures eight spans only and the duplicate of the chains in the outer fence contains 21,600 knots, representing the number of times he breathes per day through the holes of the nostrils in the ordinary course.

The second subtle bodily state is denoted by the inner octagonal space covered with the walls containing twenty four openings of doors and windows.

The thord stage of the causal bodily stage is with the Divine Light put upon the central altar with the five steps on each of the four sides depicting the penta forces of the Almighty.

In between the second and third stage, there are seven curtains which act as a bar to perceive the inner light by ordinary man. But the appearance of curtains is only an illusion and not real.

At the time of worship, one is to stand before the central spot of the main door from where he can perceive the Divine Light in front of him and from there he can see the golden and silver apartments in either side of him.

All these are to enlighten the inner Divinity to be experienced from the centre of the eye brows.

The Hall which was built according to his own plan was dedicated to the public on 25.1.1872 with the star poosam representing the day.

All the seven screens were removed one by one, revealing the grand sight to the devotees.

He insisted on one's ardent desire to have this vision of light within one's own soul through personal experience. His ulterior motive is that the outer structure is there only to enable them to get at the truth and make them to lead a Blessed life.

Contrary to the expectation of the saint, the people used to look at the Hall more with outer senses.

This made him to feel sorry about their behavior and thought that his teachings could not bear the fruit for the present. Thus he closed the doors, locked and took the key to his hermitage. It happened in the year 1873.

Though it was closed, the physical life's sustenance alone is continued through Dharmasalai.

Some years after the disappearance of the saint, the Temple of wisdom was opened by some of his followers and the festival is conducted annually. But they are not conducted as expected by the saint and hence could not be commented upon.

The dome is constructed in such a way everybody who passes that side is being attracted by it.

As the temple was built in 1872, due to efflux of time it developed some cracks in the structure.

In the year 1949, Thirumuruga Krupananda Wariar, a renowned Saivaite scholar took keen interest in the work and renovated the same.

This time also it did not sustain for a long time. Thus the renovation work had to be taken up urgently as desired by the public.

With the munificence of Dr.N.Mahalingam, an ardent devotee of Vallalar and a leading industrialist, the work was undertaken by him. Under his close guidance, one Dakshinamurthy Mudaliar of Vellore, a contractor supervised the work solely. The work was completed in 3 years and consecrated on 19.6.1977 in the august presence of Thiruvallam Mouna Swamigal and Thiru Uran Adigal.

CHAPTER 9

SIDDHIVALAGAM

This building (ashram) is said to have been built by the villagers of that hamlet for the purpose of accommodating a Vaishnava guide. But subsequently it was allotted to the saint for his use.

It was a time when there was utter necessity for leaders, to bring forth an awakening in south India and unite the people of all castes and faith.

There was an urge among the common men to show something in religion and spirituality through a simple and enlightening literature.

Our saint rose to the occasion and began the renaissance in a remarkable manner. He propagated the philosophy of service he taught.

The poems and other renderings in prose style are so simple and vivid, that even a layman can understand the meaning without having any extraordinary intelligence.

His missionary spirit is more reflected from his appeal to the Lord saying.

“I should go to all parts of the world and hallow thy name”.

Service to fellow beings is his supreme motto.

He detested religion from the debating scholars and from the orthodox who attached much importance to rituals.

In this context his line “Kallarkum Katravarkum Kalippu arulum kalippe” (Arul vilakka Malai) means that the Lord gives bliss equally to the mass and the enlightened acquires significance.

He had a clear perception of the purpose of his life on the earth.

He has recorded his ideal briefly and clearly.

His ideal was to reform the worldly, whose life was lacking in the harmony between thought and deed.

His ardent wish is to make them join the “Sanmarga Sangam” in order to attain the Divine here and now itself.

He also declared that God has earmarked his life for this purpose.

The sanctuary for eternal service established by him at vadalur is a monument of his service motto, but at present the public have not given due recognition for the same. It is hoped that in course of time the people will come up to his expectation and follow the truth.

He wished to guide the people of the world in the path of Grace, which is free from violence of any sort.

He delivered the message through lectures, essays, heart melting poems and melodious songs.

He insisted on “Universal Brotherhood” as the only relation that the people of the world should have among themselves and with the living beings.

He held them, both as the chief ideal as of the religion he preached.

He insisted on the universal and spiritual aspects of religion.

He aimed at the unity of all religions, as ordained by the Lord.

He exhorted the people to set aside all their differences and live in amity and peace promoting congenial relationship among them.

He gave a clarion call to the humanity at large to follow universal path, which is free from the obsessions of differences in caste, creed, faith and religion.

His literary creations rose with a new vigor and inspiration, and this has helped to evaluate his contribution to Tamil literature.

During this period, he wrote the famous ‘Arutpaerunjothi Agval’ which comprises of 1596 lines and is said that the whole poem was written in a single night. It is termed as the crown of ‘Thiru Arutpa’.

It has become a custom to all his followers that it is recited in chorus in all public functions. It is done individually also by some.

There is strong belief that recital of this poem continuously for several days, will make all evils to vanish.

With much gratitude, one can say that in none of the poems any grammatical error has crept in.

Only in the nineteenth century, Indians established printing press and brought into print many of the Tamil literary works.

As the price of the printed books was cheaper than the hand-written palmyrah leaves, the poor people were enabled to obtain books easily at cheap price.

This was of great help in spreading education and literature among the people then.

All these factors brought the renderings of the saint “Thiru Arutpa” in reputation.

Though the progress made in this regard by the public is little, yet it is a happy angry that it has been able to penetrate deep in their minds.

It is said that in the last days, the saint never used to take any food either in any solid or liquid form.

Even in the absence of these, he was found to be ever busy as in the early years.

A Photographer tried his best to have his photo, but never succeeded in his attempt.

The above instances clearly prove that though he was seen in the physical body, yet it had undergone changes, which cannot be perceived by materialists. We shall discuss about this phenomenon below.

The body has been classified into three: 1) Gross, 2) Subtle and 3) Causal. The last one is the basis for the other two, and in the case of the saint as one Trinity. In the words of the saint, it is termed as “Three Dega Siddhi”.

By Three Dega Siddhi, the physical body itself can be transmuted in the form of pure wisdom, and from that altar, he can perform the duties of the Lord and administer all the five acts viz., creation, preservation, destruction, veil and bliss.

Having attained immortality, and in recognition of the same, in several of his poems, he exclaims as under,

“I am the eldest son of the Lord”

I have been provided with the scepter

Of Grace and thereby rule the

Universe for ever”

“My Lord, today you have shown

Yourself to be with me and myself to

Be within you and thus removed my

Suffering and done me good”

“O my king, my Lord, my mother, my
father, all in one, you removed all the
inner veils, thereby bringing me to
the perception of things unknown to
me so far, and have given me the
great experience in the ‘great
intellectual space of Grace’ which has
caused me bliss. I take refuge with
Thee” etc.

In another stanza, he states that he takes refuge in the Lord who fulfilled all his wishes by granting him the “all performing power” through the experience of His Grace.

So saying, he took out the lamp which was kept in his room, placed it outside and directed his followers to consider it as the God of real worship following the path of love kindness towards all living beings, and thereby attain the siddhi He got.

He thus locked himself inside the room he used to occupy and expressed his desire that none should venture to open it. He also added that if the Govt. authorities persist to open it, let them be convinced of his desire of not opening it and if it is opened, the room will be found vacant, since from that moment itself, he will enter the soul of everyone and lead them to the right path of Grace. These utterances proved to be final.

The above incident occurred at midnight on the 30th day of January, 1874, and the directions of the saint are being carried out in right earnest by his followers till now.

There was a wild rumor in and around the vicinity that the saint had disappeared.

As forecast by the saint early, the news reached the Govt. he then Collector of south of Arcot rushed to the spot along with a retinue of a Doctor and other officials.

The doctor went round the room and was surprised to sense the fragrance of ‘pachai-karpoom’ (Burial not combustible) against his own suspicion of scenting of foul smell as in the case of a decayed body.

The collector was informed of the experience gained by the doctor, and the Collector, who took pains to ascertain the correct position, went round the room and by scenting the same smell as reported by doctor, came to the conclusion that no foul play has been established on the life of the saint as suspected by some.

He then enquired from the followers assembled there as to the type of work that had been carried on. They informed the Collector about the instructions given by the saint at the time of disappearance.

Fully respecting the last wishes of the great saint, he offered a sum of Rs.20/- to them as his own contribution towards the good work carried out by them, and returned to his head-quarters.

It will be interesting to note the facts of disappearance of the saint as given by Mr.J.H.Garstein, Collector of South Arcot in the South Arcot Gazette 1878. Some of the excerpts are given below.

“Born in 1823 in the Chidambaram Taluk of Vellala (Sir Karuneeagar) parents in humble circumstances, the saint developed, while he was an young boy, an undeniable talent and his poems attracted the public. They dealt with religious matters.....”

“About 1872, the curious octagon-shaped Sabha with the domed roof which is to be seen at Vadalur, a hamlet of Parvatipuram, was erected by him from subscriptions.....”

“In 1874, he locked himself in a room (still in existence) in Mettukuppam (hamlet of Karunguli), which he used for samadhi or majestic meditation and instructed his disciples not to open it for some time. He was never seen thereafter and the room is still found locked. It is considered by those who still believe in him, that he was miraculously created one with his God and that in fullness of time he would reappear to the faithful.....”

Mr.W.Francis, I.C.S.in the year 1906 has expressed his opinion in ‘The South Arcot Gazetteers’ as follows:

“Parvatipuram - a village of 1189 inhabitants lying 23 miles south west of Cuddalore on the Virudhachalam road, is connected with one Ramalingam Paradesi, a somewhat curious example of a latter day saint who has been almost deified by his followers.”

The saint pained to see that his followers were not amenable to his teachings diligently, used to tell them often that people from north and west would come there to carry out his instructions and it was hoped that their minds would be changed then and begin to follow his teachings.

This prophecy came true.

Madam Blavatsky of Russia and Colonel Alcot of America came to the place at a later date and formed the Theosophical Society at Adyar in Chennai.

There they used to teach the teachings of the saint to the public to a certain extent.

Lady Annie Besant of Great Britain, who succeeded them, also carried out the message of the saint for some years.

As their successors did not evince keen interest in the teachings of the saint, the place is now converted as a school for demonstrating modern art and culture.

As pointed out by the saint already, we shall now turn to the subject with experiences gained from the innermost.

It is said that in and around Siddhivalagam, in Tamil means it is the inner part of the body where the soul exists and it is the source of origin from where the attainments (siddhis) used to emanate.

It is said that in and around siddhivalagam, the sweet fragrance of pachai karpooram and the vision of the saint are available to those matured. But it is very rare.

In one of the poems, he states that his body is permeated with that sweet fragrance and the same is prevailing with the Lord Almighty. From this it has to be inferred that mere vision of the saint will not be useful unless the sweet fragrance is scented therein. The combination of both these facts alone can prove the existence of the saint in the locality.

On the third day of Thaipooam, people used to visit this place to have glimpse of the room from where he disappeared.

Dr.N.Mahalingam, who is prefixed with the words “Arut Selvar” by public came forward to construct a building where the light(Jothi) is kept in an elevated place with a dome above and with a hall in front of this light making the public to have a dharsan even from some distance. It is to be noted that it has been constructed from his own funds. This was in the year 1985.

With his own efforts, on the day of monthly poosam, he has arranged series of lectures by eminent scholars and thus the place wears a new look now.

With this we shall now proceed to the next chapter, to summarise the teachings of the saint to the maximum extent.

CHAPTER 10

ETERNAL DIVINITY

In the previous chapters, we have learnt something about the life and teachings of the saint and supernal powers he attained as a result of his realisation of God's Grace.

The elucidations now brought out in this chapter will be more objective in nature.

So far it was held that we are but eternal souls temporarily encased in this physical body.

The followers of Advaita thought that the grace of the Lord would deliver us from this physical imprisonment.

Advaita philosophy preaches that soul and God remain as one without duality.

The aim is to merge this soul into Godhead as to become inseparable.

But a serious question arises on this hypothesis. It is this.

How can one hold his consciousness without a frame to hold it? It can be explained thus.

The physical body is like the outer glass of an electric bulb.

As long as the bulb is intact, light will emanate from the bulb.

The moment the glass cracks, the glow stops.

Similar is the case with the physical body.

When the body is dropped the feeling of consciousness is merged with the Almighty, and it ceases to function.

But the philosophers of Advaita insist that this illusory body is essentially needed till the feeling of consciousness merges with the Brahman-the God.

Their resumption is that after merger, we can drop the mortal frame and remain in oneness with god for ever.

Here they totally forget that though the soul is eternal in existence, such existence alone cannot be called as illumination.

The truth is that to get illumination and divine experience some sort of frame as the body is needed till it realises the eternity.

Almost all religions and philosophical systems insist on a body-less liberation.

They insist that after illumination, one has necessarily to shed his mortal frame.

But even common sense will speak that one should have the semblance of a body, whether physical, or ethereal to hold on one's consciousness.

Those sages of yore never thought that it is possible to lead illumined lives by retaining this body simultaneously.

They thought that the humanity at large aspire for the dizzy height of Godhead discarding the physical body.

Such out molded and stale religions and physical systems have brought out more and more fetters on man, instead of liberating him from the bondage.

The human beings were groaning under its weight during the past centuries.

Fortunately the Almighty Himself knowing the plight of man has come to the rescue of the mankind.

All the said miracles, siddhies and liberation are only a fraction of His compassionate power.

The major portion has now been revealed to the mankind through his chosen disciple, the saint Ramalingam, now called as Thiru Arutprakasa Vallalar.

We have already given about his achievements in this regard in the previous chapters.

It is He who has assured that the so called God is within Him and with His guidance, he can become He Himself.

In other words, God has emanated as a human being in order to make man realise himself as one with Effulgence.

The Divine Light has descended from lofty heights into the human form in order to make him immortal.

From the soul of man, it spreads throughout, transmuting the mortal body into an immortal golden one during the process.

For this, one has to eschew the ephemeral pleasures and get in to deep meditation to realise the real truth, and be compassionate towards all living beings.

Compassion occupies the core place of the God.

The universe is enlightened by this compassion.

Similarly if one aspires to get enlightened, he must start his quest only from within.

This practical way is called ANAGANERI, which is the path laid down in Suddha Sanmarga and this makes one to live in eternal Bliss ultimately.

This path of Anaganeri is a new path devised by the saint to enter the kingdom of God and live in oneness.

So far, the materialists and other worldly people who led a material life, discovered many new things but breathed their last, at the end.

The yogis and other saints finding the world to be a fetter renounced the world, got into deep meditation and merged with him and thus left the world.

In both the above cases, whether he is a materialist or a spiritualist, the life is lost.

This is against the principles of the saint, since he used to live from the soul-abode and at the same time to live in the outer world, with assumption that the latter life is not a fetter to him, except it is intended to equip him with all experiences, which will make him to realise the Truth at the end.

This is called anaganeri, which has brought new dimensions to the mankind through our saint.

It will be interesting to note that the first two letters of the two words-GOD, ALMOGHTY when combined together will form the word 'GOAL'.

This observation confirms the truth that it is only the Omnigracious Light of God Almighty which heads to take possession of the human being gradually to metamorphosis the same in the Eternal Divine Being- The Goal.

Profound compassion and the highest realisation of the Almighty are well reflected in the saint's most famous, oft-repeated unique Mantra (sacred utterance), which is given below:

ARUTPERUNJOTHI

ARUTPERUNJOTHI

THANIPPERUNKARUNAI

ARUTPERUNJOTHI

As favored by the disciples, the literal meaning of this is given as the great effulgence of the Lord with his profound compassion coming to rule the earth.

But the true meaning of this stanza is quite a different one and unless one views this from the inner light with a broad based mind, he cannot have the true meaning. From the experience gained in this line of thought, we could see what it is.

The first line can be explained as below:

Before the formation of this universe, darkness prevailed everywhere, and this made one to believe that even the Almighty was inactive during this period. But this is not true, in as much as the God has neither a beginning nor an end. The supreme Grace Light has its existence but could not be perceived by anybody as he was in an invisible stage. Only to prove this, the saint has noted in the first line that the Lord Arutperunjothi existed even before the creation of this universe.

How his presence has been perceived, is defined in the middle line. The supreme effulgence with all his benevolence is now acting in the universe both with his inner and outer forms to uplift one and all and thereby make them live a blessed life for ever. This represents the form (uruva) and formless (aruva) stage.

In the last line the so called Arutperunjothi alone is noted which denotes the fact that the effulgence will remain for ever even after the destruction of this universe. The truth that the Almighty is ever existing is thus proved beyond doubt by this.

‘DAEIOU’ and its internal meaning

During the month of November, 1873, the saint gave a long sermon after hoisting the flag in front of Siddhivalagam by clearly instructing the audience as to the type of work that should be undertaken by them in future. Some of the excerpts are reproduced below:

“Behold. Please don’t aim at any religion as the deity revealed therein is only a model and the real truth has not been disclosed there transparently.

If we begin to study them after taking much pains, in the short span of time allowed before us, we will be benefited to a very small extent and thereby miss the opportunity of living eternally with a Blissful life.

The time is very short. For all the above things, I now stand as the sole witness. You very well know the deepest faith I once had in Saivism. That aim has now vanished. The reason as to why I had such deep faith in saivism at that time will only reveal the meager knowledge possessed by me then.

The God has elevated me to the highest plane now. This is solely due to my complete surrender. If you adopt the same path, you will also get the best benefit. It is not the religious fervor that has taken me to this height. That which has helped me to achieve this distinction is only His Grace. The merciful deed of the Grace (îò¾) alone has installed me in this super plane”.

(Mahopadesam)

The saint has affirmed by stating that Dayavu (Grace) alone has taken him to this unascendable height.

It is now our part to know the real meaning of Dayavu more vividly and this is explained below.

The Tamil word Dayavu is mostly known as love, mercy, grace, etc. But it has got a wider meaning.

When we commence our new life from the Wisdom temple, the light ever glowing from the cerebral spinal cavity, will give us new thoughts and ideas.

Once the expression of Dayavu is implemented through one's thoughts, words and deeds, it is sure that he will feel more elucidation.

On the basis of the experience gained, we shall get at the real truth now.

The letter Da-â in Tamil is the 7th consonant and is considered to be the abode of the Lord in the seventh stage of the human body (Niradharam) from where one has to realise his existence and abide with God with ever lasting happiness.

Ya-ò signifies the existence of the God in the soul form of the human body expressing the soul and sense knowledge.

Thus the combination of these two letters âò represents the God in the human form to lead a divine life in the world.

As regards the letter vu - $\frac{3}{4}$ represents the world with all its animate and inanimate objects which have been created for the sole purpose of gaining experience and in the long run to achieve the goal of immortality.

Further the letter 'vu' à is placed as the fifth vowel, depicting the penta powers of the God. As a significance of this, the human being has got five fingers in each of his hands and legs.

From the above, it can well be inferred that Dayavu is the real form of God and its experience will make one to live with Godhead.

For non-Tamils it is not easy to make them to understand the real meaning of Dayavu, and for this purpose, a new word has been coined in English as 'DAEIOU' and it is hoped that it will serve the purpose.

This word contains one consonant and five vowels.

Everyone knows that vowel is the life form of the alphabet and consonant denotes the body form.

The letter 'D' in the upturned form represents the head of the human being where the Inner Light is ever kept glowing.

From this light, the penta powers of Porul, Kiriya, Gnana, Yoga and Arul (representing the five Vowels) are spreading around to produce in the universe all atoms, energies, Intelligence, Omni-Soul power and Universal Blissful life of God - man.

Thus by this Daeiou representation, one can realise the Eternal Blessed life of Bliss and live in this world for ever in an immortal stage.

This bliss-giving life is a must to the whole mankind.

This is neither a religious nor an irreligious life in nature.

Also it is not a material or spiritual life of the famous saints and rishis of yore.

So, no one should take this as a challenge to their present life.

Without any prejudice and religious chauvinism and casteism, everyone has to extend his 'Daeiou' life from the Divine centre within him.

When the life blossoms from the innermost, all the truth will come to light, which will aid and guide the humanity to make the life completely blissful.

The key of Grace is necessary to open the lock of fetters and it has been distinctly styled as vast compassion.

In other words, one has to offer his compassionate life to God in order to get himself transformed as God.

Let this Goal of Daeiou life be achieved through the munificence of the Omnigrace by one and all and adore our Lord who is all in all.

SOME OF THE POEMS IN THIRU ARUTPA RENDERED IN ENGLISH

1. Against lust.

“Driven to the jungle,

I fell in the eyes of the hunter.

He pursues me. I run for my life,

But wherever I go he follows me.

Thus I am driven hither and thither.

My Lord, I yearn for your grace,

Which will rescue me from this hazard?

To whom else shall I confess My wretchedness?

What shall I do if your grace is not

Forthcoming for my rescue?

What punishment shall I inflict on myself?

* * *

2. All sufferings driven away at the instance of the Lord.

“Both ‘Sithsabai’ and ‘Porsabai’ have become my own.

All celestials talk only of me.

What is there for religions to deride me?

All sufferings caused by my birth have ceased to exist from this moment”.

(Ananda Meleedu-3.stanza-2)

* * * *

3. The Bliss of the Lord compared with that of the worldly dishes.

“Mangoes, jack fruits and plantain fruits are crushed separately

and their juice distilled and mixed together.

Sugar and sugar candy are added in plenty.

Pure honey, milk, coconut juice and powder of green gram are mixed with it.

Lastly, after adding sweet ghee, this mixture is taken to the stove and

A sweet dish is prepared.

Sweeter than this dish is the bliss of the Lord”.

(Arulvilakkamalai Stanza-17)

* * * *

4. Happiness prevailing in the outer world is only a fraction of Divine Experience.

“During the hot summer at 12 noon, a traveler walking a long distance comes in sight of a green tree with full of branches and green leaves.

He sits under the shadow of the tree and thereby he is relieved of his tiredness and fatigue. What will be his feeling and appreciation about the green shade of the tree?

How glad will he be if he gets a sweet, ripe fruit there to eat?

Near by he sees a stream flowing with sweet cold water surrounded on either banks with colored flowers emanating sweet fragrance bringing solace not only to the eyes but also to his mind.

He now feels that he is seated on a green meadow from where he takes rest.

The sweet breeze around him brings more comfort and thus he feels very fresh now with new gains and forgets all previous miseries.

The Divine Experience the saint acquired with the union of the Lord surpasses all such happiness prevailed in the outer world”.

(Arulvilakkamalai - stanza -3)

* * * *

5. Longing for a body ever existing without any destruction.

“I yearned for a body, which will exist for ever and not destructible by any of the following.

Air, earth, ether, fire, water, sun, king of destruction (Yama), disease, weapon planet, cruel deeds and any others which will have a destructive nature.

My desire was fulfilled in no time.

You, worldly people, don't think that begging is below to your dignity.

Please surrender completely to the feet of the Lord Arutperunjothi”.

(Addenda. Stanza - 64)

* * * *

6. "From the very beginning of the 12th year till this 51st year, the poor soul has been subjected to so many difficulties and if expressed out, even hard metals like iron will melt.

Now I have been equipped with your Grace, all the past miseries and difficulties have vanished and I am put in utmost happiness".

7. "Take everything which is mine. Give me everything that is yours."

8. "How long would it take for me to swim across the sea of grief"

9. "The Lord and myself become one. The experience I had at that juncture is an all-comprehensive grand space".

* * * * *

DAEIOU